

# HIV still a health concern in Canada, study says

June 6 2011

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Every eight hours, a Canadian contracts HIV.

To commemorate the 30th anniversary of the first diagnosis of [AIDS](#) on June 5, 2011, the Canadian Foundation for AIDS Research (CANFAR) partnered with the Social Research Centre (SRC) at the University of Toronto's Dalla Lana School of [Public Health](#) and national polling firm Strategic Counsel to gauge Canadians' knowledge and perception of the state of [HIV](#) and AIDS in Canada. The study revealed that most Canadians (93 per cent) believe they are knowledgeable about HIV and AIDS, yet only half of those surveyed consider condoms to be very effective in reducing the spread of HIV.

The study indicated that while Canadians who have had two or more sexual partners in the last year are more likely than those with only one partner to have used a condom the last time they had sexual intercourse, the majority - almost six-in-ten (57 per cent) of those with two or more partners still admit that they did not use a condom the last time they had sexual intercourse.

“It is clear that Canadians' attitudes have shifted in the past 30 years, but this hasn't necessarily affected behavior,” said Christopher Bunting, president of CANFAR. “I find it surprising that so many aren't using a condom to reduce the spread of HIV. It is critical that we as a nation understand the severity of this epidemic and engage in the fight against AIDS.”

The Public Health Agency of Canada indicates that there has been a 14 per cent increase in the number of people living with HIV in Canada from 2005 to 2008, yet the study shows that only 17 per cent of Canadians who were tested for HIV and AIDS were tested with the intention of finding out if they were infected.

“Studies show that condoms are 80 per cent effective in reducing HIV sexual transmission among heterosexuals. I was somewhat surprised that only 50 per cent of Canadians view them as ‘very effective’ and that condom use among those with multiple partners is so low,” said Professor **Liviana Calzavara**, director of the CIHR Social Research Centre in HIV Prevention at U of T’s Dalla Lana School of Public Health. “Strategies to increase [condom](#) use must move beyond individual-level education and identify interventions aimed at changing norms and culture among youth and older Canadians.”

Canadians consider HIV and AIDS a serious health concern in Canada, yet only about eight per cent of [Canadians](#) have donated to an HIV and AIDS-related organization in the past year.

Provided by University of Toronto

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