

PREDICTORS OF CONDOM USE AMONG HETEROSEXUAL MALE UNIVERSITY STUDENTS IN NORTHERN THAILAND USING A PSYCHOLOGICAL FACTORS MODEL

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Abstract. Male university students are vulnerable to HIV and other STIs due to inconsistent condom use. There is little data regarding condom use behaviors among heterosexual male university students in Thailand. The purpose of this study was to identify psychological factors predictive of condom use behavior in this population. We constructed a model to determine psychological factors predictive of condom use behaviors. This model was developed from three psychological theories described in this paper: the Health Belief Model, the Theory of Planned Behavior, and the Social Cognitive Theory. We then developed a computer-based questionnaire asking about condom use behavior and administered to sexually active male university students in northern Thailand. The results of this questionnaire were used to evaluate our newly constructed model. A total of 1,200 students were recruited into the study of whom 1,039 completed the questionnaire completely and whose data was used in the results. The constructed model explained 56% of the variance ($R^2 = 0.56$). In this model, higher levels of perceived susceptibility, perceived self-efficacy and subjective norms and lower levels of perceived barriers predicted consistent condom use behavior. Of these, perceived barriers to condom use was the strongest predictor ($\beta = 0.42$) of condom use behavior. This model provides information useful for condom promotion programs targeting the study population. Further studies are needed to determine if this model can be applied to other populations and if programs based on the results of this model can indeed be effective in improving condom use behavior among the study population.

Keywords: condom use, HIV prevention, psychological factor model, heterosexual males, university students

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INTRODUCTION

Prevention of HIV among young people is an important priority. About 35% of new HIV infections worldwide