

# **You Want Me To Use *What?*: Rectal Microbicide Acceptability**

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# Caveat

- Rectals and vaginals

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# Why Do We Need a Microbicide?

- Existing methods - condoms and mutual monogamy - depend upon the cooperation of a person's sexual partner
  - Many people believe condoms (as well as abstinence, monogamy) will decrease their sexual pleasure
  - Others have had negative experiences with condoms: breaking, slipping, not available, or one or the other partner not motivated to use them
- ♀ Violence, coercion, and economic dependency in relationships make it hard for women to "negotiate" condom use or to leave a partnership that puts a woman at risk



# How would we use microbicides?

- As primary protection for individuals and/or couples unable or unwilling to use condoms consistently
- Along with condoms for extra protection
- As lubricant to increase sensation and pleasure



# Acceptability

- Can have a highly efficacious product, but... needs to be used
- to be used it needs to be ACCEPTABLE
  - an effective microbicide is an acceptable microbicide
- how do we know if it's acceptable? What makes a product like this acceptable?



# Microbicide Acceptability Research

- Quantitative and qualitative studies designed to assess the factors associated with acceptability and how they operate in the interplay between sexual risk and a given microbicidal product



# Microbicide Acceptability

- *Trying, continuing and maintaining use of a product*
- what makes a product “acceptable?”
  - vehicle associated factors
  - application associated factors
  - use associated factors
  - **the context of risk**



# Vehicle Associated Factors

- The product itself
  - formulation: gel, cream, foam, suppository, tablet, film
  - color: clear, translucent, “tinged,” colored
  - odor: flowers, fruit, musk, odorless
  - taste: fruity, minty, tasteless, “mediciney,” “metallic”



# Application Associated Factors

- The applicator and the process of applying the product
  - type of applicator: prefilled, fillable, re-useable, disposable, portability
  - type of tube (if there is one): single dose, multi-dose
  - timing of application: prior to sex, waiting period for efficacy, length of efficacy
  - Ease of use: prior product use (efficacy: lubes, douches/enemas)
  - environmental issues: privacy, temperature



# Use (and User) Associated Factors

- How the product “acts” during use (before, during, and after sex)
  - bothersomeness of:
    - leakage during/after sex
    - dryness, stickiness, wetness
    - Volume of product
- Product function: HIV/STD prevention
  - pregnancy, in the case of vaginal microbicides
- How long the product “lasts”
- Cost, accessibility, packaging, SEs



# Use-Associated Factors (2)

- Partner acceptability
  - Impact on sexual pleasure
  - Product “stealth”
  - Power dynamics (power, dependence, decision making)
  - Different types of sexual partnerships (e.g., main, casual, commercial)
  - Serostatus of partners



# Use-Associated Factors (3)

- How might typical sexual or hygiene practices be impacted by microbicide use (or... how might they impact the effectiveness of the microbicide)?
  - Use of prescribed and nonprescribed sex enhancing drugs (e.g., Viagra, crystal meth)
  - Means of drug administration (e.g., cocaine inserted rectally)
  - Sexual site sequencing (whether cunnilingus or anilingus precedes or follows penetration – or both)
  - Position during sex (e.g., how often and for how long)
  - Use of sex toys
  - Facilities for pre and post sex hygiene



# The Context of Risk:

## Key Issues that Affect Microbicide Acceptability

- Partner attitudes / response to product
- Accessibility: cost, access, ability
- Decision-making: balancing risk of not using with risk of using
- Behavioral “willingness” to use microbicides as a function of:
  - Risk perception
  - Sexual context, including partner and norms



# Cultural factors

- context of risk
  - body attitudes?
  - role in relationship?
  - partnership?
  - empowerment or dependency?
  - covert use?
- product use stigma or lack of access
- ♀ reproductive needs



# Adherence: Using Microbicides When You Need To...

- How consistently does a person correctly use a microbicide?
  - Can be consistent without correct application
  - Can correctly apply without being consistent
  - Need both
- How does a person decide s/he wants/needs to use a microbicide?
  - Under what circumstances?
  - During what kind of sex?
  - With which partner(s)?
  - At what point can s/he stop, if ever?



# Summary

- What makes a person a microbicide user?
- What qualifies as the appropriate context(s) for microbicide use?
  - Person-related
  - Partner-related
  - Product-related
  - ... Something else?
- What makes for a good rectal microbicide?
  - What makes for a good vaginal microbicide?
  - Can one product be used for both?
- How do we make it acceptable and effective?



# We Need You (and your opinions)!



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