



The Female Condom

The Female Condom
Where the girls – AND boys – are

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The Female Condom

The Product Everyone Loves...to Hate

- In a review of HBO's "Life Support", Virginia Heffernan of the *New York Times*, March 10, 2007:
- In this public service announcement, dental dams, female condoms and other oddities that make safe sex seem worse than lifelong celibacy receive a hearing. Weird timing. Are those things even around? Were they ever?



Products, Protection & Programs

- 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 and programs do!
- Consistent use of any safer sex product is a holy grail that may never be realized for many users
- *The technology is the means to the end*



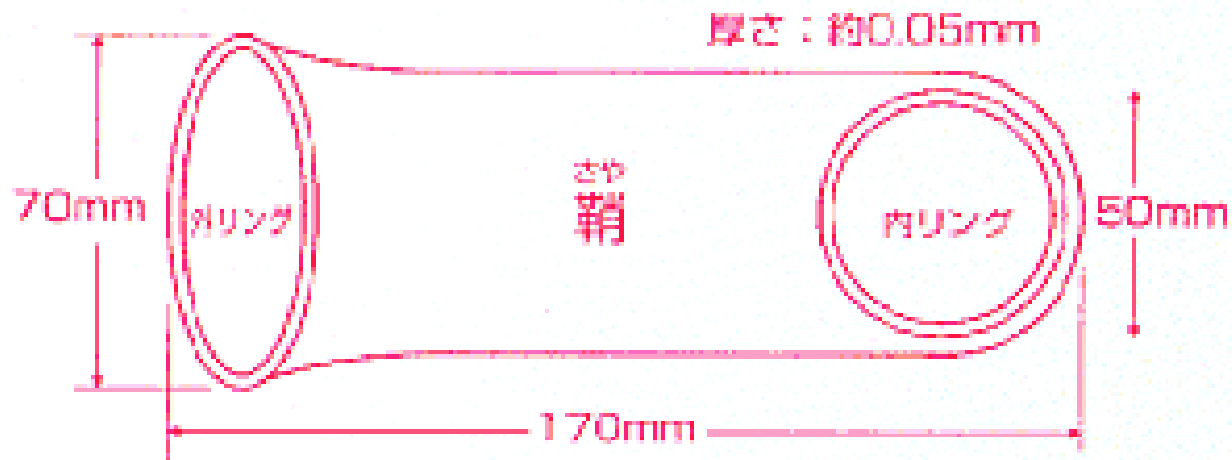
Challenges

- 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

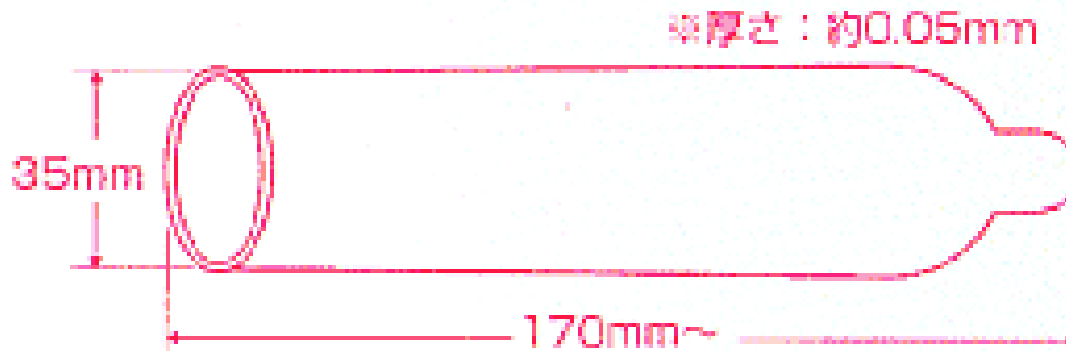


The Female Condom

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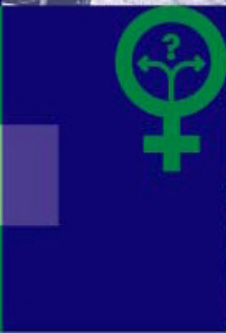
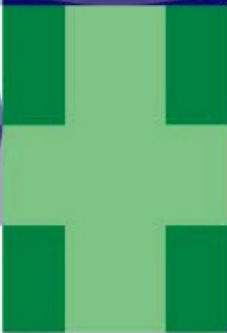
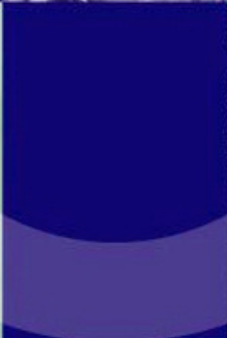
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The Female Condom

The Female Condom A guide for planning and programming





Introducing FC to men

- “Target men as well as women. Men often initiate use of the female condom. Female condom use requires that even if men do not initiate use, their co-operation is important. Men play a significant role in many decisions taken by women to use a protective method during sex.”
- “In many countries, men still maintain the dominant role in sexual decision making, including those decisions relating to contraception and disease prevention. Therefore, targeting men in the promotion of and education about the female condom is essential and has proven effective in improving overall acceptability of the device.”
- “In the past, women have typically been the target audiences for the development of female condom educational and promotional materials. Additional time and attention need to be committed to motivating men in much the same way, particularly men who rarely practice safer sex.”
- From *The Female Condom: A Guide for Planning and Programming*. WHO/UNAIDS, 2000.



The literature on FC and MSM

- *Experiences of 100 men who have sex with men using the Reality condom for anal sex.* Gibson S; McFarland W; Wohlfeiler D; Scheer K; Katz MH. AIDS Education and Prevention. 1999 Feb;11(1):65-71.
- *Use of Reality "female condoms" for anal sex by US men who have sex with men.* Gross M; Buchbinder SP; Holte S; Celum CL; Koblin BA; Douglas JM Jr, American Journal Of Public Health.1999 Nov;89(11):1739-41.
- *Attitudes towards and experience with the female condom: results of a qualitative study with heterosexual women and male injecting drug users, and with men who have sex with men.* Smith, R.A., Hirky, A.E., Shedlin, M., Tross, S. and Kim, J. 1999: Paper presented at The National AIDS Prevention Conference in USA.
- *Acceptability and safety of the Reality condom for anal sex.*



The Female Condom

INFORMATION FOR GAY MEN

Femidoms

AND GAY MEN

Produced by Salisbury Gay Men's
Health Project, UK, ±1998





The Female Condom



Reality® brand condoms are condoms that you put into the vagina or anus before sex. Sometimes they are called "female condoms," but they can be used by men for anal sex, too. Some people think Reality condoms feel better or are easier to use. Others prefer regular condoms. You and your partner(s) can decide what's best for you.

Produced by Fenway Community
Health, US, ±2002



Pleasure sells

- Pleasure is a main driver for success (not new...)
- Pleasure might help us sell FC and other methods (also not new...see PSI/Kenya TV advert for *Trust*)
- Please see “***Promoting protection and pleasure: amplifying the effectiveness of barriers against sexually transmitted infections and pregnancy***” in the *Lancet*, by Anne Philpott, Wendy Knerr & Dermot Maher, December 2006



New method introduction

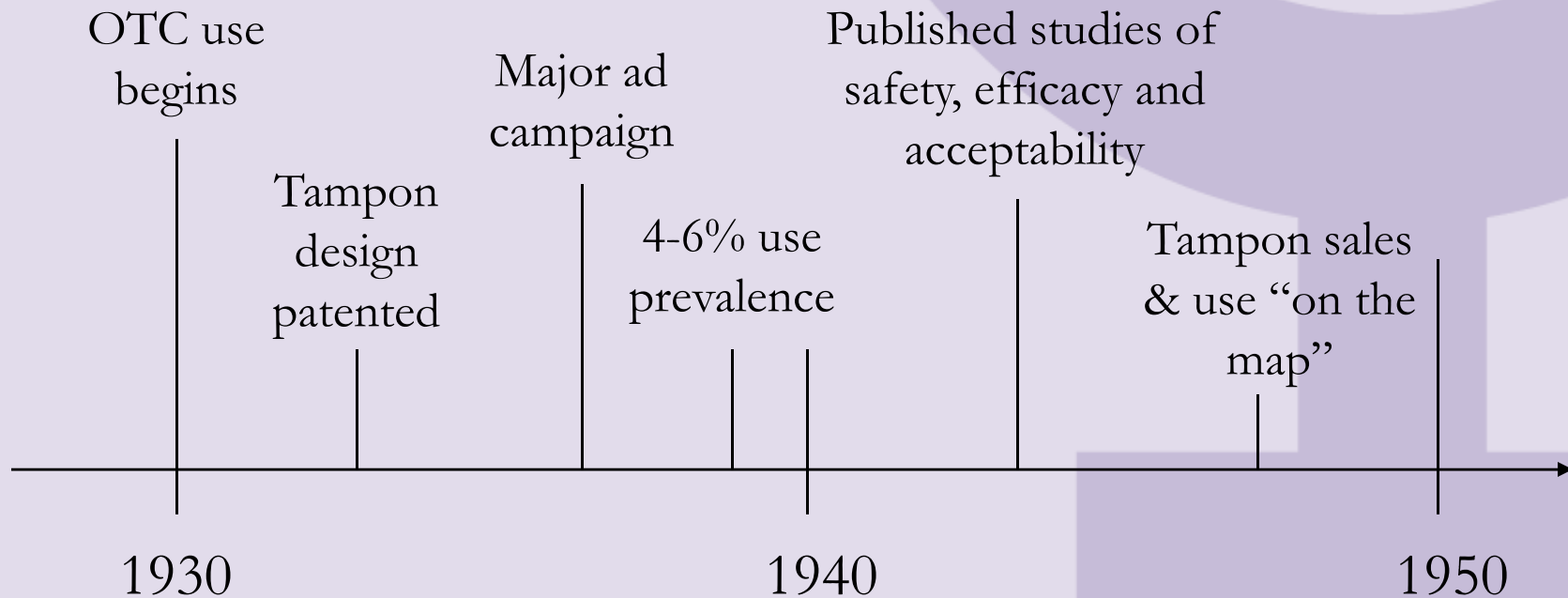
Historically, introducing new technologies has been hampered by:

- 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



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 and PrEP – 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)



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



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!