

Condom Use Survey for Different Avenues

This is completely confidential

The purpose of these questions is to help Different Avenues know more about how the packets we leave at this club are used. *All questions are optional-skip over anything you don't want to answer for any reason*

- I am:**
- a dancer
 - a patron/customer
 - a bartender or manager
 - a doorman
 - someone else _____ (please describe)
- I have been doing this/coming here for:**
- a couple days
 - about 1 month
 - about 6 months
 - about 1 year
 - more than a year

- I am:**
- 18-24
 - 25-29
 - 30-39
 - 40-49
 - 50 or older

- Each week I take about:**
- 1 packet with condoms, lube
 - 5 packets
 - more than 5, about _____ (how many?)
 - no packets because I've
 - never seen them
 - don't need them
 - missed out because they were all taken
 - someone _____ told me not to take the packets

The packets are useful to me personally because:

- I use the condoms, lubricant and other materials
- I use the condoms only
- I use the lubricant only
- I don't find the packets useful personally

The packets are most useful to this club because they:

- make patrons aware that they should use condoms when having sex
- make dancers aware that they should use condoms when having sex
- provide lubricant for dancers
- can be given to families, partners, friends or children of people in this club
- I don't think that the packets are useful to the club.

Different Avenues is:

- a group of people who give out free condoms
- a group that can provide a lot of services
- a group I would like to know more about
- a group that educates other people just like I do
- I don't know

I consider myself to be:

- straight (heterosexual)
- gay or lesbian (homosexual)
- bisexual
- hadn't really thought about it so I don't know
- _____ (describe)

Since I've been coming to this club I think I:

- have sex with more people
- have more sex with my partner
- have the same amount of sex/nothing changed
- have sex less often
- I don't ever have sex so this question does not apply to me.

I have put an "X" for one of the above options and I'd like to tell you more about my answer so you can understand why things have changed for me: _____

In the past week I:

0 times 1 time 2 times several times

- had vaginal sex without a condom:
- had anal sex without a condom:
- gave a blow job without a condom:
- got a blow job without a condom:
- had sex without condoms w/ someone I didn't know:
- had sex without condoms w/ someone I consider my partner:

My biggest problem with condoms is that:

- they break
- they are expensive
- they don't work
- they don't feel good
- dates at the club won't use them
- I don't seem to have them when I need them
- my partner(s) won't use them
- I don't ever use them so I don't know.

When I think about HIV or other diseases that are out there I:

- think that I could never catch this kind of disease
- think that I could catch HIV, but it's unlikely
- worry that I could have something but I'm scared to get tested
- worry that I could have something and so I plan to have a check up and get tested
- know that I am living with HIV
- know that I have another infection _____

True or False

- There is no treatment for HIV _____
- 1 in 20 District residents are HIV-positive _____
- Lesbians are safe from HIV _____
- Most people I know use condoms _____
- I can tell by looking if someone has HIV _____

Please write any comments or suggestions you might have:

Condon Survey Analysis 2005

From April 7 to June 30, we asked dancers and others in the exotic dance clubs where we do weekly outreach to fill out a 1 page double sided survey. We collected 33 surveys. 27 were by dancers, 4 by “someone else” and 1 each by bartender and patron. Of the dancers’ surveys, 25 had more info than simple condom use. We got surveys at all four locations, 9 at R, 5 at T, 7 at O and 12 at Y. The differing numbers at each venue shows the different relationship we have with each club – at NE locale for example we have the best relationship with dancers and management, and this is the only club where we are allowed access to the dressing room where many dancers spend time. Respondents were not always able to fill out the survey in complete privacy, and also knew we would have them immediately after completion, so even though they were confidential and anonymous, it’s possible this affected their responses. It’s also important to keep in mind that this is snapshot of dancers and others in the clubs. We can tentatively presume that the percentages of various responses and such are reflective of the larger population in the clubs, but this is not necessarily the case.

The most interesting results are related to the respondents’ perceptions of Different Avenues and the activities we do. We also got a better understanding of who we are working with from the surveys, including age, sexual identity, perceived risk for HIV and knowledge of HIV, and more. If we consider the surveys as reflective of the larger pool, we see that most dancers are under 30 (85%), and a third of the total being under 25. We also see that a large percentage of dancers identify as gay/lesbian/homosexual or bisexual, 30% all together. The dancers are knowledgeable about HIV, but most are not very concerned about it.

Surprisingly, our survey indicated that almost half of the dancers didn’t take the condom packs we take each week. A variety of reasons were given for this, and at the same time almost all dancers thought the condom packs were useful in some way. Most dancers said they felt the condom packs were useful because they “make patrons aware they should use condoms.” Close to half of dancers didn’t know what Different Avenues is, and about a third only thought of us as giving out condoms.

All together this seems to point to a need for us to increase people’s knowledge of Different Avenues among the dancers. We also know that the dancers appreciate and support our work in the clubs. It seems we can do a better job of finding out other ways we could support dancers besides condoms, since so many don’t take them. We also may be in a unique position to further educate the patrons at the club, which is something dancers indicate they would support.

Age

Most dancers (52%, or 13) reported being between ages 25 & 29. 32% (8) said they were 18-24 while 8% each (2) said they were 30-39 and 40-49. That means only 16% of dancers who responded were over the age of 30, with 84% being 29 & younger.

Length of time at club

Twenty dancers indicated the amount of time they’ve been at the club. The vast majority (75%) said they’d been there longer than a year. Three said they’d been there about a month, and one each responded “a couple days” and “about a year.”

Risk self-assessment

Only 16 dancers assessed their risk for HIV or other infections. Most (50%) said they think they “could catch HIV, but it’s unlikely.” More than a third (37.5%) were worried that they “could have something,” with two-thirds of those planning to get tested, while another third (2) said they’re “scared to get tested.” 12.5% of dancers responding said they “could never catch this kind of disease.”

Usefulness of condoms to the club

Respondents could mark multiple answers on this question, and 30 respondents answered this part, including 25 out of 27 dancers. Only one dancer replied that the condom packs are not useful to the club. Most respondents (66%) believed the packs are most useful “because they make patrons aware that they should use condoms when having sex,” with 53% of dancers marking that as well. 43% of dancers thought the packs were most useful because they make dancers aware that they should use condoms. 33% of dancers said that the condom packs were useful in more than one way. A significant number, 20%, of dancers felt the condom packs are useful because they can be given to family, friends, partners and such.

Number of packs taken

A surprising revelation came from this question, with the majority of respondents (14), all but one of whom were dancers, said they did not take any packets each week. This represents 48% of dancers who filled out the surveys. Most of these dancers (a total of 9, or 70%, 33% of all respondents) said they didn’t take the packs because they didn’t need them. Breaking these numbers down, 9 (70%) of those dancers said they are heterosexual, while only 15% said they are homosexual. 2 dancers (15%) did not answer any other questions but that they don’t take the packs because they don’t need them. Of the heterosexual, non-pack-taking dancers, 2 said they have no risk of HIV infection, 1 said they could catch HIV but it’s unlikely, 2 said they were scared they had something but were afraid to get tested and 1 said she was worried she had something and planned to get tested. Of the homosexual dancers not taking packs, 1 said that she thought she could catch HIV but it’s unlikely, and one said she’s worried she has something and plans to get tested. That means that 30% of the dancers not taking packs were concerned they might have something, even though all of them said they don’t need condoms. 8 dancers, about 30%, said they take 1 pack each week, and 4, about 15%, said they take 5 packs a week. That means just under half (about 45%) of dancers surveyed said they take condom packs each week, while slightly more (about 48%) do not take them. No respondents reported taking more than 5 packs a week.

Sexuality

52% (13) of dancers responding described their sexuality as “straight/heterosexual,” while 30% described themselves as bisexual (20%) or homosexual (10%). All respondents who were “someone else” and the one patron respondent described themselves as “straight/heterosexual,” while the one bartender respondent described herself as “bisexual.”

Sexual encounters

Sixteen dancers did not mark any column under the table asking about unprotected sex in the past week. This either can mean none of them had unprotected sex in any way, or they didn’t answer, so it’s unclear. However, of those who did answer (10), all said they had had unprotected vaginal sex – with most (half) having had it five or more times, two respondents had unprotected vaginal sex twice, and three had it once. Only two responded that they had had unprotected anal sex in the past week, 1 or 2 times. Three had given unprotected oral sex, while one had received it. None marked having unprotected sex with an unknown person in the past week, while three marked having sex without a condom with their partner – all three indicated having it twice.

Length of employ or patronization compared to taking of packets and unprotected sex

Although many respondents did not answer the question about length of employment or patronization at the club, sixteen dancers and one “someone else” answered “more than a year.” One dancer and two “someone else” responded “6 months” and 2 dancers and one someone “someone else” answered “about 1 month.” Only one respondent, a dancer, had been at the club for a couple of days. The correlation between length of employment, taking of packs, and the amount of unprotected sex is interesting, and would be an area for further exploration: it may be that the longer dancers are working at a club, the more knowledgeable about HIV and condoms they are, and the more condoms they use, but that may also not be the case. Of the 15 dancers (79% of responding dancers) who said they were working at the club for more than a year, a plurality (6) said they use condoms and lube from the packs and reported no unprotected sex in the past week. Slightly fewer, 4 said they take condoms and lube but did have unprotected sex in the week prior. Interestingly, all three of these dancers who said they don’t find the packs useful also reported no unprotected sex in the past week – and this could be

related to the fact that some dancers report being “celibate.” Finally, of those dancers, the two who take only lube, one said she’d had unprotected sex in the previous week, one said she had not. The small numbers of the other respondent categories make it hard to analyze, but the one dancer who said she only worked at the club for a couple of days also said she doesn’t find the packs useful, and had had unprotected sex in the past week. One dancer who reported being at the club about a month had never seen the condoms, while the other who responded to that answer said she uses all the contents of the packs and has had no unprotected sex recently.

HIV self-knowledge

Twenty one dancers answered questions in the self-knowledge assessment section. Basically half of these (10) answered 3 out of 4 answers correctly. Ten others answered 4 out of 4 correctly. Only one dancer who answered in this section got less than 3 out of 4 right, and she scored 1 out of 4. Three “someone else” respondents who answered these questions got 3 or 4 out of 4 right. Overall, this shows a basic level of knowledge about HIV in the clubs. Eight dancers responded “true” to the statement “most of my friends use condoms, while 10 responded false – this question was meant to measure peer evaluation of condom use, which can impact someone’s desire to use condoms.

My biggest problem with condoms is that...

Seventeen dancers reported their biggest problem with condoms. Three reasons equally shared the majority of the responses: five dancers each said “they break,” “they don’t feel good,” “I don’t ever use them so I don’t know.” One dancer each said “the dates at the club won’t use them” and “I don’t seem to have them when I need them.” Interestingly, “they are expensive” was cited by a bartender and “someone else.” All other non-dancer responses were either “they don’t feel good” or “they break.” No one responded with “they don’t work” or “my partner(s) won’t use them.”

Knowledge of Different Avenues

This question revealed surprising answers as well. 25 dancers answered this question. A plurality of those (10, or 40%) marked the response “I don’t know,” in response to the question “Different Avenues is...” Since 15 dancers marked other answers, it seems that 60% of dancers who responded feel they know something about Different Avenues. Four dancers did indicate that they “would like to know more” about Different Avenues, and four also marked that “Different Avenues is a group that educates other people just like I do,” indicating that at least 16% of respondents are informal peer educators. The second largest group (8) of respondents identified Different Avenues as “a group of people who give out free condoms.” Two of those respondents marked other answers as well, revealing that almost a third of respondents don’t know anything about the organization other than that it gives out condoms. Five responding dancers said they see DA as “a group that can provide a lot of services.”

Club’s influence on sexual activity

The vast majority of dancers who responded to this question (15 out of 25) said “I have the same amount of sex since I’ve been coming to this club.” Seven dancers (28%) said that they “have more sex with their partner” while only two responded that they “have sex with more people,” the same number (2) that said “I don’t ever have sex so this question does not apply to me.”

Condom Survey Analysis 2006

From April 20 to May 26 2006 we collected surveys in the venues where we do weekly outreach. Reflecting changing relationships with the venues, we got a fairly equal number of surveys from each of the four locations where we conducted the surveys. 30 people filled out surveys – one was a patron, two marked “someone else” and one did not identify. 26 surveys were complete by dancers. Respondents were not always able to fill out the survey in complete privacy, and also knew that we would have them immediately after completion; it’s possible this affected their responses even though the surveys were confidential and anonymous. It’s also important to keep in mind that this is snapshot of dancers and others in the venues. We can tentatively presume that the percentages of various responses are reflective of the larger population in the clubs, but this is not necessarily the case.

The overall picture, when compared to the last administration of this survey a year ago, is very positive. Particularly of note, more dancers report taking condom packs, more dancers report knowledge of Different Avenues’ program, and more say their peers are using condoms. Many dancers noted their positive opinions of Different Avenues, and their active use of condoms to protect themselves from HIV and other STDs. Demographically, little has changed, as most dancers continue to indicate that they are under 30 (85%) and many identify as bisexual, lesbian, or gay (35%). Many dancers still have worked for more than a year. While most show a high level of knowledge of HIV, the majority continue to see it as a possibility that is unlikely to affect them, in part because of their own condom use and other methods of prevention.

If the survey can be taken as a snapshot representative of the larger picture in the venues where we conduct outreach activities, then we should feel very positive about the progress we have made. Most dancers know what Different Avenues is, with many (45%) seeing us as a resource for more than just condoms. Two thirds do take condom packs each week, and the same number think the packs are useful to clubs because they make patrons and dancers aware of the importance of using condoms when having sex.

Who are the Women Dancing in These Venues?

Age

Most dancers indicated their age 18-24 (39%) or 25-29 (46%); only 4 dancers reported being over the age of 30. Several dancers did not answer this question, but the answers are similar to our findings last year. In that set of dancers, 52% were between 25 and 29, 32% were between 18 and 24 and 16% were over thirty. Since the time difference was only a year, these numbers do not indicate that in the period between surveys many dancers necessarily left the work because of age. However, if we can assume that the same demographic profile has been the case for a while, and will continue to be that way, an interesting question to ask is what do the women working in the venues do when they stop dancing because of age. We have some anecdotal evidence from clients, but it may be something worthy of follow and deeper investigation. Naturally, we also know anecdotally that women will also stop dancing and pursue other employment for other reasons besides age, and that too may be worth understanding better.

Sexual Orientation

Also similar in demographics are responses from dancers about their sexual orientation. Last year we found close to a third of the women filling out the survey identified as bisexual, gay or lesbian, and it is about the same this year. 27% indicated being bisexual, while 8% said they were lesbian or gay. 58% indicated being heterosexual, including one respondent who marked “heterosexual” but added “but I like to have fun.”

Length of time “doing this”

Again this year, we see that many of the women have been dancing for over a year (35% or 9 out of the total). 5 reported working at venues for about 6 months, while only one marked that they had danced for about a month. This is slightly different from the last survey, when 75% of respondents indicated having been dancing for more than a year. It’s important that in our work we reach both groups – those who have been dancing for a long time and those who are relatively new. The former can play an important mentoring role and also give us meaningful

feedback and input on our work, while the latter may have had less exposure to HIV prevention information and resources. There is no particular correlation between age and length of time dancing, as those women who had been working in venues for less than a year were evenly distributed between the two age groups under 30.

Dancers and Condoms

Number of Packs Taken

We saw these numbers change dramatically from last year when we conducted the survey. Whereas at that time a huge plurality of the dancers filling out surveys (48%) reported taking no packs each week, during this survey the majority of women report taking at least 1 pack weekly. Almost a quarter of those surveyed said they take five packs a week, which is also significant, and an increase over last year when only 15% reported taking that many. All told, 66% of those who completed surveys said they take condoms each week. Of those who do not take packs, more than half (57%) said they don't need them, while equal numbers said they have never seen them or have missed out because they were all gone. This information correlates with our experiences on outreach, where we have seen dancers requesting greater numbers of condom packs over the past year.

How are the Condoms Useful?

Although 8 dancers reported not taking any packs on a weekly basis, 22 dancers marked what they found personally useful in the packs. Only two dancers said they do not find the packs personally useful. The majority (58%) said they use the condoms, lubricant, and other materials that we distribute during outreach. A fifth of respondents said they use condoms only, while a small portion (8%) use only lubricant. Even the 15% of dancers who didn't report using any of the materials we distribute say they feel the packs are useful to the club. Women could mark more than one response regarding how they thought the packs are useful, with the majority saying that the most important role the packs play is to make patrons (69%) and dancers (62%) aware of the importance of using condoms. A quarter of respondents found the packs useful because they can be given to others, like family and friends, while 19% said they are useful by providing lubricant to dancers. Not a single respondent to the survey felt that the packets were not useful to club in some way. Half of the dancers indicated they thought the packets were useful in multiple ways.

Problems with Condoms

Almost half (42%) of respondents did not indicate any problem with condoms – which could mean they have no problems or simply chose not to answer the question. Of those who did answer, the plurality (31% of total respondents) noted “they don't feel good” as their main problem with condoms. This is different from last year when this answer did not rank among the top responses. Condom breakage was the second most popular answer (12%) following by the expense (8%). A number of dancers marked more than one answer, and some added their own problems. “None of the above,” “They make me dry,” “Allergic,” and “Other” were all handwritten by women in the margin. One dancer each said their biggest problem was “don't have them when I need them,” “partner won't use them,” and “I don't ever use them so I don't know.” No dancers said “They don't work” or “Dates at the club won't use them.” The number of dancers not answering this question is similar to the number last year, and this consistency could mean that a number of dancers do not feel they have any problems with condoms.

More than Just “Condom People”

Another significant outcome from this survey compared with the last is the change in knowledge of Different Avenues and our program. Almost half (45%) of respondents to the survey identified Different Avenues as a group offering many services, more than twice the percentage that gave that answer in the last survey. Similarly, the number of women answering “I don't know” to this question decreased markedly from 40% a year ago to 19% with this survey. This shows not only that more dancers are aware of Different Avenues, but that they are more fully aware of our programs, which are more than just handing out condoms. In fact, only 3 dancers (12%) marked only “a group that gives out free condoms” in this section, a big difference from the last round of surveys. Also of note is the number of dancers who indicated “a group that educates others like I do” because this shows an awareness of being informal peer educators – 23% expressed this, compared to 16% a year ago.

12% of women filling out the survey said they would like to know more about Different Avenues, while 19% marked more than one answer.

Sex, HIV, Risk & Knowledge

Sexual Practices

The influence of dancing in the venues on dancers sexual habits remained very similar to what we found last year. The majority of women (54%) still say that they have the same amount of sex since starting to work in the clubs. 12% said they have more sex with their partner, while 23% stated they have sex less often. Only one person indicated having more sex with more people since working at the club, and only 2 respondents said they do not have sex. A couple dancers chose to add comments to this section, describing their situation in more detail. "I am myself, nothing has changed since I've started dancing," wrote one, while another expressed a similar sentiment: "Things are the same. I've dealt with the same person for a while now." Another noted her observations about customers at the venues: "Dancing makes you more aware of how easily men are seduced by sex." And one expressed thanks for our efforts: "I got a very good doctor from yall and got a good check up."

Most women (50%) completing the survey indicated that they had not had any sex acts without a condom in the past week. However, 23% did say they had had unprotected vaginal sex in the past, two thirds of that number saying it was once, one third twice. 15% said they had had sex with a partner without a condom. Only two respondents marked having unprotected anal sex in the past week, 1 or 2 times. No respondents said they had had unprotected sex with someone they didn't know in the previous week.

HIV Risk Self-Assessment

In assessing their risk for HIV and STDs, it was interesting to see the importance that several respondents put on emphasizing what they do to minimize risk. "I make sure I am protected all the time" and "I know it's out there and I use protection" were both answers hand written on this part of the survey, along with "I know it's truly possible." This sentiment was reflected in the 35% of dancers who stated that catching HIV is "possible by unlikely," including one dancer who wrote next to that phrase "because I practice safe sex." This demonstration of knowledge of the link between condom use and protection from HIV and STDs is significant. 10 dancers did not answer this question, representing 39% of the whole, a result that is hard to interpret; however, it is approximately the same percentage as the survey conducted a year ago. This could mean that dancers do not see HIV as a risk, or could be a simple explanation that this question is on the back side of the survey, and perhaps many dancers simply filled out the front. 12% of dancers (19% of those who filled out this question) said they thought they "could never catch this disease, the same percentage as answered they were "Worried I have something and plan to get tested." One dancer said she knew she had another infection: herpes, while no dancers stated that they know they are living with HIV, or are worried they have something and are afraid to get tested.

HIV Knowledge

Dancers' knowledge of HIV continues to be high. Over half of the respondents answered all four questions in this section correctly, while 31% got three out of four right. Almost all respondents (23) filled out this section, and we see a huge increase in reported peer usage of condoms over last year – 65% this year vs. 32% last year. This is measured by the question "Most people I know use condoms" which is answered true or false. These results show a significant change in community norms, as only 19% said most people they know do not use condoms.

Comments from Dancers

Many dancers chose to write something in the comments section at the end of the survey, all of which are positive. "Keep doing what you all do!" "Keep doing what you all are doing because you probably saved tens of thousands of lives every day! Thank you!"

"This is a great thing you're doing by helping to educate people about abusing sex rituals (condoms, etc). I wish you the best." "Thank you for the service you provide to patrons and dancers." "Thank you for being concerned."