

# The Pleasure Principle: Impulsivity Overpowers Condom Use Efficacy among Men who have Sex with Men (MSM)

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Despite continuous efforts to control the prevalence of HIV/AIDS in the Philippines, the rate of the spread of the virus has skyrocketed. Risky sexual practices among men-who-have-sex-with-men have been identified as one of the top contributors for the heightened spread of HIV/AIDS. There have been growing studies looking into self-efficacy and impulsivity as psychological factors that carry impact toward sexual practices. In the present study, both self-efficacy toward condom use and impulsivity were tested as predictors of risky sexual practices. A total of 93 MSM participated in the survey. Results of hierarchical regression analysis indicates a cooperative suppression effect, that is, the presence of impulsivity as a suppressor increases the capacity of both self-efficacy toward condom use and impulsivity in predicting risky sex. In line with cognitive-experiential self-theory, implications of the findings indicated that the automatic and pleasure-driven impulsivity overpowers the deliberative and reason-oriented ability and knowledge toward condom use in engaging in risky sex.

Keywords: Self-efficacy, impulsivity, risky sex



2015). Although the quantity of heterosexual transmissions has remained stable, the yearfaemairSYCH18ual t18uamo0 1 ngainL6

Several studies have pointed to the contribution of self-efficacy toward the increasing practice of safe sex. For example, African males and females who have high self-efficacy use condoms during their sexual encounters (Sayles et al., 2006). Men who have high self-efficacy also negotiate safer sex practices with regular or casual sex partners (Bauermeister et al., 2014). Taiwanese immigrants in the US who had low self-efficacy were more likely to have multiple sex partners, and used condoms inconsistently (Lin, Simoni, & Zemon, 2005). Thus, self-efficacy is an influential fact.04 r( )13(p)-3(owar)4rs



On the other hand, self-efficacy toward condom use reflects a rational system. In CEST, a rational system is the active and deliberative system in charge of conscious thoughts. One's knowledge, capacity, and deliberative efforts toward condom use, or self-efficacy toward condom use in general, are indicative of being part of a rational system. In addition to self-efficacy, which may be influenced by educating individuals about proper health behaviors, the individual's impulsivity can also affect his/her health behaviors—in this case, engaging in risky sexual practices.

The Condom Use Self-Efficacy Scale (Brien, Thombs, Mahoney, & Wallnau, 1994) was used to measure self-efficacy for condom use. It is a 15-item measure (4-point rating scale) that assesses one's perception of their ability to use condoms and also to discriminate among the three types of condom users: non-users, irregular, and ritualistic. Sample items include "I feel confident in my ability to put a condom on myself or my partner" and "I feel confident that I would remember to use a condom even if I were high". In our study, a higher score indicates higher condom use efficacy. In the actual data set, the measure yielded a strong reliability coefficient ( $\alpha = .759$ ).

To measure risky sexual practices, the researchers created a checklist of different risky sexual behaviors such as failure to use condoms, participating in simultaneous sex partnerships, having sex with random people, and having sex under the influence of alcohol consumption. There are 13 items in which participants responded whether they have engaged in a specific sex behavior or not over the past 12 months. (See Appendix A).

## Procedure

Through a pen-and-paper survey, we recruited male participants with an inclusion criterion of their having had sex with men over the past 12 months. Participants were recruited through snowball sampling. Initial members of the snowball sample were college students or came from salons; these participants then referred the survey to other target samples from different salons, universities, and BPO companies. Men who participated in the study were asked to give their informed consent and were assured that whatever information they disclosed would remain confidential and used strictly for research purposes.









also been found that acts that may involve potential danger could

experiential system and thus constituting the variance shared with the automatic and pleasure-driven nature of impulsivity. The fear of partner rejection and confidence that one can use a condom are in part reflective of an experiential system. Several of the attributes of an experiential system include its cognitive-affective components being organized in a rudimentary manner, making its associated behaviors pleasure-driven, in contrast to the more reason-oriented operation of the rational system. Apart from the rationality-system-related aspect of self-efficacy, which is being competent and knowledgeable toward condom use, there is also the experiential-system-related aspect, which includes the fear of rejection and confidence that one can use condoms. This fear of rejection from the partner when suggesting the use of condoms





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