



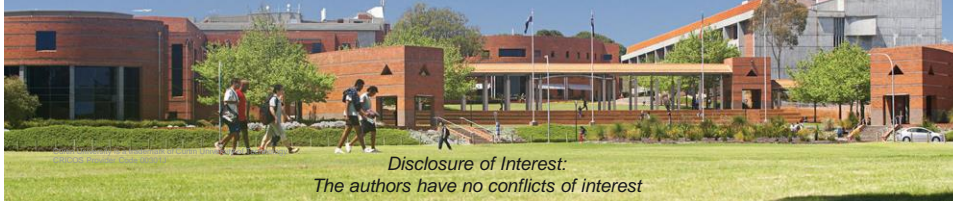
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Speaking safer sex:

Exploring how young Australian men negotiate condom use

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*Disclosure of Interest:
The authors have no conflicts of interest*

Aim

- The aim of this study was to investigate the relationship between condom use and safer sex communication amongst young heterosexual Australian men living in New South Wales
- This population is amongst the highest 'at risk' for STIs in Australia



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Methods

- This study was guided by an interpretive phenomenological design
- 12 participants meeting the inclusion criteria were interviewed
- Inclusion criteria: Australian, identifying as male, single, heterosexual, residing in New South Wales and 18-26 years of age.
- Semi-structured face-to-face in-depth interviews were employed in order to investigate the lived experiences and attitudes of individuals in this demographic.
- Thematic Analysis was used to analyse the data



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Findings

Inconsistencies between attitudes towards condom use, experiences of safer sex communication, and **actual** condom use were found.

Four themes were identified:

1. Talking about safe sex isn't sexy;
2. Intentions do not necessarily predict use;
3. Knowledge and experience mitigates condom use efficacy; and
4. Safer sex decisions made based on assumed partner sexual safety.



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Findings cont'd

- General attitudes towards condoms were unanimously positive, whereas engaging a sexual partner in discussion on condoms was experienced as uncomfortable
 - "There's subtlety involved especially in picking up ... there's so much subtlety involved and it's all about not saying what you should say. And one of those things you should say is like 'are there condoms?' ... It's definitely a social thing." (Callum, 20 y.o.)
- Young men negotiated condom use with partners through strategies of humour, subtlety, directness or avoidance depending on their individual levels of motivation to use condoms
- Intentions to use condoms were influenced by the individual's circumstances and experiences
 - "...my education on the issue, plus my personal experiences, mean that STIs are something that I'm more concerned about." (Trent, 24 y.o.)
- Factors influencing safer sex communication included assumptions about a partner's sexual safety, level of knowledge and experience of social and sexual scripts



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So what?

- Sexuality education programs, public health campaigns and media organizations need to focus on **normalising** safer sex communication.
- Increased efforts through these mediums are needed to empower young people to become informed and celebrate their intentions to be sexually safe.
- Future research is needed to continue investigating the socio-relational aspects of safer sex.



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Thank You!

Any Questions?

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