

# RAP\* Time



## RURAL CENTER *for* AIDS/STD PREVENTION

A JOINT PROJECT OF  
INDIANA UNIVERSITY, UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO,  
AND UNIVERSITY OF KENTUCKY

\*Rural AIDS/STD prevention. rap (rap) v. *Slang*. To talk freely and openly

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## Long-distance truckers not using condoms with sex workers or casual partners

Studies in several countries have linked the spread of HIV/STI with sex between long-distance truck drivers and commercial sex workers. Truck drivers have been implicated for the spread of HIV/STI in rural areas in countries such as India and Bangladesh. Studies have shown high levels of risky behavior, unprotected sex with multiple partners, and high levels of drug use among long-distance truck drivers.

However, few studies have been conducted on the roles that long-distance truck drivers and sex workers at truck stops might play in spreading HIV/STI in the US.

This study examined sexually transmitted infection, HIV, and hepatitis virus prevalence and risk behaviors among truck drivers.

### Methodology

A mobile clinic van was used to conduct the study at a large trucking terminal in Albuquerque, New Mexico and at 10 truck stops on interstate highways elsewhere in the state during 2004 to 2006. Truck drivers were recruited via citizens' band radio and leaflets distributed at trucking venues.

A structured interview form collected demographics, driving

history, sexual behavior and alcohol/drug use. Blood and urine samples for HIV/STI testing were collected at conclusion of the interview.

### Outcomes of the Study

652 drivers (591 men, 61 women) were enrolled representing 44 states. Drivers were away from home a mean of 288 nights a year. The mean years driving was 13.

Major findings include:

- 21% reported sex with sex workers or casual sex partners in the prior year.
- Mean number of lifetime sex partners was 48. Three percent of drivers reported ever having sex with a man.
- Half reported that they had not used a condom the last time they had sex with a sex worker or casual partner. 32% reported never using a condom and 46% indicated using condoms less than half the time.
- 14% reported drug use in the prior year and 11% reported having ever injected drugs.
- Positive test results were found for 54 participants for hepatitis C, 66 for hepatitis B, 8 for chlamydia, 1 for gonorrhea, 1 for syphilis and 1 for HIV.
- Driving solo, history of IDU and

history of STI were independently associated with high risk sexual behavior.

- History of IDU was associated with HCV infection.
- Previous STI treatment was reported by 132 truck drivers (gonorrhea 12%, chlamydia 5%, herpes 2%, syphilis 1%, and HPV 1%).

### Implications for Prevention

As was found in similar studies in developing countries and in Florida, the long-distance truck drivers of this study reported engaging in risky STI-related behaviors. Further, the prevalence of HCV was higher than the highest rate reported in a national survey.

Study findings suggest increased STI risk-reduction interventions and HCV screening for long-distance truck drivers.

### SOURCE:

Valway, S., et al. (2009). Risk assessment and screening for sexually transmitted infections, HIV, and hepatitis virus among long-distance truck drivers in New Mexico, 2004-2006. *American Journal of Public Health*, 99, 2063-2068.

## Women report condoms make anal sex less pleasurable

Heterosexual intercourse is a highly efficient mechanism for HIV transmission. Interviews were conducted in Boston in 2006 with 28 women having had unprotected anal sex in prior year with a man who was HIV-positive or unknown serostatus.

The male partner typically initiated anal sex, often occurring along with vaginal and oral sex. Reasons for anal intercourse included to experience physical pleasure, to enhance emotional intimacy, to please their male partners or to avoid violence.

Among the reasons for not using condoms were familiarity with their partner and feeling that condoms made anal sex less pleasurable. Knowledge of HIV and STD appeared not to encourage condom use.

Women having anal intercourse who perceive condoms interfere with pleasure and intimacy may be a high risk for HIV/STD. Hence, interventions must find ways to increase condom use without decreasing pleasure.

SOURCE: Maynard, E. (2009). Women's experiences with anal sex: Motivations and implications for STD prevention. *Perspectives on Sexual and Reproductive Health*, 41, 142-149.

## Condom slippage during sex found higher among PDE5j users

To increase condom use and reduce STI risk, some physicians prescribe phosphodiesterase type 5 inhibitors (e.g. Viagra) for men who experience condom-associated erection difficulties. This study examined whether the prevalence of erection-related condom problems differed between men using and not using PDE5j at last condom-protected vaginal or anal intercourse. Participants were 757 men who completed an internet questionnaire.

PDE5j users, compared with non-users, were five times more likely to report the condom slipping off during intercourse, three times more likely to report erection loss during sex while using a condom, and three times more likely to remove the condom before sex was over. These occurrences may increase STI risk.

Physicians prescribing PDE5j may want to determine if the male patient is experiencing condom-associated erection loss and consider titrating doses and/or make referral for psychotherapy and condom skills education.

SOURCE: Sanders, S. A., et al. (2009). Do phosphodiesterase type 5 inhibitors protect against condom-associated erection loss and condom slippage? *Journal of Sexual Medicine*, 6, 1451-1456.

## Genital warts declined rapidly after HPV vaccination program

In 2007, Australia began free HPV vaccination (types 6, 11, 16, 18) for school girls and females under age 28 years, covering about 70% of them. Since 2008 there has been a 25% decrease in genital warts in this group, but not for women over 28 years. Also, a decline in genital warts occurred in homosexual men but not heterosexual men.

SOURCE: Fairely, C. K., et al. (2009). Rapid decline in presentations of genital warts after the implementation of a national quadrivalent human papillomavirus vaccination programme for young women. *Sexually Transmitted Infections*, doi:10.1136/sti.2009.037788.

## HIV infection is 6th leading death cause

Among persons 25-44 years, HIV infection is the 6th leading cause of death in US (1987-2006), following unintentional injury, cancer, heart disease, suicide and homicide.

SOURCE: CDC. (2009). Deaths among persons with AIDS through December 2006. *HIV/AIDS Surveillance Supplemental Report*, 2009, Vol. 14 (No. 3). <http://www.cdc.gov/hiv/topics/surveillance/resources/reports/>.

**RAP\* Time** is a monthly AIDS/STD prevention bulletin published by the Rural Center for AIDS/STD Prevention (RCAP) at Indiana University, Bloomington. RCAP is a joint project of Indiana University, University of Colorado, and University of Kentucky. The major focus of RCAP is the promotion of HIV/STD prevention in rural America, with the goal of reducing HIV/STD incidence.

The opinions expressed here do not necessarily represent those of the cooperating universities.

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