

Utilisation of the Female Condom by Women in Chainda catchment area of Lusaka District, Zambia

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Abstract: The study focused on Utilisation of the female condoms by women in Chainda catchment area of Lusaka district, Zambia. This study attempted to answer the research question ‘What are the factors associated with utilisation of the female condom by women in Chainda catchment area?’ A cross-sectional analytical study design was used to determine utilisation of female condoms among women aged between 15 and 49 years of Chainda catchment area in Lusaka District and Quantitative data was collected using a structured questionnaire which comprised of close ended questions. The major findings were that: (a). 44% of the women agreed that female condoms were easy to use. (b). 48% of the women agreed that they would use the female condom when having sex with any partner (c). 45.1% of the women agreed that they would use the female condom even if the male sexual partners disclosed that they had HIV/STIs while (d). 63% of the women strongly agreed that they would use a female condom when having sexual intercourse with men having multiple sexual partners. The conclusions came out of the findings as stated below: (i)The women were of the view that female condoms were easy to use.(ii) The women would use the female condom when having sex with any partner.(iii) The women agreed that they would use the female condom even if the male sexual partners disclosed that they had HIV/STIs.(iv)The women would use a female condom when having sexual intercourse with men having multiple sexual partners. The conclusions gave rise to the recommendations as stated below: (a). More female condoms should be distributed to women in this study area because they are easy to use.(b) There is need to keep encouraging women to use female condom when having sex with any partner.(c) There is need to continue encouraging women to use the female condom even if the male sexual partners disclosed that they had HIV/STIs (d) There is need to keep encouraging women to use female condoms when having sexual intercourse with men having multiple sexual partners.

Keywords: Chainda, Female condoms, HIV/AIDS, Lusaka, Utilisation, Women.

I. INTRODUCTION

The female condom is one of several overlooked and under-used reproductive health technologies having the potential to expand choice in family planning and HIV/STI prevention programmes [1] [2]. The World Health Organisation [3], cited the female condom as an essential strategy for pregnancy and HIV/STI prevention. The method also accords women greater control over negotiating protection of their health [4] though it has not been fully recognised, resulting in inadequate marketing [5] and under-funding of programmes.

Globally, 220 million women experience an unmet need for family planning [6]. According to [7], expanded access to family planning services in Sub-Saharan Africa would result in a reduction in unintended pregnancies, a three quarters reduction in unsafe abortions, a 69% decrease in maternal death, and a 57% decrease in newborn death. [7] went on to state that women in Sub-Saharan Africa are at an increased risk of contracting STIs including HIV and are twice as likely to be living with HIV compared to men. Female condoms used as a family planning method enables women to limit the sizes of their families by reducing rates of unintended pregnancies as well as reducing the need for unsafe abortions [8]

According to the United Nations Programme on HIV and Acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS) [7], the female condom was introduced to Zambia in the 1980s. The method provides equally effective protection against STIs, including HIV and Hepatitis B, similar to the male condom. The female condom is a sheath of rubber that is inserted in the vagina before sexual contact. An inner ring fits inside the vagina around the cervix (like a diaphragm) and an outer ring covers the outside labia [9]. [9] instruct that after its use, the user must twist and gently pull it from the vagina after the man ejaculates. Several organisations both in private and public sector, including donors, researchers, product developers, and social marketers are involved in supporting, researching, and implementing promotion of the female condom.

Many studies indicate low utilisation of the female condom, and this is in agreement with a survey that was conducted in Zambia by the National AIDS Council [10]. The survey aimed at identifying factors that are impeding the use of the female condom and suggest strategies that could increase its use. According to the findings of the survey, the low use was attributed to the female condom not being readily available as compared to the male condom [10]. Other findings were that the female condom was not adequately promoted and information on it was not readily available in any form of media. Hence, it was recommended that Zambia needed to do more to ensure that female condoms were easily accessible to both women and men.

According to Ministry of Health [11], majority of women suffer a disproportionate impact of HIV/AIDS. The Ministry goes on to say that these conditions have implications for the well-being of women and the female condom is the only technology available that women can use as an alternative to the male condom. Although the Zambian government has demonstrated a strong commitment to expanding family planning services; consistent female condom use overall is low [12]. In an attempt to improve the utilisation of the female condom, the [12] report revealed that the Zambian government through the Ministry of Gender is committed to protecting women's rights, fight gender based violence and reduce gender inequalities by conducting national promotional campaigns that help to identify successful approaches, and altering the social environment that may support female condom uptake.

Despite the knowledge about female condoms being almost universal, its utilisation among women is still low. United Nations Fund for Population activities (UNFPA) in 2014 hosted a media round table discussion in Zambia, which attracted both local and international journalists to give influential media professionals covering public health, development and foreign affairs issues, guidelines and tools to bring the female condom into their reporting [13]. This was in order to increase awareness of its benefits and putting women's health first. According to [13] only 40 to 50 million female condoms were being procured every year and distributed worldwide. This is a small number to cater for all the women in the world. If female condoms are provided in sufficient quantities, with proper education on their use women and couples would have more options for protection against STIs and unwanted pregnancies, and thus saving lives in the process. In line with policies and guidelines on family planning use in Zambia, Chainda health centre in Lusaka district provides different types of family planning services, including the female condom. However, among the family planning services being provided, the female condom has remained to be the least choice among both married and unmarried women [14].

This study looked at utilisation of the female condoms by women in Chainda catchment area of Lusaka district in Zambia. Many scholars have not yet conducted research in this area, hence its importance in filling the gap that exist in terms of knowledge.

II. BODY OF ARTICLE

Statement of the problem

Nursing staff at Chainda health centre in Lusaka offer information, education and communication (IEC) on all family planning services at the centre daily, and in the community during outreach activities. However, data for the centre as

obtained from Lusaka District Health Office (LDHO) show that the female condom is the least choice in comparison to other family planning methods as illustrated in Table 1. The factors associated with the female condom being the least chosen family planning method in the catchment area were not clear, and hence this study was conducted.

Table 1: Chainda health centre family planning methods.

Methods	2019	2020	2021
Intrauterine contraceptive device	33 %	34 %	37 %
Jadelle	86%	84 %	75 %
Depo Provera	100 %	100%	100%
Noristerent	90 %	84 %	73 %
Microgynon	67 %	72 %	53 %
Microlut	63 %	47 %	41 %
Male condom	100%	100 %	100 %
Female condom	5.6 %	7.2 %	3.5 %

Source: (LDHO, 2020)

Methodology

A cross-sectional analytical study design was used to determine utilisation of female condoms among women aged between 15 and 49 years of Chainda catchment area in Lusaka district.

Population of the study

The study population were women age 15 to 49 years old of Chainda catchment area in Lusaka district who accessed health services from the health facility

Sample size

The total number of women who seek family planning services from the health facility exceeds 10,000, [15]. Therefore, the sample size was obtained using [16] formula.

$$N = Z^2 P (1 - P)/E^2$$

Where;

N = Sample size

Z = Standard normal deviation of 1.96 Corresponding to 95% confidence interval.

P = is the prevalence of female condom use will be taken as 0.5%

E = Standard error, which is 5%

$$N = 1.96^2 \times 0.5 (1 - 0.5)/0.05^2$$

$$= 384$$

Thus, the sample size for quantitative component of this study was 384 while the qualitative had 20 women.

Research instrument

Quantitative data was collected using a structured questionnaire which comprised of close ended questions

Data analysis

After data collection, the questionnaires were sorted, responses verified, coded and plotted on a data master sheet to allow for easier analysis. Questionnaire interviews data was entered in Microsoft excel for cleaning of data for any errors and later exported to SPSS V.23 for analysis. Each questionnaire was checked for completion. Open ended questions were put in categories and then coded. Closed ended questions were also coded and entered into the statistical package for social science (SPSS) version 23 for analysis. Tables and graphs were then used to explain and interpret the results. Means with associated standard deviations were used to summarize and describe continuous variables. Chi-square test was also used to test association between the dependent variable and independent variables.

Analysis of parameters

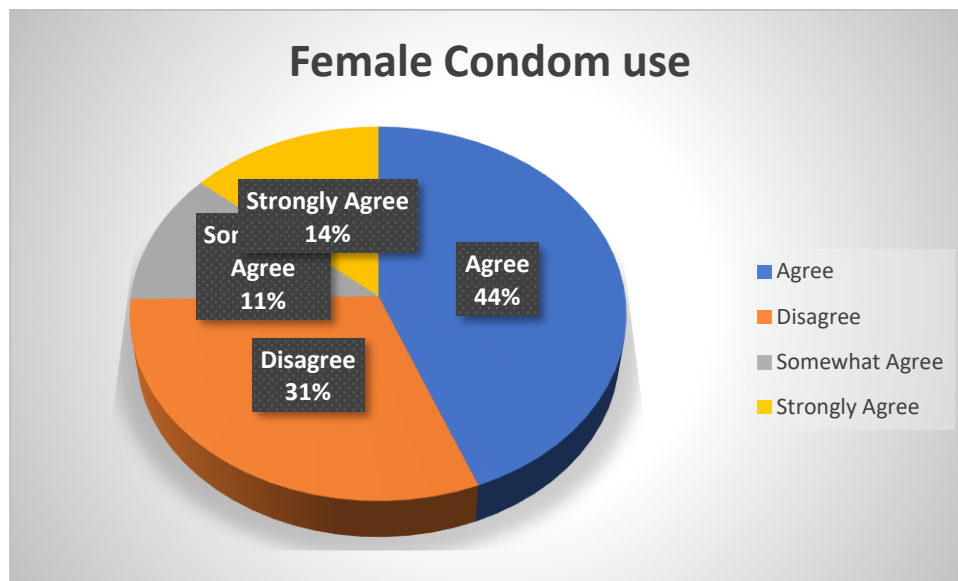


Figure 1: Female Condom use

The study participants were asked whether female condoms were easy to use. The figure above shows the responses.

From the above figure, 44% of the women were of the view that female condoms were easy to use compared to the 31% who did not agree that female condoms were easy to use.

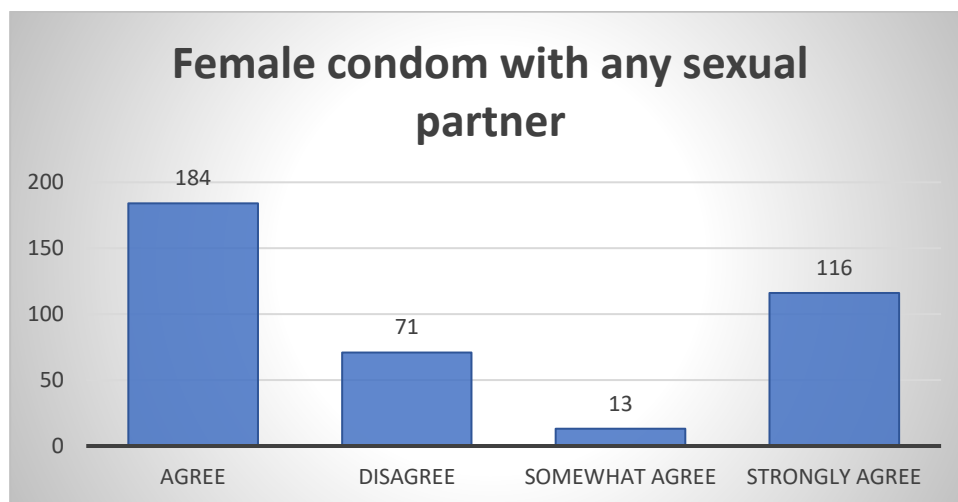


Figure 2: Female condom use during sexual intercourse with any sexual partner.

Above figure shows that 48% of the women agreed they would use the female condom when having sex with any partner compared to the 18.5% who would not.

Table 2: Women female condoms use with men who are HIV/STIs positive

		(n=384)	
Statement	Response	n	%
I would use female condoms if I had sex with someone who told me that he has HIV/STIs.	Agree	173	45.1
	Disagree	40	10.4
	Somewhat Agree	9	2.3
	Strongly Agree	162	42.2

The table above shows that 10.4% would still not use a female condom even if the male sexual partners disclosed that they had HIV/STIs while 45.1% insisted that they would use the female condom.

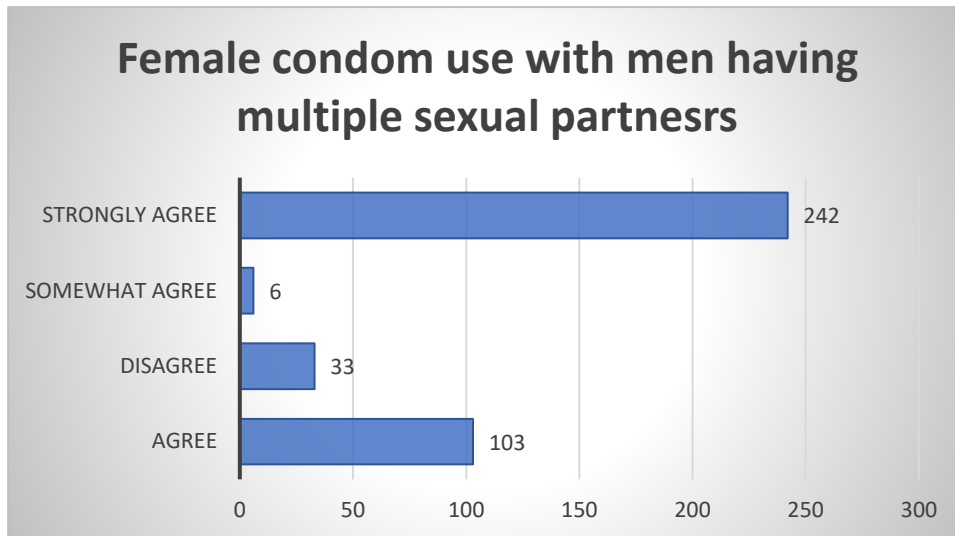


Figure 3: Female condom use with male partners having multiple sexual partners.

According to figure 4 above, 63% of the women strongly agreed that they would use a female condom when having sexual intercourse with men having multiple sexual partners while 9% of the respondents disagreed.

III. FINDINGS

The major findings were that:

- a. 44% of the women agreed that female condoms were easy to use.
- b. 48% of the women agreed that they would use the female condom when having sex with any partner
- c. 45.1% of the women agreed that they would use the female condom even if the male sexual partners disclosed that they had HIV/STIs while
- d. 63% of the women strongly agreed that they would use a female condom when having sexual intercourse with men having multiple sexual partners.

IV. CONCLUSION

In this study conclusions came out of the findings as stated below:

- i. The women were of the view that female condoms were easy to use
- ii. The women would use the female condom when having sex with any partner
- iii. The women insisted that they would use the female condom even if the male sexual partners disclosed that they had HIV/STIs
- iv. The women would use a female condom when having sexual intercourse with men having multiple sexual partners

V. RECOMMENDATION

- a. More female condoms should be distributed to women in this study area because they are easy to use.
- b. There is need to keep encouraging women to use female condom when having sex with any partner
- c. There is need to continue keep encouraging women to use the female condom even if the male sexual partners disclosed that they had HIV/STIs
- d. There is need to keep encouraging women to use a female condom when having sexual intercourse with men having multiple sexual partners

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