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:
- More positive experiences
- Negotiation Skills lack
- Low lubrication and other physical concerns
- High Cost
- Poor Availability
- Large Size
- Off-putting Noise
- Off-putting Appearance
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

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

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 × 10 tsunamis
- Total all new HIV infections =
  
  × 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

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