

## Girls who rely on a boyfriend for money are less likely to use condoms

February 28 2012, By Laura Kennedy

---



Young women whose boyfriends are their primary source of spending money are more likely to report that their boyfriends never use condoms, according to a study in the *Journal of Adolescent Health*.

These adolescent women may not explicitly exchange money for [unprotected sex](#), says the report, “but their relationships may be implicitly transactional.”

“We live in a consumerist society in which people may feel that they cannot belong unless they have certain things,” explains lead author Janet Rosenbaum, Ph.D., who studies sexual decision-making at the University of Maryland Population Research Center. “Teens who have needs that they feel aren’t being met may act unwisely to meet those needs.”

“Safe sex interventions and clinicians must consider economic factors that may interfere with adolescents’ practice of safe sex,” say the authors.

The new findings are based on detailed questionnaires completed by more than 700 African-American females ages 15 to 21 participating in an HIV-prevention study in Atlanta. All were unmarried and sexually active.

The [young women](#) filled out surveys at the beginning, middle, and end of the one-year study.

At the start of the study, nearly one-quarter of the participants said their boyfriend was their primary source of spending money.

Among those depending on a boyfriend for spending money, 25 percent said that their partner had not used a condom in the preceding two months. Among the other girls, who received spending money from family members, employment or other sources, only 15 percent reported having unprotected sex. Similarly, young women who discontinued receiving most of their money from their boyfriend during the study were more likely to use safe-sex behaviors.

Researchers matched the two groups on more than 75 characteristics, including education, relationship quality, and self esteem measures, so that there were no important differences between the adolescents other than their primary source of [spending money](#). Thus, the researchers say,

safe [sex](#) programs that empower young women economically may be more effective than other methods.

“The decisions that women and men make in their relationships cross socioeconomic boundaries,” concurs Elizabeth Schroeder, Ed.D., executive director of Answer, a nonprofit dedicated to comprehensive sexuality education.

“This study only looks at half of the dyad. Similar research is needed to question young men about how economic factors affect their sexual decision-making. Sexual decision-making is complicated and complex, this study tries to simplify a really, really complicated topic,” Schroeder concludes.

**More information:** Rosenbaum, J. et al. (2012). Cash, Cars and Condoms: Economic Factors in Disadvantaged Adolescent Women’s Condom Use. *Journal of Adolescent Health*, [doi: 10.1016/j.jadohealth.2011.12.012](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jadohealth.2011.12.012)

Provided by Health Behavior News Service

Citation: Girls who rely on a boyfriend for money are less likely to use condoms (2012, February 28) retrieved 26 April 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2012-02-girls-boyfriend-money-condoms.html>

<p>This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.</p>
--