

Student condom use sporadic, study says

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For the Oregon Daily Emerald

By the year 2005, the world will need one billion or more condoms, according to World Health Organizer Patrick Friel. But how many of those will be put to use?

A recent study released by the National Institute for Healthcare Research revealed that 70 percent of the college students surveyed failed to use condoms consistently.

"It just shows how so many college students think they're immortal," said University freshman Lisa Grundstedt.

The survey was based at a New York state university where 488 students were polled. The NIHR study revealed that only 28 percent of the students surveyed could be classified as consistent users, 50 percent as sporadic users and 20 percent as nonusers.

"The data we have presented here show that the barriers (to using condoms) are more closely related to intoxication, emotional concerns, communication and relationship problems, and a lack of confidence in one's abilities to deal with these issues," researchers said.

How does this information relate to University students?

"Young adults seem to go through a 'rites of passage' to explore aspects of their sexuality, especially the twentysomething age group," said Health Education Director Joanne

Frank. "But that doesn't mean that they can't be responsible with their sexual freedom."

A study relating to disease and AIDS prevention conducted on campus in 1990 revealed that 12 percent of those surveyed abstained from sexual practices, 24 percent used condoms or dental dams and 26 percent discussed their sexual history with their partners.

The study also revealed that 44 percent reduced their number of partners, 47 percent were more selective in choosing partners and 59 percent discussed contraception with their partners before sexual intercourse.

The Student Health Center provides a variety of services on campus, including the distribution of health information, pamphlets on safer sex, and HIV testing.

"Students here are very HIV and AIDS aware. There is a constant flow of students in and out of the student testing center," Frank said. "But there are some students who interpret a negative HIV test as a passport to go back into denial and not practice safer sex."

Hogan Sherrow, a senior, agrees: "If you are not mature enough to have responsible sex, you are not mature enough to have sex at all."

The NIHR's study also showed that those classified as sporadic users tended to drink more alcohol. The study suggests that heavier use of alcohol can be directly related to the inconsistent use of condoms.

"I think people use alcohol as an excuse to be irresponsible," said freshman Richard White.

Can nonassertiveness lead to death, disease or pregnancy? The NIHR study says yes. The researchers said, "Nonusers... lacked confidence in their abilities to discuss and insist on condom use to negotiate and resolve any conflict about their use; they also feared partner rejection."

Tania Isoton, a graduate student, said education isn't the problem. "We're taught about the dangers of sex in school, but lack of confidence and self-esteem threads itself through our lives."

Proper use and application of condoms were also questioned. The researchers noted that the ability to use condoms properly was not a problem in all groups.

The researchers concluded, "This indicates that the mechanical aspects of condom use are not important barriers in their actual use."

The study further suggests that people's ability to assert themselves as well as to experience possible rejection are major factors in whether they will insist on condom use.

College students were chosen as the subjects for research because they are typically more competent in communication and social skills. Of these presumably more effective communicators, less than one-third used condoms consistently.

Dow Jones average rose briefly then fell after elections

NEW YORK (AP) — Stocks, bonds and the dollar zoomed up Wednesday in euphoria over Republican Election Day victories, but the party didn't even last through lunch.

Prices fell back, with most stocks actually closing lower, as the grinding insecurity over the economy that has plagued the markets for months returned.

Economists and traders said investors are much more concerned about whether inflation

is spinning out of control and how high the Federal Reserve Board has to raise interest rates to cool the economy and, thus, curb price increases.

Andrew Schwarz, who trades stocks on the American Stock Exchange for AGS Specialist Partners, said, "We had lots of buy orders this morning."

"There was a euphoric feeling," he said. "People wanted to own stocks and the market shot up very rapidly. It didn't go

away, but the realization came back that the Federal Reserve is meeting next week and we could be looking at another hike in interest rates and inflation. The market came back to reality."

Although investors like the GOP's promises of lower taxes and cuts in government spending and regulation, there is much uncertainty about how those promises will be fulfilled.

"Until we see legislation that

looks like it's going to have a serious impact, I don't think the new Congress is going to weigh very heavily on Wall Street," said David Blitzer, chief economist at Standard & Poor's Corp., the business information company.

The Dow Jones industrial average gained just 1.01 points to 3,831.75. It had been 38 points higher just after the 9:30 a.m. EST open. Most other stock indexes declined.

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