

# Pope 'publicly distorted' science in condom row: Lancet

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One of the world's top medical journals accused Pope Benedict XVI on Friday of having distorted scientific evidence in his remarks on condom use and demanded he make a retraction.

"By saying that condoms exacerbate the problem of HIV/AIDS, the Pope has publicly distorted scientific evidence to promote [Catholic doctrine](#) on this issue," The [Lancet](#) said in an editorial.

"Whether the Pope's error was due to ignorance or a deliberate attempt to manipulate science to support Catholic ideology is unclear.

"But the comment still stands, and the Vatican's attempts to tweak the Pope's words, further tampering with the truth, is not the way forward."

The London-based journal added: "When any influential person, be it a religious or political figure, makes a false scientific statement that could be devastating to the health of millions of people, they should retract or correct the public record.

"Anything less from Pope Benedict would be an immense disservice to the public and health advocates, including many thousands of Catholics, who work tirelessly to try and prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS worldwide."

The pope made the [controversial remarks](#) last week when he travelled to Africa, the worst-hit continent for AIDS.

AIDS is a tragedy "that cannot be overcome through the distribution of condoms, which even aggravates the problems," the pope said aboard his flight to Cameroon.

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