

Gender affects reaction to HIV-prevention materials

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Various intervention strategies have been implemented to curb the rise of HIV, and a factor that might affect exposure to interventions is gender. A new study in the *Journal of Applied Social Psychology* reviewed the behavior of participants exposed to various HIV brochures. Researchers found that both men and women were likely to avoid gender-mismatched brochures. Women, however, were more likely to approach gender-matched brochures over gender-neutral brochures.

Kathleen C. McCulloch and Dolores Albarracin of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, and Marta R. Duranti from the University of Florida looked at the behavior of 350 volunteers consisting of both men and women who were African American, European American, or Latino, with over half having an average income under \$10,000.

Participants were exposed to six HIV-prevention brochures, two of which were gender-targeted and four of which were gender-neutral. The study was conducted at the Florida Department of Health in Alachua County. Participants were then given the chance to watch an HIV-prevention video and participate in an HIV-prevention counseling session.

Both men and women avoided gender-mismatched brochures. Women were more likely than men to choose brochures tailored to their gender. Overall involvement with or exposure to the female-specific brochure predicted accepting the video element of the intervention. This pattern was only the case for females, and not for males for the male-specific

brochure.

The study also found overwhelming gender differences in exposure to the intervention. Women read more brochures, were more involved in reading, and retained more information from all six brochures than did men. Women also were more deeply absorbed by the video and retained more information from it than did men.

"As the incidence of HIV is rising in the female population, understanding how to facilitate women's participation in effective HIV risk-reduction interventions is crucial to public health," the authors conclude.

Source: Wiley

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