

Condom social marketing for men who have sex with men (MSM) in the city of São Paulo, Brazil: an ex-ante and post-ante statistical evaluation analysis

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Issues: 17.5% of MSM in São Paulo (SP) report not using a condom in the last 30 days. Only one partner (23.0%) and condoms unavailable (15.3%) are main reasons for not using a condom.

Description: The main objective of this study is to evaluate the impact of a condom social marketing project (H.COM.H) for MSM in SP. The two main components of the project were reducing condom stigma and increasing exposure of the project's condom brand (Hora H – “In the Heat of the Moment”). A baseline (n=229) and post-ante (n=306) survey questionnaire with 17 questions about condom accessibility, preferences, and behaviors were applied in 2004 and 2005. Main profiles about the condom market in 2005 for MSM and statistical significant changes between condom stigma and Hora H recall indicators were analyzed (p-value<0.05).

Lessons learned: 49.0% (CI:43.3-54.7%) of MSM in SP buy condoms at pharmacies, 12.0% (CI:8.3-15.7%) receive from condom promoters, and 11.3% (CI:7.7-14.9%) receive at health posts. In comparison to 2004, no significant difference in reporting always using a condom was found in 2005. For market indicators, significant increase in the use of the governmental condom brand during last intercourse, from 5.2% (CI:2.3-8.1%) in 2004 to 23.3% (CI:18.5-28.1%) in 2005. For condom stigma, those reporting that condoms impair sex drive reduced from 49.6% (CI:43.0-56.1%) in 2004 to 36.0% (CI:30.5-41.5%) in 2005. Also, significant increase in brand recall. From 10.1% (CI:6.1-14.0%) in 2004 to 25.0% (CI:20.1-29.9) in 2005. For those who recalled Hora H, significant exposure in specific channels of communication reported: mouth to mouth (47.4%), Hora H stands (14.1%), and Discos (14.1%).

Recommendations: Changing behavior in a short-period of time (12 months) is difficult. Behavioral change requires long-term exposure to sexual health lifestyle messages. Therefore, condom social marketing short-term goals should be focused on reducing condom stigma and increasing exposure of social condom brand.