



**International Community
of Women Living with
HIV/AIDS**



**“Sex, Life and the Female
Condom: some views of HIV
positive women”**

ICW

Patron: Mary Robinson

INFORMAL SURVEY

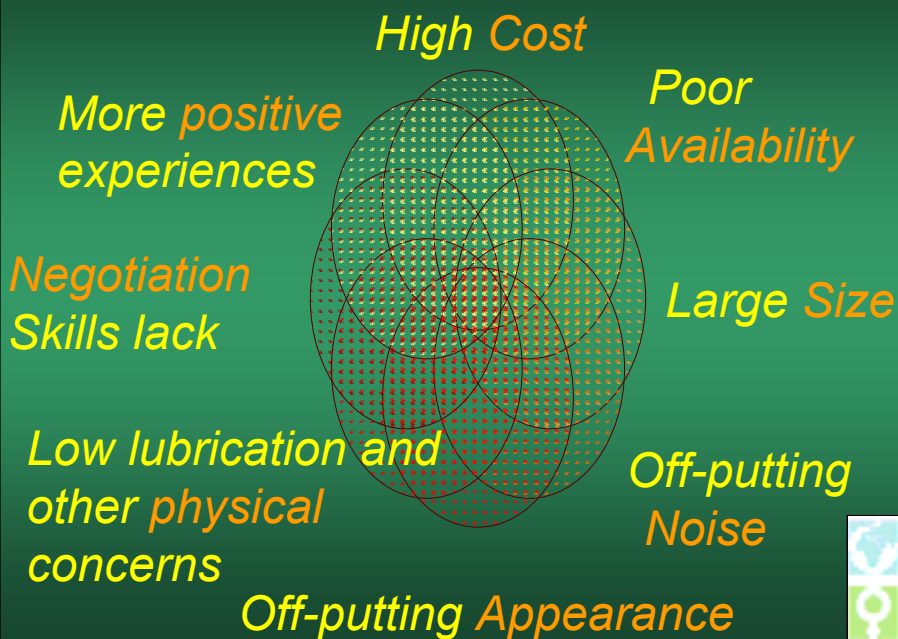
By e-mail Of ICW members

(all HIV positive women)



Responses from members in Asia-Pacific, Africa, Latin America, North America and Europe

Comments raised:



WHY USE A CONDOM?



- pleasurable and fulfilling sex life....
- whilst practising safer sex....
- *and making sure my husband remains HIV negative*
- female condom more comfortable with practice

ICW

The Quality of your life...



Physical

Well-Being

Psychological

Sexual

HIV and the DENIAL of sex...

- denial of sexual and reproductive rights of HIV positive women
- forced abortions and sterilisations
- told to stop having sex and remain abstinent for life
- told not to have (more) children
- ARVs only if on depo-provera



HIV and the DENIAL of sex...

Also.....

- *unwanted sex*
- *unwanted pregnancy*
- forced asexuality and/or ritual sex upon widowhood



BENEFITS of FEMALE CONDOMS for HIV+ve WOMEN ...

- **claiming our rights to a healthy, positive, mutually respectful, fulfilling relationship**
- **greater physical protection against STIs, re-exposure to HIV, unwanted pregnancy**
- **no latex allergy problem**
- **can be used with massage oils**



CHALLENGES of FEMALE CONDOMS for WOMEN ...

- **lack of knowledge of female anatomy or ease with our bodies**
- **anxiety that our own bodies are not “normal”**
- **sanctity of the hymen and penetration**
- **access to vagina owned by men**
- **deep shame if things go wrong...**



The Stirrups...



.. and these look less extreme than many ..

OUR BODIES OURSELVES

Boston Women's Health Collective

a book of revelations...

THE FEMALE CONDOM AS A KEY PART...



- of reclaiming our bodies as HIV positive women
- of learning about *all* our bodies as a part of our own possession
- developing more mutually respectful, satisfying and fulfilling relationships for ourselves *and* for our partners AND....

International Community of
Women Living with HIV/AIDS



**Most of our members never
thought themselves to be at risk
of HIV.....**

**.....and of those that did, most
had no power to reduce their risk**

THE FEMALE CONDOM...

➤ AS A MATTER OF LIFE OR DEATH



HIV Global Figures *All* of 2005:

Estimated....



Total deaths from Tsunami 295,608

Total AIDS-related deaths x 10 tsunamis

Total all new HIV infections =

x 16 tsunamis

76% of young HIV +ve people in sub-saharan Africa are young women

“Wanted sex, good sex and right to enjoy sex is not something that is covered in many intervention programmes...how do we expect young women to understand the importance of consensual sex and negotiating skills if education is only limited to prevention of pregnancy, STIs, and sex being a no go area in many societies?” HIV positive Namibian participant, ICW Young Women’s Dialogue Workshop



ICW

International Community of Women Living with HIV/AIDS

www.icw.org

the only international network run by and for HIV positive women

**September 2005 Female Condom Conference
Baltimore Dr Alice Welbourn**

