

New condom could boost use, study finds

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Credit: CC0 Public Domain

A condom designed to increase sexual pleasure has the potential to increase protected sex and decrease sexually transmitted infections, a new study suggests.

The new condom, called CSD500 and not currently available in the United States, includes a gel designed to enhance erection firmness, size and duration.

The randomized, controlled study led by researchers at The Ohio State University compared CSD500 to standard condoms, and both men and women in the test condom group reported greater enjoyment. The men in the CSD500 group also indicated much greater acceptability, reporting greater ease in putting on the condom and a more natural feel. Almost 16% even said that sex felt a lot better than sex without a condom. The study appears in the *Journal of Sex Research*.

The results suggest the condom could be a powerful tool in preventing both the spread of infections and unwanted pregnancies, said the study's lead author, Maria Gallo of Ohio State's College of Public Health.

The study, supported by the National Institutes of Health, included 500 couples in heterosexual monogamous relationships in Thanh Hoa, Vietnam, where condom use is especially important given heightened perception of risks related to hormonal contraception, such as the pill, and high abortion rates. Over the course of six months, couples repeatedly reported their sexual satisfaction and pleasure through a seven-item questionnaire.

CSD500, made by Futura Medical, has been approved for over-the-counter use in more than two dozen European nations and is being sold in the Netherlands and Belgium. More recently, it was approved for use in Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. Futura Medical provided the condoms for the study but was not involved in the research.

Overcoming obstacles to condom use has widespread benefits, particularly among certain populations at highest risk for infections and [unwanted pregnancies](#), Gallo said.

"Married women account for about one-third of HIV cases in Vietnam, and most were exposed to the virus through sexual activity with their husbands. Worldwide, more than 80% of HIV cases in women result from sexual exposure to husbands or primary partners," Gallo said.

Gallo and her colleagues are interested in finding ways to increase the power women have when it comes to negotiating condom use, and protecting their health, in a variety of relationships.

"In a marriage or a long-term relationship, asking for condom use might feel like you are suggesting that the person is having sex with other partners or that the person has HIV or another sexually transmitted infection," Gallo said.

"A condom such as CSD500 could be helpful for women in established relationships because they may face less difficulty in asking a partner to wear a condom for his pleasure than for pregnancy or disease prevention."

Gallo said she could see CSD500 being useful for men who have sex with men as well, because the group is at higher risk of HIV and other sexually transmitted infections, and because of the appeal of using a condom for pleasure.

If men find sex with the CSD500 condom pleasurable, as shown with many in this study, the condom or one like it could go a long way in overcoming obstacles to protection, she said, adding that an estimated 9-37% of condoms users have had erection problems during condom application or use.

"This experience—especially during initial, formative sexual encounters—has been shown to make some men less confident about their ability to maintain an erection during [condom use](#). This can then cause a negative feedback loop of erectile dysfunction and dissuade men from attempting to use a condom again," Gallo said.

"By increasing [blood flow](#) within the penis and causing a firmer erection, CSD500 use could allow men to become comfortable and experienced with condoms, enabling them to overcome perceived or actual performance issues."

One limitation of the study is that the couples were aware of which [condom](#) they were using—a decision the researchers made in the interest of creating an experience as true to ordinary life as possible, Gallo said.

More information: M. F. Gallo et al, Effects of a Novel Erectogenic Condom on Men and Women's Sexual Pleasure: Randomized Controlled Trial, *The Journal of Sex Research* (2022). [DOI: 10.1080/00224499.2021.2024790](#)

Provided by The Ohio State University

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