Condom Use Errors/Problems Survey

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For sexually active persons wanting to prevent sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and pregnancy, condom use for all sexual episodes is necessary. Consistent use of the male, latex condom is an effective method of reducing the risk of transmitting and acquiring many STIs, including HIV infection, and unintended pregnancy (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [CDC], 2009; Holmes, Levine, & Weaver, 2004). However, consistently using condoms is not sufficient—condoms must also be used correctly (CDC, 2009; Crosby, DiClemente, Holtgrave, & Wingood, 2002; Steiner, Cates, & Warner, 1999). Indeed, evidence suggests that condom failure typically stems from user error rather than product defect (Graham, Crosby, Sanders, & Yarber, 2005). Thus, identifying prevalent user errors and problems can be a valuable starting point toward the goal of promoting improved quality of condom use (Crosby, Yarber, Sanders, Graham, & Arno, 2008).

Description

The Condom Use Errors/Problems Survey (CUES) is a comprehensive assessment of errors and problems that people may experience when using male condoms that may lead to condom failures. Errors such as forms of incorrect use (e.g., putting condom on after starting sex) and problems such as breakage or slippage, erection difficulties, and discomfort are assessed using the CUES. The questionnaire has been refined through use in several studies involving samples of adolescent and adult men and women recruited from STI clinics, college students, rural men from a random telephone sampling, and participants from an online survey (e.g., Crosby, Milhausen, Sanders, Graham, & Yarber, 2008; Crosby, Sanders, Yarber, Graham, & Dodge, 2002; Graham et al., 2006; Sanders et al, 2003; Sanders, Milhausen, Crosby, Graham, & Yarber, 2009; Yarber, Graham, Sanders, & Crosby, 2004; Yarber et al., 2005). We

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have two versions: (a) Condom Use Errors/Problems—Men (M-CUES), for men who placed the condom on themselves, and (b) Condom Use Errors/Problems—Women (W-CUES), for women who placed condoms on their male partners. Both versions are presented in the Exhibit.

The CUES assesses the last three times a condom was used during the past 3 months as the recall period. The CUES has also been used to assess use errors and problems the last time the condom was used or during all occasions of condom use during a specified time period. We used a limited event and time frame because accuracy of recall is considered vital (Graham et al., 2005). However, researchers are encouraged to adopt a recall period that reflects their study goals and objectives.

The survey can be used to measure condom use errors and problems during either penile-vaginal or penile-anal sexual intercourse. As seen in the CUES versions presented below, a blank space is provided before the word “ intercourse” so that researchers can tailor the measure to assess the specific behavior of interest (i.e., penile-vaginal intercourse or penile-anal intercourse).

Response Mode and Timing
Respondents indicate whether or not each condom use error or problem occurred during the last three times they used and applied a male condom and, if so, if it occurred on one, two, or three occasions. The survey takes an average of 10 minutes to complete.

Scoring
Although analysis of individual items provides greater insight, summative scores of error items and problem items can be calculated. Error Items are 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 9, 10, and 11. Problem Items are 5, 8, 12, 13, 14, 15, and 16. For a recall period based on the last three times a condom was used, the summative error score indicates the total number of times errors were reported (minimum 0, maximum 27 [9 errors × 3 occasions]). Items 1, 3, and 4 are reversed scored such that a no response is scored as 3, one occasion scored as 2, two occasions scored as 1, and all three occasions scored as 0 (for an example of this scoring, see Crosby, Milhausen, et al., 2008). Alternatively, an error occurring during any of the last three occasions or that occurred at least once during a specific time period could be scored a 1 and a correct condom use or no problem is scored as 0 (Crosby, Sanders, et al., 2002; Milhausen et al., 2009).

Reliability
Reliability refers to the consistency of a measure within the same subject under the same conditions. It is usually measured in terms of internal consistency and test-retest reliability. Behavioral measures such as the CUES do not easily lend themselves to such evaluations, as they are not measuring a trait or construct assessed with multiple questions. Instead, the items are designed to measure distinct behavioral experiences. Making one type of error is not assumed to correlate with making other errors. Relative to test-retest, the same person may have different behavioral experiences over time; test-retest assessments may not be highly correlated over time unless the person has the same behavioral experiences. Although it is possible that a person who reports a specific error or problem at “test” may also be inclined to the same error/problem in the future “retest” (assuming that taking the CUES does not alter the behavior), this has not been evaluated longitudinally with the CUES.

Validity
The survey items have evidence of content and face validity because they were informed by widely cited condom use guidelines (CDC, 1998; Warner & Hatcher, 1999). Our studies have found, for example, that respondents who reported previous instruction on correct condom use were found to have lower error scores than those who had not had such instruction (Crosby, Sanders, et al., 2002), and correlations have been reported between errors and specific problems, such as incomplete use and erection difficulties (Graham et al., 2006) and using sharp objects to open the package and condom breakage (Yarber et al., 2004).

References


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Condoms


Exhibit

Condom Use Errors/Problems Survey

Condom Use Errors/Problems Survey—Men (M-CUES)

Directions: The questionnaire is designed for a man who has used male condoms at least three times in the past three months for ________ [Researchers choose penile-vaginal (penis in vagina) or penile-anal (penis in rectum/butt)] intercourse and who put the condom on his penis all of the three times. Thinking about the last three times you (not your partner) put the condom on your penis, indicate whether or not you engaged in the behavior or if the event happened and, if so, how often it occurred.

1. For the last three times you used a condom for ________ [Researchers choose: penile-vaginal or penile-anal] intercourse, did you check for visible damage before having ________ intercourse?
   ___ no
   ___ if yes, did you do it on 1 occasion, on 2 occasions, or on all 3 occasions?
     ___ I did it on 1 occasion
     ___ I did it on 2 occasions
     ___ I did it on all 3 occasions

2. For the last three times you used a condom for ________ intercourse, did you put it on the wrong side up and have to flip it over?
   ___ no
   ___ if yes, did you do it on 1 occasion, on 2 occasions, or on all 3 occasions?
     ___ I did it on 1 occasion
     ___ I did it on 2 occasions
     ___ I did it on all 3 occasions

3. For the last three times you used a condom for ________ intercourse, did you leave space at the tip of the condom when putting it on?
   ___ no
   ___ if yes, did you do it on 1 occasion, on 2 occasions, or on all 3 occasions?
     ___ I did it on 1 occasion
     ___ I did it on 2 occasions
     ___ I did it on all 3 occasions

4. For the last three times you used a condom for ________ intercourse, did you squeeze the air out after putting it on?
   ___ no
   ___ if yes, did you do it on 1 occasion, on 2 occasions, or on all 3 occasions?
     ___ I did it on 1 occasion
     ___ I did it on 2 occasions
     ___ I did it on all 3 occasions

5. For the last three times you used a condom for ________ intercourse, did you lose or start to lose your erection while putting it on?
   ___ no
   ___ if yes, did you do it on 1 occasion, on 2 occasions, or on all 3 occasions?
6. For the last three times you used a condom for ________ intercourse, did you use a condom without a water-based lubricant such as K-Y jelly or spermicidal cream (meaning the condom did not have lubricant on it and you or your partner did not put any on it)?
   ___ no
   ___ if yes, did you do it on 1 occasion, on 2 occasions, or on all 3 occasions?
       ___ I did it on 1 occasion
       ___ I did it on 2 occasions
       ___ I did it on 3 occasions

7. For the last three times you used a condom for ________ intercourse, did you also use an oil-based lubricant, such as Vaseline or baby oil, with the condom?
   ___ no
   ___ if yes, did you do it on 1 occasion, on 2 occasions, or on all 3 occasions?
       ___ I did it on 1 occasion
       ___ I did it on 2 occasions
       ___ I did it on 3 occasions

8. For the last three times you used a condom for ________ intercourse, did you lose or start to lose your erection after ________ intercourse had begun while using the condom?
   ___ no
   ___ if yes, did you do it on 1 occasion, on 2 occasions, or on all 3 occasions?
       ___ I did it on 1 occasion
       ___ I did it on 2 occasions
       ___ I did it on 3 occasions

9. For the last three times you used a condom for ________ intercourse, did you let it contact sharp jewelry, fingernails, piercings, or teeth anytime before or during ________ intercourse?
   ___ no
   ___ if yes, did you do it on 1 occasion, on 2 occasions, or on all 3 occasions?
       ___ I did it on 1 occasion
       ___ I did it on 2 occasions
       ___ I did it on 3 occasions

10. For the last 3 times you used a condom for ________ intercourse, did you start having ________ intercourse without the condom and then put it on later and continued ________ intercourse?
    ___ no
    ___ if yes, did you do it on 1 occasion, on 2 occasions, or on all 3 occasions?
       ___ I did it on 1 occasion
       ___ I did it on 2 occasions
       ___ I did it on 3 occasions

11. For the last time you used a condom for ________ intercourse, did you start having intercourse with it on and then take it off and continue having ________ intercourse without it on?
    ___ no
    ___ if yes, did you do it on 1 occasion, on 2 occasions, or on all 3 occasions?
       ___ I did it on 1 occasion
       ___ I did it on 2 occasions
       ___ I did it on 3 occasions

12. For the last three times you used a condom for ________ intercourse, did it break during ________ intercourse?
    ___ no
    ___ if yes, did it do it on 1 occasion, on 2 occasions, or on all 3 occasions?
       ___ I did it on 1 occasion
       ___ I did it on 2 occasions
       ___ I did it on 3 occasions
13. For the last three times you used a condom for ________ intercourse, did it slip off during ________ intercourse?
   ___ no
   ___ if yes, did it do it on 1 occasion, on 2 occasions, or on all 3 occasions?
   ___ it did it on 1 occasion
   ___ it did it on 2 occasions
   ___ it did it on 3 occasions

14. For the last three times you used a condom for ________ intercourse, did it slip off as you were taking your penis out of the ________ [vagina or anus/rectum/butt]?
   ___ no
   ___ if yes, did it do it on 1 occasion, on 2 occasions, or on all 3 occasions?
   ___ it did it on 1 occasion
   ___ it did it on 2 occasions
   ___ it did it on 3 occasions

15. For the last three times you used a condom for ________ intercourse, did you have any problems with the way it fit?
   ___ no
   ___ if yes, did I on 1 occasion, on 2 occasions, or on all 3 occasions?
   ___ I did on 1 occasion
   ___ I did on 2 occasions
   ___ I did on 3 occasions

16. For the last three times you used a condom for ________ intercourse, did you or your partner have any problems with the way it felt?
   ___ no
   ___ if yes, did it happen on 1 occasion, on 2 occasions, or on all 3 occasions?
   ___ it happened on 1 occasion
   ___ it happened on 2 occasions
   ___ it happened on 3 occasions

Condom Use Errors/Problems Survey—Women (W-CUES)

Directions: The questionnaire is designed for a woman who has used a male condom at least three times in the past three months for ________ [Researchers choose penile-vaginal (penis in vagina) or penile-anal (penis in rectum/butt)] intercourse and who put the condom on her partner’s penis all of the three times. Thinking about the last three times you (not your partner) put the condom on his penis, indicate whether or not you engaged in the behavior or if the event happened and, if so, how often it occurred.

1. For the last three times you used a condom for ________ [Researchers choose: penile-vaginal or penile-anal] intercourse, did you check for visible damage before having ________ intercourse?
   ___ no
   ___ if yes, did you do it on 1 occasion, on 2 occasions, or on all 3 occasions?
   ___ I did it on 1 occasion
   ___ I did it on 2 occasions
   ___ I did it on all 3 occasions

2. For the last three times you used a condom for ________ intercourse, did you put it on the wrong side up and have to flip it over?
   ___ no
   ___ if yes, did you do it on 1 occasion, on 2 occasions, or on all 3 occasions?
   ___ I did it on 1 occasion
   ___ I did it on 2 occasions
   ___ I did it on 3 occasions

3. For the last three times you used a condom for ________ intercourse, did you leave space at the tip of the condom when putting it on?
   ___ no
   ___ if yes, did you do it on 1 occasion, on 2 occasions, or on all 3 occasions?
   ___ I did it on 1 occasion
4. For the last three times you used a condom for ________ intercourse, did you squeeze the air out after putting it on?
   ___ no
   ___ if yes, did you do it on 1 occasion, on 2 occasions, or on all 3 occasions?
      ___ I did it on 1 occasion
      ___ I did it on 2 occasions
      ___ I did it on 3 occasions

5. For the last three times you used a condom for ________ intercourse, did your partner lose or start to lose his erection while you were putting it on his penis?
   ___ no
   ___ if yes, did he do it on 1 occasion, on 2 occasions, or on all 3 occasions?
      ___ he did it on 1 occasion
      ___ he did it on 2 occasions
      ___ he did it on 3 occasions

6. For the last three times you used a condom for ________ intercourse, did you use a condom without a water-based lubricant such as K-Y jelly or spermicidal cream (meaning the condom did not have lubricant on it and you or your partner did not put any on it)?
   ___ no
   ___ if yes, did you do it on 1 occasion, on 2 occasions, or on all 3 occasions?
      ___ I did it on 1 occasion
      ___ I did it on 2 occasions
      ___ I did it on 3 occasions

7. For the last three times you used a condom for ________ intercourse, did you also use an oil-based lubricant, such as Vaseline or baby oil, with the condom?
   ___ no
   ___ if yes, did you do it on 1 occasion, on 2 occasions, or on all 3 occasions?
      ___ I did it on 1 occasion
      ___ I did it on 2 occasions
      ___ I did it on 3 occasions

8. For the last three times you used a condom for ________ intercourse, did your partner lose or start to lose his erection after ________ intercourse had begun while using the condom?
   ___ no
   ___ if yes, he did on 1 occasion, on 2 occasions, or on all 3 occasions?
      ___ he did it on 1 occasion
      ___ he did it on 2 occasions
      ___ he did it on 3 occasions
      ___ not sure

9. For the last three times you used a condom for ________ intercourse, did you let it contact sharp jewelry, fingernails, piercings, or teeth anytime before or during ________ intercourse?
   ___ no
   ___ if yes, did you do it on 1 occasion, on 2 occasions, or on all 3 occasions?
      ___ I did it on 1 occasion
      ___ I did it on 2 occasions
      ___ I did it on 3 occasions

10. For the last three times you used a condom for ________ intercourse, did you start having ________ intercourse without the condom and then put it on later and continued ________ intercourse?
    ___ no
    ___ if yes, did you do it on 1 occasion, on 2 occasions, or on all 3 occasions?
       ___ I did it on 1 occasion
       ___ I did it on 2 occasions
       ___ I did it on 3 occasions
11. For the last time you used a condom for ________ intercourse, did you start having intercourse with it on and then take it off and continue having ________ intercourse without it on?
   ___ no
   ___ if yes, did you do it on 1 occasion, on 2 occasions, or on all 3 occasions?
   ___ I did it on 1 occasion
   ___ I did it on 2 occasions
   ___ I did it on 3 occasions

12. For the last three times you used a condom for ________ intercourse, did it break during ________ intercourse?
   ___ no
   ___ if yes, did it do it on 1 occasion, on 2 occasions, or on all 3 occasions?
   ___ it did it on 1 occasion
   ___ it did it on 2 occasions
   ___ it did it on 3 occasions
   ___ not sure

13. For the last three times you used a condom for ________ intercourse, did it slip off during ________ intercourse?
   ___ no
   ___ if yes, did it do it on 1 occasion, on 2 occasions, or on all 3 occasions?
   ___ it did it on 1 occasion
   ___ it did it on 2 occasions
   ___ it did it on 3 occasions
   ___ not sure

14. For the last three times you used a condom for ________ intercourse, did it slip off while your partner was taking his penis out of your ________ [vagina or anus/rectum/butt]?
   ___ no
   ___ if yes, did it do it on 1 occasion, on 2 occasions, or on all 3 occasions?
   ___ it did it on 1 occasion
   ___ it did it on 2 occasions
   ___ it did it on 3 occasions
   ___ not sure

15. For the last three times you used a condom for ________ intercourse, did your partner have any problems with the way it fit?
   ___ no
   ___ if yes, did he on 1 occasion, on 2 occasions, or on all 3 occasions?
   ___ he did on 1 occasion
   ___ he did on 2 occasions
   ___ he did on 3 occasions
   ___ not sure

16. For the last three times you used a condom for ________ intercourse, did you or your partner have any problems with the way it felt?
   ___ no
   ___ if yes, did it happen on 1 occasion, on 2 occasions, or on all 3 occasions?
   ___ it happened on 1 occasion
   ___ it happened on 2 occasions
   ___ it happened on 3 occasions