

I've Read the News Today, Oh Boy

Global Politics of Condom Promotion

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- I read the news today oh boy
About a lucky man who made the grade
And though the news was rather sad
Well I just had to laugh [*or cry*]
– *The Beatles, A Day in the Life*



- Hope lies in dreams, in imagination, and in the courage of those who dare to make dreams into reality.

– *Jonas Salk*



- Don't let the perfect be the enemy of the good.

– *Jeff Spieler*



The news five years ago

- UN Target to reduce new HIV infections 25% in 15-24 year-olds in most-affected countries by 2005, and globally by 2010
- Women are at greatest risk
- UN agencies highlight urgent need to “intensify efforts to prevent HIV and STIs in women by providing women and girls with female-initiated protection methods”
- UNGASS Declaration calls for increased support for the female condom and microbicide development



The news today

- The politics of condoms in 2005
 - ABCs
 - Global Gag Rule
 - Pledge of Allegiance
 - “Condoms Don’t Work”
 - “Young men don’t know how to use condoms?”



The Female Condom

The alphabet soup of the comprehensive response

- ABC...
- F
- H
- M
- P
- T
- V

We need the full alphabet!



The Female Condom

Products and Protection

- Our focus is not – or at least should not be – on the products
- Our collective goal is to have more options for women and men to protect additional sex acts to prevent new infections
- Products don't protect sex acts; people do!
- *The technology is the means to the end*

Challenges

- How to recognize the urgent need to develop more options to prevent HIV without undermining interest, enthusiasm or funding for existing, available methods.
- It should not be “either/or”; we can and must do both.
- Different strokes for different folks

Show me the money

Product	Approved	Efficacy	Investment
MC	1930	$\geq 95\%$	$\geq \$100\text{m}$
FC	1993	$\geq 95\%$	$\leq \$10\text{m}$
Microbicide	Still waiting	1 st generation: 30-60%???	\$142m
Vaccine	Still waiting	1 st generation: 30-60%???	\$692m



New method introduction

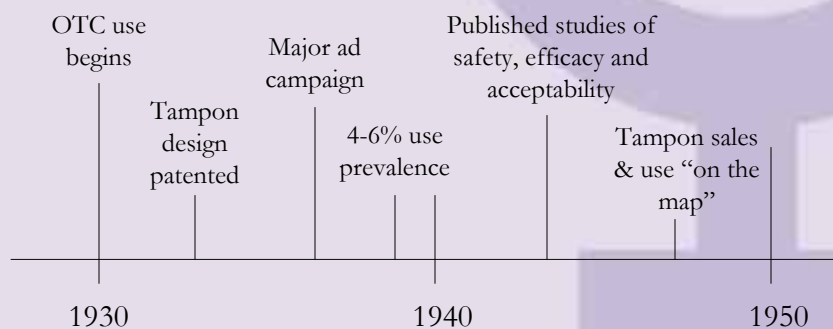
Historically, introducing new technologies has been hampered by:

- Provider bias
- Limited data
- Doubts about potential market size and actual use
- Limited infrastructure for distribution & promotion
- Limited resources for – or investment in – training, communication and outreach.

These issues are not unique to any one product.



The Tampon in America



Source: Latka, Journal of Urban Health, 2001



What the future holds?

- “Women won’t use that.”
- “That’s not what I meant when I said I wanted a microbicide.”
- “I don’t have time to promote that.”
- “I am not convinced of its effectiveness.”
- “*Our women* don’t insert things in their vaginas.”



What the future holds?

- “*This* _____ (fill in the blank with product of choice) is not the one; let’s develop something better.”
- “It’s not for everyone.”
- “Yuck – it’s messy!”
- “We need acceptability and/or effectiveness data from our country.”
- “But there is no real demand – it is just novelty.”



The Female Condom

What the future holds?

- “Not everyone is using it.”
- “Not enough people are using it.”
- “People aren’t using it consistently.”
- “It’s a sex worker product.”
- “My partner doesn’t want me to use it.”



The Female Condom

Key lessons from the FC

- Adding options increases protection
- Acceptability changes over time – for an individual user and for communities, societies and cultures
- Practice make perfect
- One person’s product advantages, are another person’s disadvantages – different strokes for different folks



The Female Condom

Key lessons from the FC

- Some assumptions about sex, sexuality, demand, acceptability, likes and dislikes, etc. are true, and...
- Some are not.
- Need \neq use
- Demand \neq use
- Access \neq use



The Female Condom

Key lessons from the FC

- Do not over-promise or create unrealistic expectations.
- “Consistent” condom use is the ultimate, but not all women (and men) need to (or will) use any one product all the time to have public health impact.
- You get what you pay for!
- “Niche” is not a bad thing – novelty can be good!



Key lessons from the FC

- It's not the product, it's the programme!
- A vaccine – or a microbicide, or a female condom – that sits on the shelf is useless.
(adapted from Jonas Salk)
- The science is easy...
- ...compared to getting the product distributed, accepted and used.



What we need now

- Trained providers
 - address provider potential bias
 - encourage “practice makes perfect”
 - does not over-complicate product use
 - incorporates anatomy, sexuality, communication & negotiation
 - respects women and provides opportunities for control & empowerment
- Potential users with knowledge of their bodies
- Potential users with communication and negotiation skills
- Outreach, distribution, education & training for men
- Network to deliver product and – more importantly – message, outreach, support



Expanding access

An investment of \$20 million today would

- Protect no fewer than 20 million sex acts now.
- Reduce the unit cost of the female condom by over 25%.
- Provide programme, financial and technical support to dozens of country, regional and community programmes.
- Build a solid foundation of programmes and networks of providers, programmers, policy makers, users and partners for the introduction of microbicides and other barrier methods.



Final thoughts

“The story of the tampon demonstrates that a method does not have to be adopted by all users immediately to play an important role, and that even initially controversial methods can become widely accepted as mainstream. The early history of the tampon sheds perspective, and hope, on where we stand with the female condom. While much-needed work is under way to develop microbicides [*and vaccines – MW*], we should take advantage of the fact that the female condom is already available and promote it to those in need now.”

(Latka, Journal of Urban Health, 2001)



Final thoughts

- I don't want to see an article or a presentation in 20xx comparing tampons, FCs and microbicides
- Three years and counting...presentation made in 2002, so what's different – other than more meetings, more reports and, tragically, more infections



The road to “ending the epidemic”

- We're on a road to nowhere
- If you don't know where you're going, any road will take you there
- It's a long and winding road