

Abstract

Behavioral models that focus on an individual are often found to be inadequate in explaining people's condom use behavior. These individual-based models are criticized to be ignoring the fact that sexual activity takes place within relationships, social contexts and cultures, and thus condom use is subjected to the influence of these factors. This study tested the utility of a condom use model that incorporates individual cognitions and relationship-level factors in understanding condom use among individuals engaging in romantic relationships. In a sample of 348 sexually active dating individuals in Hong Kong, on top of individual attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control over condom use, fear of AIDS and dyadic sexual communication were found to be associated with condom use intentions. Relationship power, subjective norms, and condom use intentions fostered actual condom use while relationship commitment hindered condom use. Multi-sample invariance analysis revealed differences in the effect of perceived behavioral control, relationship power, commitment as well as dyadic sexual communication on condom use intention and subjective norms across gender and sexual orientation. Findings of the study suggested that the impact of relationship factors on individual condom use intentions as well as behavior should not be neglected as sexual behavior takes place within relationships. They are also of practical significance to the design of future safer sex campaigns.