

Condom use among young women who sell sex enrolled in an impact evaluation of DREAMS in Zimbabwe

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Introduction

- Although HIV incidence is decreasing in sub-Saharan Africa, it remains high among sub-populations, including young women who sell sex (YWSS).
- Reducing incidence among this population requires increased coverage of efficacious prevention tools.
- Condoms are known to be highly effective in preventing HIV when used correctly and consistently.
- We use enrolment data from evaluation of DREAMS (a large HIV prevention initiative targeting adolescent girls and young women)¹ to describe use of condoms among HIV-negative YWSS and determine factors associated with any condom-less sex in the past 12 months (condom-less sex).

Methods

- YWSS (N=2431) aged 18-24 years were recruited using respondent driven sampling (RDS) in 6 sites across Zimbabwe.¹
- We collected data on socio-demographics, sexual behaviour and offered HIV testing.
- Analyses were restricted to women who tested HIV negative during the survey and RDS-2 weighted.
- We describe reported condom-less sex in the last month, whether women thought it important to use condoms with all sexual partners, availability of condoms, and ability to negotiate use of condoms.
- Logistic regression was used to identify socio-demographic and sexual behaviour characteristics associated with condom-less sex.

Results

- Among 1859 HIV-negative YWSS, 64% self-identified as sex workers (SW) and 36% did not (non-SW).
- 97% of YWSS considered it important to use condoms with all sexual partners (98% SW; 97% non-SW).
- 92% said condoms are always available at places where they mostly get them (93% SW; 89% non-SW) and 80% reported obtaining condoms for free (82% SW; 74% non-SW).
- 2% did not know a place to get condoms.
- 88% reported ability to negotiate condom use with any sexual partner (89% SW; 85% non-SW).
- 90% of SW and 76% of non-SW were able to use condoms correctly (see Figures 1 & 2).
- Condom-less sex was high, 51% among SW and 60% among non-SW).
- After adjusting for other factors, SW were less likely to report condom-less sex compared with non-SW (AOR=0.67; 95%CI: 0.52-0.86).
- YWSS who were married/ cohabiting (AOR=5.14; 95%CI: 1.69-15.69) were more likely to report condom-less sex compared with those single/ never married.
- YWSS who had ever experienced any form of violence had increased odds of condom-less sex.
- There was no evidence of association between condom-less sex and education, duration selling sex, alcohol use, mental health, social cohesion or food insecurity.

Figure 1

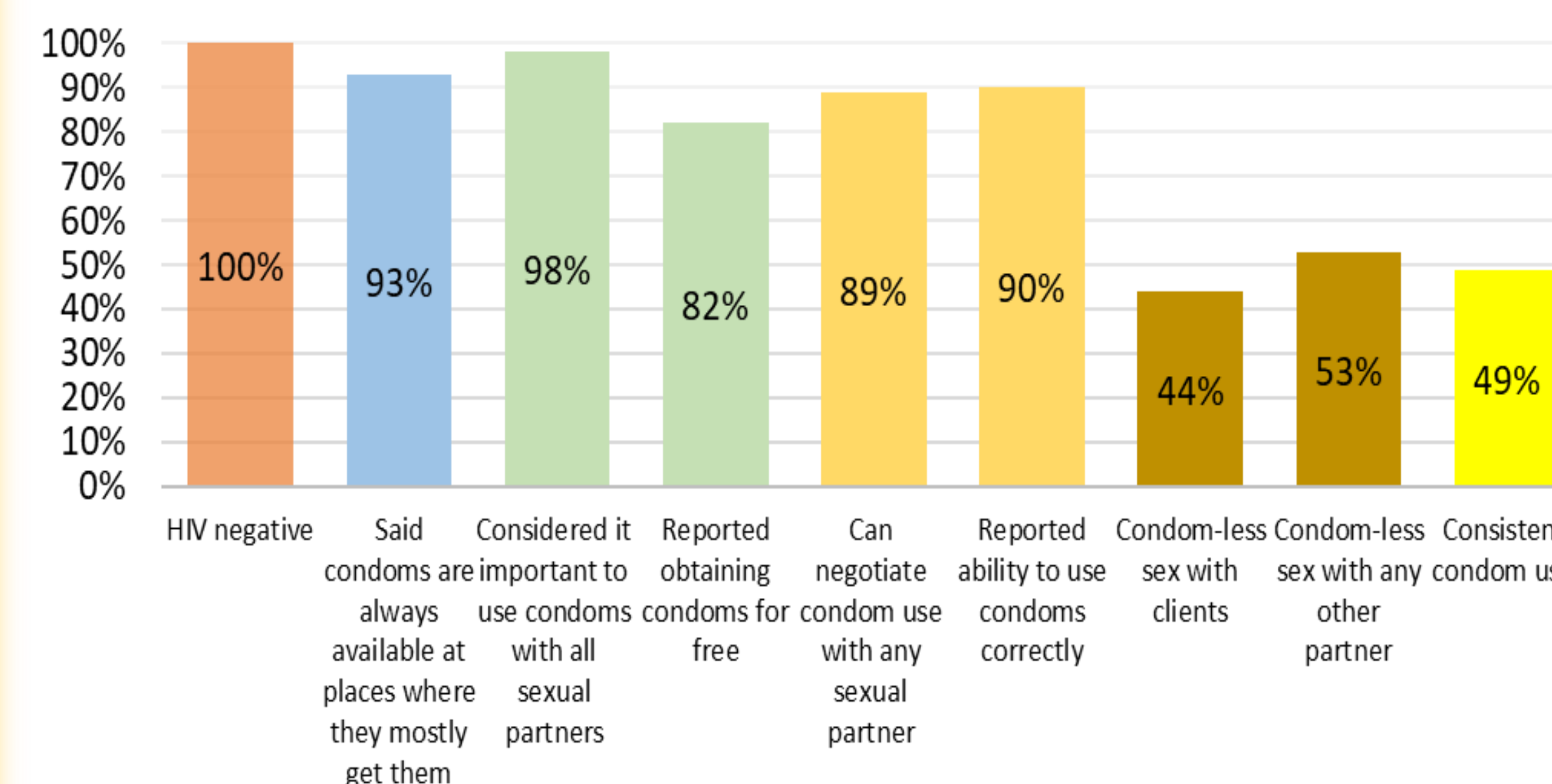
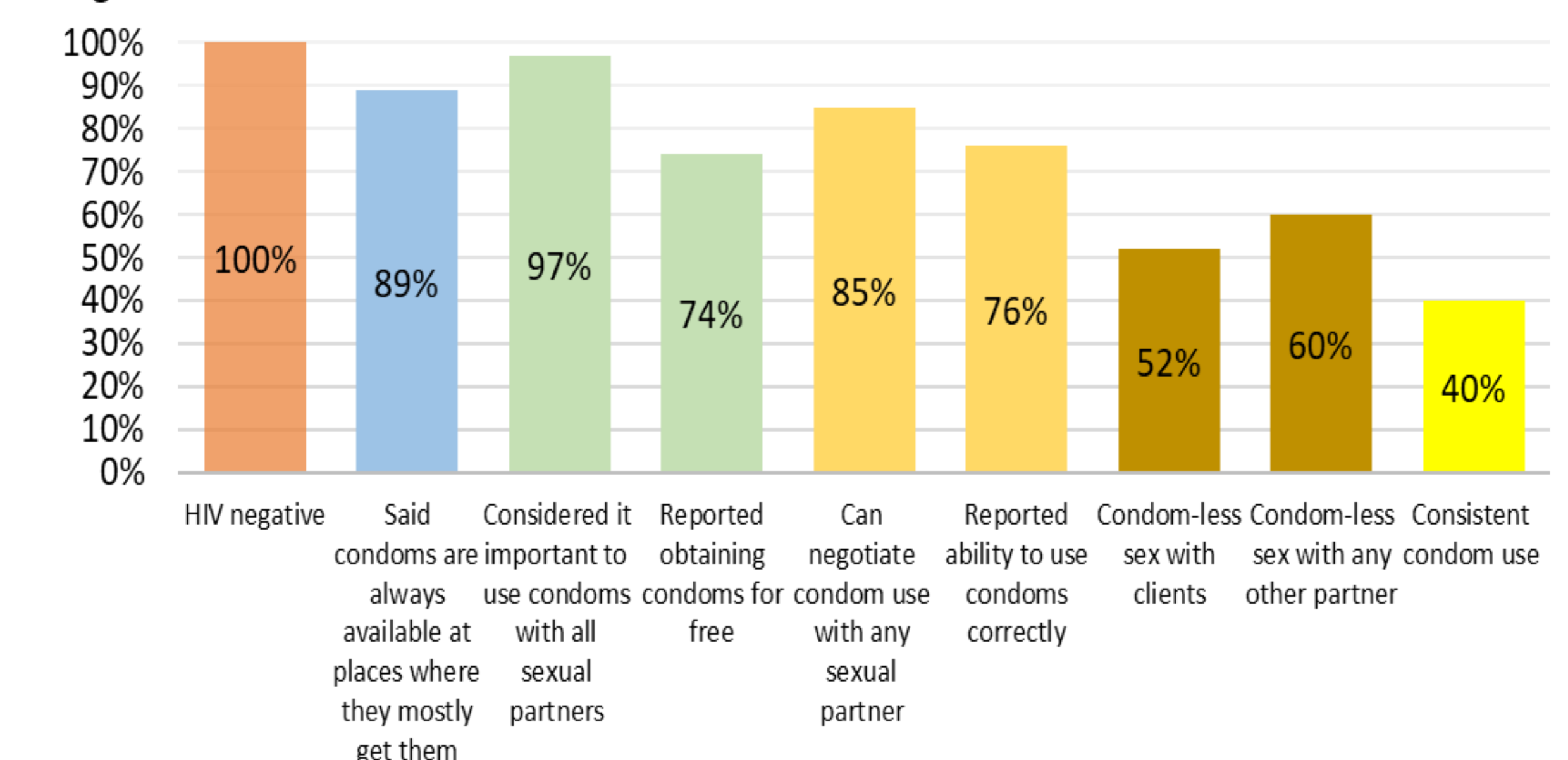


Figure 2



Condom cascade among YWSS who self-identified as sex workers (Figure 1) and those who did not (Figure 2). Denominator is 1221 for all bars in Figure 1 and 622 for all bars in Figure 2.

Factors associated with condom-less sex among young YWSS

Characteristic	N (%)	# of YWSS who had condom-less sex in the past month (n=946) N (%)	Crude OR (95%CI)	p-value	Adjusted OR* (95%CI)	p-value
Self-identified as sex worker				0.019	1	0.002
	No 611 (36.4)	359 (59.9)	1			
	Yes 1198 (63.6)	576 (50.4)	0.74 (0.58-0.95)		0.67 (0.52-0.86)	
Marital status				0.006	1	0.005
	Single/ never married 1143 (61.5)	590 (51.8)	1			
	Married/ cohabiting 36 (2.1)	32 (86.6)	5.30 (1.69-16.62)		5.14 (1.69-15.69)	
	Previously married 647 (36.3)	324 (56.1)	1.24 (0.97-1.60)		1.26 (0.97-1.64)	
Ever experienced physical violence from sexual partner				0.002	1	0.030
	No 1131 (63.9)	557 (51.1)	1			
	Yes 695 (36.1)	389 (59.4)	1.45 (1.14-1.84)		1.32 (1.03-1.69)	
Experienced sexual violence from a sexual partner in the past 12 months				0.001	1	0.002
	No 1532 (84.7)	765 (52.4)	1			
	Yes 293 (15.3)	180 (63.6)	1.68 (1.22-2.32)		1.66 (1.20-2.30)	
Experienced physical violence from police in the past 12 months				0.009	1	0.026
	No 1763 (97.1)	907 (53.6)	1			
	Yes 62 (2.9)	38 (71.7)	2.36 (1.24-4.49)		2.08 (1.09-3.98)	

*Adjusted for all variables in the table

Discussion

- Despite appreciating the importance and availability of free condoms, and feeling able to negotiate condom use, condom-less sex remains high among YWSS.
- Factors influencing condom use need to be addressed, particularly violence.
- YWSS who do not self-identify as SW may require additional targeting.

References

- Hensen B, Hargreaves JR, Chiyaka T, et al. Evaluating the impact of DREAMS on HIV incidence among young women who sell sex: protocol for a non-randomised study in Zimbabwe. BMC Public Health 2018; 18(1): 203.