

CHAPS Expert Think Tank Seminar Evaluation report



Condom access & condom failure @ Lesbian & Gay Foundation, Manchester, 28th July 2004

Everyone at the seminar has been invited by the Terrence Higgins Trust (Gay Men's Sector Development Team). The aims of the seminar were that attendees:

- Know which behaviours contribute to condom failure (eg. using spit as a lube).
- Know the needs associated with those behaviours (eg. knowing spit splits condoms, having access to water-based lube, skills in using)
- Know of interventions that can reduce condom failure need.
- Agree the contents of an "ideal condom pack" that can reduce the largest amount of condom failure need (and therefore reduce condom failure behaviours and therefore reduce condom failure).
- Understand the methods and consequences of rationing condom packs.
- Know better how to increase gay and bisexual men's accessibility to appropriate condoms and lubricant.

25 people booked to attend
18 arrived (1 left part-way through the day)
17 people returned evaluation forms

Part 1: BEFORE

1. How much do you already know about interventions to increase access to condoms and lubricant?

6% Little or nothing
18% Some
71% Lots
6% Expert

2. How much do you already know about interventions to reduce condom failure?

0% Little or nothing
12% Some
71% Lots
18% Expert

ONLY ONE PERSON CONSIDERED THEMSELVES EXPERT ON BOTH QUESTIONS 1 & 2.

3. What, in your opinion, are the major obstacles to reducing condom failure when they are used for anal intercourse between men?

- Lack of campaigns around usage. Not being able to engage with MSMs.
- Getting info. to gay men re. reducing risks.
- Education. Availability.
- Knowledge.
- Strong condoms are safer. Making sure expiration date is OK. Proper way to use.
- Men often don't check that condoms are still intact - it's like "once they're on, that's enough". Despite knowing there is a big range of condoms available, I wonder if men really think that there's any difference between them.
- Ensuring condoms are available at the time of need. Providing condoms to young men for their first fucks. Ensuring lube is always available. Reaching poorer / less well educated men.

- How to use - lack of lubricant, knowledge.
- Info about use of lubricant/ change of condom. Negotiation skills and self-esteem.
- Men having access to lube and not using spit. Reducing the proportion of condom wearers engaging in PAI for over half an hour with same condom.
- Spur of moment - spit not lube. Too little lube in packs.
- Use of spit. Lack of lube.
- Access to lube.
- Increase the size of the lube sachet from 10ml to 15ml or 18ml.

4. How feasible do you think it is to INCREASE gay men's access to CONDOMS in the UK in the future?

- 0% Not at all feasible
- 41% Fairly feasible
- 59% Very feasible

5. How feasible do you think it is to INCREASE gay men's access to LUBRICANTS in the UK in the future?

- 0% Not at all feasible
- 41% Fairly feasible
- 59% Very feasible

ALL RESPONDENTS ANSWERED QUESTIONS 4 & 5 IDENTICALLY.

6. Has your recent work involved actions intended to increase the proportion of anal intercourse that features condoms?

- 53% Yes, many actions
- 41% Yes, a few actions
- 6% No

7. Has your recent work involved actions intended to reduce the proportion of condoms that break?

- 41% Yes, many actions
- 47% Yes, a few actions
- 12% No

8. What are you personally hoping to get out of today?

- Find out what schemes are available nationally and to share good practice.
- What happens nationally.
- Debate the need/ effectiveness of [?] condom distribution schemes.
- Knowledge of other agencies work in this area. A way forward to increase condom / lube availability.
- Knowledge of increasing access to condoms and lube.
- Knowledge. National guidelines.
- Other people's thoughts on increasing access to condoms.
- Some better understanding of countrywide condom provision ie. Extra-strong vs standard and free vs charged.
- Insight into how other people (and their agencies) view condom use.
- Have a debate, and consensus not to ration condoms.
- End to thickness debate - consistency of messages across regions. Greater buying power to reduce costs.

- A bit more informed on condom failure.
- Increase expertise around HIV and gay men's needs.
- Hear and share views with other professionals.
- Coherent expert advice that front-line workers can use.
- Better understanding of issues affecting access to condoms and lube.
- A train ride home and lunch.

9. Which of the following roles do you carry out? (tick as many as apply)

- 100% Health promoter
- 24% Researcher
- 6% GUM provider
- 0% Commissioner
- 18% Policy maker
- 18% News media
- 6% Trainer

ALL PARTICIPANTS WERE 'HEALTH PROMOTERS' - 11 TICKED 'HEALTH PROMOTER' ONLY. 6 GAVE OTHER ANSWERS ALSO.

10. Which area of Britain do you work in?

- 6% South
- 47% London
- 6% Midlands & Eastern
- 35% North
- 6% Wales

PART 2 - AFTER

11. Do you know more about the BEHAVIOURAL CAUSES of condom failure than you did when you arrived?

82% No more than when I arrived
18% A little more
0% Much more

12. Do you know more about the PREVENTION NEEDS associated with condom failure than you did when you arrived ?

59% No more than when I arrived
41% A little more
0% Much more

13. Do you know more about INTERVENTIONS you could make to reduce needs associated with condom failure than you did when you arrived?

23% No more than when I arrived
65% A little more
12% Much more

14. Did the meeting reach a consensus on the contents of an ideal condom pack?

94% NO
6% YES

IF YES, 15. Do you agree with that consensus?

Yes, wholly agree
100% Yes, agree with reservations
No, do not agree

16. Do you know more about INTERVENTIONS to increase ACCESS to condoms than you did when you arrived?

29% No more than when I arrived
65% A little more
6% Much more

17. Do you know more about METHODS of rationing condom packs than you did when you arrived?

53% No more than when I arrived
47% A little more
0% Much more

18. Do you know more about the CONSEQUENCES of rationing condom packs than you did when you arrived?

47% No more than when I arrived
47% A little more
6% Much more

19. What, in your opinion, are the major obstacles to reducing condom failure when used for anal intercourse between men?

- Lack of knowledge on the part of gay men of the factors that increase failure.
- Education. Lack of lube.
- Lube
- Access to lube. Understanding of how to use condoms and lube.
- Knowledge of use, condom type, lube.
- Access to appropriate lube in areas not served by gay men's health project.
- Problems accessing appropriate lube. Lack of knowledge of reasons for failure.
- Info. On the length of sex. More lube in packs.
- Access issues. Lube increased in packs.
- Non-availability of condoms and lube. Not using spit. Not using same condom for long episodes of AI.
- Not enough free condoms and lube.
- Greater availability.
- Education. Stigma. Access to water-based lube.
- LEQs, language barriers, education.
- Lack of funding from government for bigger campaigns - TV, cinema etc.

20. How feasible do you think it is to INCREASE access to CONDOMS for gay men in the UK in the future?

- 0% Not at all feasible
- 47% Fairly feasible
- 53% Very feasible

6 PEOPLE STAYED WITH FAIRLY
8 PEOPLE STAYED WITH VERY

2 WENT DOWN FROM VERY TO FAIRLY
1 WENT UP FROM FAIRLY TO VERY

21. How feasible do you think it is to INCREASE access to LUBRICANTS for gay men in the UK in the future?

- 0% Not at all feasible
- 35% Fairly feasible
- 65% Very feasible

5 PEOPLE STAYED WITH FAIRLY
9 PEOPLE STAYED WITH VERY

1 WENT DOWN FROM VERY TO FAIRLY
2 WENT UP FROM FAIRLY TO VERY

22. Looking back at your answer to Question 8 (what you were hoping to get out of today), how much was that satisfied?

- 0% Worse than when I arrived
- 12% Not satisfied at all
- 71% Partly satisfied
- 18% Well satisfied

23. If someone you know were invited to a future Expert Think Tank Seminar, would you recommend attending?

94% Yes
6% Maybe
0% No

24. What would have made the event more likely to have met its aims?

- The assumption that the seminar would agree a "gold standard" for a condom pack needed to begin with a discussion of whether such a standard was desirable/feasible / wanted.
- Group reaching more of a consensus.
- More people attending.
- Wider range of participants - not all HP professionals.
- Government representative! Public health official?
- People from Scotland and non-THT organisations.
- Representatives from more statutory organisations (PCTs) - gay men's health promoters for a more rounded debate.
- A country-wide overview of the current ways in which condoms / lube are distributed to gay men to highlight gaps.
- Over-view of the London situation - re. rationing of condoms and lube.
- Some aims very simplistic for "expert think tank" - 1st half of the day more of a training event. We should all know reasons for condom failure.
- It was fine - it gave us all a chance to share views and have an open debate, which was great.
- Perhaps a bit more time?

25. What other comments do you have about this event?

- Promoted debate - worthwhile.
- Useful, informal - needs more input from other agencies.
- Very [unreadable] and worthwhile day.
- I greatly enjoyed it - as Gerard said at the start, it was a chance to spend more time than we usually allow ourselves to look at a vital part of our work in depth.
- It was well organised and facilitated. The venue wasn't ideal acoustically.
- Size of seminar was about right. Less would have been too few but more would have been less effective.
- Location was good, food nice but not labelled. Pleasant facilitators. Feel that London is very different from the rest of the country in views on this subject - would have been good to hear from projects who do NOT provide a free condom scheme.
- Well organised, great food. Social networking opportunity.
- Useful for networking. Room was oppressive, lightly air conditioning. Subject interesting as was input from other agencies in / out of London.
- Please be more imaginative about warm-up - induction exercise.
- Not a very good venue (room was too cavernous).
- Needs to be more gay men's health projects invited - not many were present other than those from the larger cities.

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