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Factors Associated with Use of the Female Condom

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Black, Hispanic and white women recruited for an HIV prevention intervention were instructed in the use of the female condom and encouraged to try the device. Of the 231 women who completed the intervention, 29% tried the condom over the course of a month; 30% of those who tried it used it during at least half of their sexual encounters. Both ethnicity and age were associated with trying the device: Nearly 40% of black women and 30% of Hispanic women did so, compared with 18% of white women; 37% of those aged 25-34 tried the female condom, compared with 22% of women younger than 25. Trying the device was more likely among women living with a partner, those with a history of sexually transmitted disease infection, women who had had an HIV test, those who did not believe that the method afforded them a greater degree of overall control than did the male condom and those who had no prior knowledge of the device. Among women who used the device during at least half of their sexual encounters, 27% were black and 44% were Hispanic; 38% were younger than 25, and 43% were single. More regular users were about half as likely as less regular users to experience difficulty with insertion and one-eighth as likely to report the device slipping during use; they were more likely than less regular users to report that sex was more pleasurable with the female condom than with the male condom.

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