

VANIMO FAMILY LIFE APOSTOLATE

DO CONDOMS STOP OR SPREAD AIDS?

**INFORMATION
FROM THE AGENCIES PROMOTING CONDOMS
AS A PROTECTIVE FROM AIDS**

Vanimo Family Life Apostolate is an organization of the Diocese of Vanimo (Papua New Guinea) dedicated to the spiritual welfare of the family. Among its goals it includes the fight against the HIV virus, by promoting greater awareness of the threat of AIDS and by promoting human values.

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FOREWORD

The prevention from the HIV virus, which causes AIDS, is a topic of great interest and concern everywhere in the world. In Papua New Guinea too.

All those who have dedicated themselves to seriously study the problem of the HIV virus eradication know very well that it is necessary to use a global strategy in order to defeat AIDS. The reason is that the elements involved in such a struggle are very many, not just one. In fact, if after only twenty years of the HIV virus infection we can count more than twenty million dead, and forty million infected people, we can reasonably conclude that there are many factors helping the spread of such an infection. The HIV virus is easy to spread because in the world there is not only a lack of medicines, but also a lack of education and awareness; there is poverty and unemployment, financial interests, uncontrolled risky sex behavior, polygamy, a loss of the traditional values of family and marriage, political and economic support for false human rights like sex at any age, pornography, sex-slave rackets, pedophilia etc.

Each of these elements must be taken into account when one aims at the eradication of AIDS. To focus only on one element and to forget the others means facing tragic consequences.

Unfortunately most of the time the strategy against AIDS is summarized in the use of condoms, and forgets all of the other elements. The world propaganda from the condom producers has already succeeded in making the vast majority of people believe that condoms are the 'only' efficient means to stop AIDS. We hear everywhere slogans like: 'if you use condoms you avoid AIDS, if you don't use condoms you will get it'

In such a context it is also very easy to dismiss anybody who sees the problem in all its complexity and refuses to support condoms as the strategy for fighting AIDS. If one questions the real effectiveness of condoms as a preventive from HIV virus, then one is labelled as being responsible for the death of thousands of people, and is seen by everybody as an enemy of public health.

Recently I have been involved in a debate with our national newspaper "The National". In a letter I sent to it, I expressed my objections to a Foreign Agency, which distributed booklets to our schools in Papua New Guinea advising the children to use condoms, without any previous consultation with the parents, teachers or school Agencies.

The reaction of "The National" editor was very unprofessional. He ridiculed my letter without publishing it. What surprised me was his outright accusation that I am living in an unreal world, and worse still that I am against condoms only because of my religious beliefs.

Certainly I have my own beliefs. The Catholic Church teaches that condoms are unacceptable both before and within marriage, as both contraceptive and preventive from the HIV virus. However that was not the point, because in my letter I never mentioned my beliefs; I only tried to draw everyone's attention to the facts. 'The National's' answer showed itself to be very ideological and dogmatic. No matter what the facts are.

Unfortunately many people accept such an attitude uncritically.

The worldwide propaganda about condoms is so wide spread and manipulative that even some of those who have good reason to speak out, I mean people in the Catholic Church, remain silent or are themselves convinced that condoms are the only true solution to stop the HIV virus. Consequently some of them feel a great tension within themselves: on the one hand they strongly believe in the Christian message about chastity before marriage and faithfulness within marriage, on the other hand it seems to them that it is essential to help people, especially those who do not share our own belief, with a solution that is universally believed to be effective.

Following the debate with 'The National', our Diocesan Family Life Apostolate decided to research the reality of condoms worldwide. In order not to be biased, they relied on information mainly released by Agencies promoting condoms. They used the Internet for a good period of time, and discovered a lot of surprising information, that they had not imagined before, and which is certainly not known by the people at large.

This is why they decided to put everything in writing, and to offer the results of their research to anybody willing to gain a better knowledge of the truth about condoms, especially to those, like priests, sisters, brothers, teachers, nurses, who are responsible for the pastoral or health or educational care in my Diocese. I am very appreciative of their initiative and I hope that such a booklet will also be useful to other people living outside the boundaries of my diocese.

Such research is certainly limited: its goal is to know how people succeed in using condoms and consequently the real effectiveness of condoms in protecting people from the HIV virus. Of course a lot of other studies must be done in order to understand the whole picture: we refer especially to the morality of condoms, their social effects on marriages at large, the connection between condoms and the stop or spread of AIDS etc. However the information collected by our diocesan Family Life Apostolate is meaningful and useful at least as a start to a debate on the condoms issue.

It is important to note that all this information refers to the USA, which is one of the most committed countries for both, contraception and prevention of the HIV virus.

I admit that it is not easy to read such a booklet, because it is full of statistics. Nevertheless, those who are truly concerned with AIDS will find a great quantity of essential information, useful in order to make up one's mind and to help others to do the same.

I hope that the following pages may help everybody to successfully fight the AIDS with the most appropriate means.

+ Cesare Bonivento PIME
Bishop of Vainimo
8 Dec. 2000

NB from the Editor: The Internet references are listed chronologically at the end of this booklet, and are numbered in sequence. When it is necessary to quote them, we mention only their number. The truthfulness of this information is left to those who state it.

PART I

FAILURE RATES OF CONDOMS AS CONTRACEPTIVES

1. Since the appearance of the HIV virus in 1981, one of the first ideas in order to stop such a deadly disease was to suggest the use of condoms. At that time condoms were already in use as a contraceptive. And even though sometimes they were ineffective, they were used in order to considerably diminish 'the risk' for the woman to become pregnant. There is no doubt that the use of condoms helped to diminish the birth rate all over the world. Relying on such a result, those willing to fight AIDS suggested a worldwide use of condoms in order to stop AIDS. The main reason was: even though sometimes ineffective, they can still save a lot of lives.
2. In order to know the consequences of using condoms as prevention from the HIV virus, it is firstly necessary to know some statistics about condoms as a contraceptive.
3. According to the "Westside Pregnancy Resource Center", in USA the failure rate of Condoms as a contraceptive are as follows:

The failure rate of male condoms is around 15.7% (The failure rate of female condoms is higher: 26%). However we mustn't forget that:

- For persons under the age of 18, the failure rate is the highest among condom users: 18,4%
 - The minorities (like the Indians, the Negros, the Puerto Ricans) record the worst condom failure rate: 36.3%
 - The longer the time for using condoms the higher the failure rate of condoms. This means that if in one year's time the failure rate is 15%, at the end of four years of condom use the failure rate will be not less than 48%. The probabilities in perspective are as follows:
 - ◆ Failure rate after 1 year's time: 15% - one in 7 became pregnant
 - ◆ Failure rate after 2 year's time: 28% - one in 4 became pregnant
 - ◆ Failure rate after 3 year's time: 39% - one in 3 became pregnant
 - ◆ Failure rate after 4 year's time: 48% - half became pregnant. (23)
4. Commenting on the above written figures, "Understanding your risks" writes: "If your method of contraception has an average failure rate of 18%, over five years your likelihood of pregnancy is greater than fifty percent. During those five years, 63 out of 100 women using a diaphragm will have become pregnant at least once." (29)

NB: All the statistics mentioned in this booklet and referring to Condoms as a contraceptive or preventive from HIV virus, indicate the 'actual failure rate', which is

obtained from the behavior of all the condom users as a whole. If we refer instead to the 'perfect use failure rate', which is obtained from the condom users who are able to follow all the instructions of the condom producers, we advise the reader. Moreover, these statistics indicate the result of using condoms only for one year.

PART 2

COMPLAINTS OF CONDOM USERS AND THE RESPONSE OF THE CONDOM PRODUCERS

5. As one realizes, the failure rate of condoms as a contraceptive is quite high. It is obvious then that a lot of people complain to the condom producers about the ineffectiveness of condoms. The complaints are so frequent that condom producers are facing a "myth", as they themselves say. It is no surprise that the condom producers want to destroy the "myth" of the ineffectiveness of condoms. (11-39-40)
6. To do that, they blame the condom users for not using condoms **consistently** and **correctly**. (39-10) For instance the agency "Condoms" defends itself from: "Myth #1: Condoms don't work", by saying: "Some persons have expressed concern about studies that report failure rates among couples using condoms for pregnancy prevention. Analysis of these studies indicates that the large range of efficacy rates is related to incorrect or inconsistent use. In fact, latex condoms are highly effective for pregnancy prevention, but only when they are used properly. Research indicates that only 30 to 60 percent of men who claim to use condoms for contraception actually use them for every act of intercourse. Furthermore, even people who use condoms every time may not use them correctly. Incorrect use contributes to the possibility that the condom could leak at the base or break." (40)
7. From these words we come to know that the vast majority of condom users are not able to use condoms consistently and correctly. Therefore if they avoid pregnancy, it is only due to their "good luck", because of the fact that the days fertile for conception are only 6 out of 30.
8. Let us see what '**consistently**' and '**correctly**' means, and we will know why it is so hard to use condoms.
9. **Consistently** means 'always'. However a great many condom users are not able to use condoms always. "SIECUS" (Sexuality information and education council of the United States) and "FDA" (Food and Drug Administration of United States) admit that 83% (!) of those using condoms fail to use them "always": SIECUS informs us: "Most sexually active people are not using latex condoms every time they have sexual intercourse. For example, a national study of heterosexual adults with multiple sexual partners found that only 17% of those surveyed reported using condoms all the time." (1) The same percentage is reported by FDA (Food and Drug Administration

of United States). (39-1-31) It is interesting to know why. The main reported reasons are as follows:

- 'I can't find one that fits.'
- 'Sex doesn't feel as good.'
- 'Condoms cut off my circulation.'
- 'They smell terrible.'
- 'They spoil the mood.'
- 'I'm too embarrassed to use one.'
- 'I've already had and been cured of a STD, I can't catch it again. (Durex)
- 'I forgot to bring it'
- 'I forgot to buy it'
- It is unpleasant to wear condoms
- 'I don't have any diseases!'
- 'I have superb control.' (12-15-33)

10. **'Correctly'** means to follow all the instructions. These instructions are quite particular. See how "SIECUS" presents them:

- 1) "A new condom is used every time a person has sexual intercourse.
- 2) The condom is put on after the penis is erect and before it touches any part of partner's mouth, anus, or vagina.
- 3) If the condom breaks during sexual intercourse, the penis should be withdrawn immediately, and a new condom should be put on the penis.
- 4) Withdraw from the partner immediately after ejaculation, holding the condom firmly to the base of the penis to keep it from slipping off, so no semen is spilled.
- 5) Water-based lubrication should be used to prevent condoms from breaking; oil-based lubricants such as cooking or vegetable oils, baby oil, hand lotion, or petroleum jelly should never be used with latex condoms. They can cause the condom to break.
- 6) Condoms should be stored in a drawer or closet, somewhere cool, dry, and out of direct sunlight. Changes in temperature, rough handling or age can make the latex brittle or gummy. Never use condoms that are damaged or discolored, brittle, or sticky. Do not store them in a wallet or car glove compartment for a long time." (1-10-13-16-27-30-37-39)

One realizes straightaway the difficulty of following all these instructions. It is inconceivable that ordinary people (especially those in the third world countries) know all these things, and are careful enough to follow all these instructions. Of particular difficulty is point 4): in fact it requires a control that only a few people have; plus most of the condoms users will never understand why they have to withdraw exactly at that moment. - Point 6) too is very difficult, with the result of frequent wrong handling of condoms: see the statistics at No. 11.

11. **Considering all the above mentioned elements, the condom producers are obliged to admit that it is very hard to use condoms consistently and correctly for the vast majority of condom users.** On 03/01/98 FDA Consumer wrote: "Inconsistent and incorrect use of condoms explains the discrepancy, according to

Lillian Yin, director of the division in FDA that regulates condoms and other reproductive devices. One national survey of heterosexual adults with multiple sex partners found that only 17% used a condom every time they had sex. 'People say they use condoms' Yin says, 'but do they use them each and every time and use them correctly? That's another ballgame. We hear all the time—'We tried to use it , but...' But what?....' The condom promoting agencies themselves release the following percentages:

- 83% of those using condoms fail to use them everytime
- 36% are experiencing breakage (1-3-20)
- 44% are experiencing slippage: The agency 'Durex Scientific' informs: "Our survey respondents were asked whether they or their partner had experienced breakage or slippage with their current brand of condom. Over half had never experienced breakage or slippage. Condom slippage had been experienced at some point or another by slightly more respondents than had experienced condom breakage (44% for slippage compared to 36% for breakage)." (20)
- 50% of those using condoms feel that the condoms did not fit them properly: The same agency "Durex Scientific" says on this topic: "Given the wide range of penis sizes, ... it is perhaps not too surprising that 50% of respondents felt that the condoms they were using didn't fit properly. The answer they have provided also indicates that condoms which don't fit properly are more likely to break during use –although keeping this in perspective, over half of the respondents had never experience breakage or slippage." (21-32)
- No percentage is given for those using condoms, which are faulty or dated
- No percentage is given for those re-using condoms.

12. Since the effectiveness of condoms is very low, SIECUS and others justify condoms by saying that they are effective **only with couples who are highly motivated.** (1) Certainly the situation is not satisfactory if The American College of Obstetrics and Gynecology has referred to condoms as an "**antiquated system of birth control.**"(4)

PART 3

REASONS WHY CONDOMS ARE MUCH LESS EFFECTIVE AS A PREVENTIVE FROM AIDS

13. If now we consider condoms as a preventive from AIDS, their effectiveness will immediately be lower than as a contraceptive, for the following reasons:
- a) **While the chance to get pregnant is limited to 5 or 6 days in a month, the possibility to get AIDS is there every day of the month.** Family Health International says: "Unlike pregnancy prevention, in which the unintended outcome can only occur during a portion of the menstrual cycle and during the

reproductive years, disease transmission can occur during each and every act of intercourse for all persons, regardless of age. Despite this heightened risk, inconsistent or non-use of condoms is common even among persons at very high risk of STD exposure”

If we multiply the condom failure rate of 15.7% as contraceptive by 5 (which correspond more or less to the menstrual cycle), we obtain the conservative yearly rate of the risk of getting infected if the partner is already infected: it means 78.5. It seems incredible: however the calculation is logical; it is interesting to know what Health Central states: “Some facts regarding the success or failure of condoms in preventing sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) may not be accurate because the devices aren’t always used correctly. It is hard to believe, but a recent survey shows that one-third of heterosexual students admit they often delay putting on a condom during sex until after initial penetration, according to a report in AIDS Care 2000. Well, guys, that might not have much impact on the chances of causing a pregnancy, but that method won’t work for preventing the transmission of disease. Waiting until the final act still gives you plenty of opportunity to spread HIV or other STDs”. (46)

- b) **The HIV virus can go much more easily through the hole of a condom, since it is 500 times smaller than the sperm.** Condoms are not able to eliminate holes. Also the most perfect condoms have holes, big enough to let the HIV virus pass through. Michael Roland, head of the Polymer Properties Section at the Naval Research laboratory in Washington D.C. writes: “Even intact condoms have natural defects, measuring five to 50microns in diameter – 50 to 500 times the sizes of HIV virus... The rubber comprising latex condoms has intrinsic voids about 5 microns in size. Contrarily, the AIDS virus is only 0.1 micron in size. Since this is a factor of 50 times smaller than the voids inherent in rubber, the virus can readily pass through the condom.” (3)

Even though some condom producers and others claim the safety of condoms: “Studies have shown a condom failure rate of 10-33% for preventing pregnancies. But disease can be transmitted any time of the month... And industry officials admit condoms have holes 50 to 500 times the size of the HIV virus. In fact, the government withdrew a \$ 2.6 million grant to study condom effectiveness because of the number of condoms users who could become infected in such a study” (3).

- c) **Condoms with spermicides are spreading rather stopping AIDS.** People are using and will continue to use condoms with spermicides because they are advertised as the best means to stop AIDS. Only in July 2000 some scientist informed the media that spermicides are countereffective as prevention from AIDS. On the 13th of July ABCNEWS reported: “The widely used spermicide nonoynol-9, long recommended as a way to stop the spread of AIDS, may actually increase the risk of catching the virus, at least among women who use it frequently, according to the surprising findings of a large study.” (7-18-50)

“Understanding your risks” wrote a few days later” Spermicides containing nonoxinol-9 were once thought to help prevent HIV infection, but new studies show an increased risk because the chemical can irritate the vagina, facilitating infection. Consequently, spermicides are no longer being recommended for HIV prevention. Many sexual activities aside from intercourse can result in infection as well. Know your partner and his/her sexual history. The only ‘safe sex’ is lifelong monogamy with an uninfected partner.” (29)

The doubt about the suitability of spermicide nonoxynol-9 to stop the HIV virus had already been expressed by the FDA. In fact: “According to an FDA advisory committee panel that met Nov.22, 1996, over-the-counter spermicides, such as nonoxynol-9, can help reduce the risk of chlamydia and gonorrhea transmission. The panel had concerns, however, about the possibility that tissue irritation from spermicides may increase susceptibility to HIV and other STDs’.” (38)

However the condom producers and other agencies went ahead in selling out condoms with spermicides, ignoring the warning of the scientists. On the 25 of July last, “Contraceptive Options” was still maintaining: “A distinction must be made between spermicidally lubricated condoms and condoms with an additional spermicide. The first is a condom which comes in its package already lubricated with a spermicide. The latter is a condom that is used in conjunction with a spermicide in a foam, film, or gel form. Using a latex condom and a vaginal spermicide is more effective in preventing pregnancy than using a spermicidal condom, which does not contain as high a concentration of spermicide as a vaginal foam or film.” (14-15-32-34-37-40-41)

What is the consequence of such an irresponsible attitude of recommending condoms with spermicides?

- d) **Some condoms are not made in order to stop AIDS, however people use them as a prevention from AIDS.** Some types of condoms, like lambskin condoms, are totally ineffective against AIDS. Magazine “FDA Consumer”, April 1997, warns as follows: “Some people mistakenly believe that by protecting themselves against pregnancy, they are automatically protecting themselves from HIV, the virus that causes AIDS, and other sexually transmitted diseases (STDs). But the male latex condom is the only contraceptive method highly effective in reducing the risk of STDs. Unlike latex condoms, lambskin condoms are not recommended for STD prevention because they are porous and may permit passage of viruses like HIV, hepatitis 13, and herpes”. (38)
- e) **“Defective” condoms are on the market.** It has been discovered that the USA is powerless so far against those firms smuggling unsafe condoms into it. Presumably that also happens all around the world. What about the millions of people who trust and use those condoms? They have seriously exposed themselves to catching and to spreading AIDS, and all the other STDs. Health Central informs us: “The Food and Drug Administration (FDA is cracking down

on foreign firms that ship defective condoms into the United States. This is hardly a critical issue compared to the herbal pills and potions that make bogus health claims and are allowed to be sold without proof of safety or effectiveness. The FDA is virtually powerless to do anything about supplements, thanks to the Dietary Supplement Health and Education Act, which may be why it's making an issue over imported condoms. Under a proposal made by the FDA, makers of condoms found defective will be put on a 'blacklist' and their products refused entry". (45)

f) **Inconsistent use of condoms reduces their protective value to almost zero.**

"The Latex condoms. Recent Advances. Future Directions", p. 8, states that: "Three recent studies of heterosexual serodiscordant couples (= those where one partner is infected and the other is not) have compared rates of HIV seroconversion (where the uninfected partner becomes infected) in couples using condoms with varying consistency. Two extremely important conclusions are supported by all three studies. *First*, with consistent condom use, the HIV infection rate among uninfected partners was less than 1 per cent per year. *Second*, in situations where one partner is definitely infected, inconsistent condom use can be as risky as not using condoms at all".

When you apply such a sentence to the fact that 83% of condom users, use condoms inconsistently, you can only be appalled by the facts!.

g) **Breakage or slippage is very frequent, beyond anybody's expectation.** On No. 26 we reported that according to 'Durex Scientific' 36% of those using condoms experience breakage, 44% experience slippage, and 50% are unable to choose a condom fit for them. This is not without consequence in the spread of AIDS. Here we want to report the answer of AIM Health Cure Foundation to the following question: "Why Condoms don't work and what to do about it" It says: "The second most important reason condoms don't prevent disease is they leak or break. Sometimes a condom is poorly manufactured. More often, they leak or break because they are old, have been exposed to strong sunlight, heat or extreme cold. But the most common reasons are rough treatment and oil-based lubricants" (31): "Even if there were no pores in latex condoms, in-use breakage and slip-off rates are 'so high as to make condoms ineffective for protection against HIV' says biochemist and molecular biologist Dr. David G. Collart, PHh. D." (3)

Bad handling of condoms most common and inevitable: It is interesting to hear what "Health Central" says about breakage and slippage: "Men who have had a condom break or slip off in the past are twice as likely to experience condom failure as those who have no such history, according to a new study. Improper use is the leading cause of repeat condom failure, researchers say, helping to explain why some men experience higher long-term rates of prophylactic breakage or slippage than others....."The effectiveness of condoms decreases significantly as imperfect use increases," according to a study published in the current issue of the American Journal of Public Health.... The researchers then focused on "adverse"

condom usage behaviors prevalent among men prone to "repeat failures." Those behaviors included opening condom packages with sharp implements (reported by up to 39% of men), unrolling condoms before donning, filling condoms with air or water, using additional (sometimes oil-based) lubrication, removing lubrication before or during use, using condoms during particularly intense or lengthy (more than 20 minutes) coitus, losing erection before withdrawal, or not holding onto the condom during withdrawal". (48)

- h) **No additional oral method can be utilized** in order to compensate the failure rate of condoms as prevention from AIDS. As for condoms as a contraceptive, it is possible to conceal their ineffectiveness with the use of some oral contraceptive.(34) This is not possible at all with the failure of condoms as a preventive from AIDS.
- i) **The STDs will increase enormously, since there is no condom which can protect from certain STDs.** The consequence is that all those practicing risky sex, even though they use condoms, get infected and they increase the number of those spreading STDs. (14) AIM Health Care Foundation states: "Ordinary condoms only cover the penis and therefore only protect the organ and what it touches. The Reality condom covers a greater area and therefore is better for prevention. Unfortunately this is not enough protection against HIV or most other sexually transmitted infections because infected body fluids which get into cuts, abrasions, ingrown hairs, pimples, bleeding gums or other broken skin may spread the disease. Be sure to check out yourself and your partner to avoid unnecessary risks. Consider putting band-aids over small problem areas as partial protection and a gentle reminder during sex. Also consider lubricants with nonoxynol-9 for problem areas not covered by a condom". (31)
- **A major epidemic of sexually transmitted disease (STD) has developed during the last 30 years....** Today there are over 20 diseases with 12 million newly infected persons each year..... It is estimated that 1 in 5 Americans are now infected with a viral STD. Tragically, 63% of these infections occur in persons under age 25.
 - **What Is the Cause?**
What caused this dramatic change in a period of just 30 years? The answer is simple: increased sexual mixing of the population. As more and more people have multiple sexual partners, the inevitable result is acceleration in the spread of STDs.
 - **The Effect On Young People**
Unfortunately, STDs are not equal opportunity diseases. Adolescents have a higher degree of susceptibility than do older people. Indeed, researchers have estimated that a sexually active 15 year old has a 1 in 8 chance of developing pelvic inflammatory disease (PID), but that by age 24 the probability has decreased to 1 in 80. (44)

PART 4

PERCENTAGES AVAILABLE AND NOT YET AVAILABLE

14. The available percentages which may help estimate realistic failure rates of condoms as prevention from AIDS, are as follows:

- 2 to 3% is the “perfect use failure rate”. The American agency SIECUS (Sexuality information and education council of the United States) informs us that: “The most recent study considers the difference between consistent and inconsistent condom use shows that pregnancy rates are estimated to be as low as 2% for couples who use condoms consistently and correctly” (1) FDA (Food and Drug Administration of United States) put the perfect use failure rate at 3%. (39-35-13) Even though the rate appears very low, it is important to note that: “No method of contraception can provide 100% protection against pregnancy or HIV and STDs” (13). The safety criteria used by Federal Aviation Administration are quite different: it is necessary to prove that the failure rate for some specific parts of the aircrafts is one in a billion before winning certification. (51)
- 13 to 14% is the average ‘actual failure rates’ of condoms as a preventive form the HIV virus indicated by the Agencies promoting condoms. (1-10-25-29-34-35) This is surprising data if compared with the ‘actual failure rates’ of condoms as a contraceptive, which is indicated by the same agencies around 14%. (19-24-26-35-41) In No.13 a) we said that while the chance to get pregnant is limited to 5 or 6 days in a month, the possibility of getting HIV virus is there every day of the month. Now how is it possible that the actual failure rates of condoms as a preventive form the HIV virus is lower than condoms as contraceptive?. The explanation is that possibly the ‘actual failure rates’ of condoms as a preventive from the HIV virus are taken by many agencies in conditions that are not normal; consequently they are not real “actual failure rates”. Or that only the infections re counted, without taking into account all the other failures which happened with uninfected partners. However those failures exist, even though they are not ending up with infection. To calculate only the infections and to forget the real exposures to infection by all the failures of condoms, is misleading the people and extremely dangerous to their lives. The real way to calculate the ‘actual failure rates’ of condoms as a preventive from HIV virus is not to calculate the infections, but the real exposures to infections.
- 83% of those using condoms are not able to use condoms consistently, and by that they expose themselves immediately to the HIV virus. (1-39)
- 36% are experiencing breakage. (1-3-20)
- 44% are experiencing slippage. (20)

However there are many other percentages still unavailable, which could make the failure rate of condoms as a prevention from AIDS even worse. For instance these percentages are still unknown: the percentages of:

- people using Condoms that are dated or faulty
- people reusing condoms
- those using condoms ineffective in stopping the HIV virus. A lot of condoms are ineffective against AIDS: e.g. lambskin condoms. (2-15-37-38)
- those using condoms with spermicides, which are spreading rather than stopping AIDS. However they have been advertised as the most effective means for stopping AIDS for decades. Most of the Condom producers do not give any warning yet about spermicides. (7-9-15-16-29-41)
- those using defective condoms. This means condoms which pretend they are effective, instead they are not, because they have defects.

15. All those percentages (available and unavailable) are aggravated here in Papua New Guinea because:

- People do not have money to buy condoms
- There are no constant supplies
- They are tempted to reuse condoms, more than in the developed countries
- They will find it unreasonable to withdraw immediately after ejaculation
- They have sharp finger nails, damaging condoms very easily
- They say that sex is much less pleasant with a condom.
- Condoms smell unpleasant
- They do not know how to handle condoms
- Often the correct size of condoms is not available
- They are ashamed
- In order to make money the stores will sell any and every kind of condom: lambskin condoms; or faulty or dated. (23)
- They are misled by certain health information.

16. We can apply to PNG what has been said at a conference on Biomedical means for preventing Sexual transmission of HIV, held at the Rockefeller University in New York City: “.....**Several years of study have** shown that, especially in developing countries, condom use is “universally difficult to achieve, especially in stable relationships.” (49)

PART 5

REASONABLE PREDICTIONS FOR THOSE HAVING RISKY SEX BEHAVIOR

17. If we only consider the following three factors:

- a) in USA 33% of those who have been infected, got AIDS despite 100% use of male condoms. (29-44)
- b) “in situation where one partner is definitely infected, inconsistent condom use can be as risky as not using condoms at all.” (see n. 13 e)
- c) there are so many other elements causing infections (people using condoms incorrectly, slippage, breakage, people using unsuitable condoms, or faulty or dated condoms, defective condoms on the market etc,

18. We must honestly conclude as follows:

All those having risky sex behavior (= those having more than one sexual partner or having homosexual relationships) and using condoms are exposing themselves to AIDS and have a very high chance of getting infected within the first year. If somebody is not infected within the first year, it is because he/she has been very lucky: it means that his or her partners were not yet infected. If instead the partner was infected and the person was engaging in highly risky sex behavior and they experienced even only one of the above mentioned failures, he/she got infected.

All those having risky sex behavior and using condoms for more than four or more years can be predicted to get AIDS: in fact the risk of having sex with an infected partner is so high in a four year period, that we can reasonably exclude the possibility of not being infected.

“Different studies show different failure rates, but we must consider the result of an individual relying on condoms over several years of their sexual activity. Whatever the failure rate for one sexual act with a condom, it is unacceptable when compounded over 5 to 10 years using condoms.” (44)

It is a joke to say that condoms are safe or safer. They are not safe because the statistics deny it. They are not safer, because it is just ‘good luck’ not to be infected. It is only a big risk, without mercy if the game is too long. 94/2 Because of the high failure rate of condoms. Dr. Susan Weller says: "it is a disservice to encourage the belief that condoms *will prevent* sexual transmission of HIV." (5)

19. Some people may have been appalled at the rate of possible infections. If we made any mistakes, we would be very grateful if somebody could show them to us.

PART 6
A NEW HYPOTHESIS IS EMERGING:
ARE CONDOMS SPREADING RATHER THAN STOPPING AIDS?

20. At this stage it is reasonable to conclude at least that the effectiveness of condoms is really in doubt. "Sexually transmitted Disease and Complications" summarizes the entire topic of condoms as contraceptive and as preventive from AIDS as follows:

"Although touted by many as the solution to the problem of STD and unwanted pregnancy, condoms definitely are **not**. They have a poor record for prevention of pregnancy, with failure rates of up to 13% or more per year. The American College of Obstetrics and Gynecology has referred to them as an "antiquated system of birth control."

The preponderance of the scientific evidence demonstrates that condoms are equally poor in preventing the transmission of STD. They do not significantly reduce tubal infections or the infertility which may be the result of those infections. A meta-analysis of condom effectiveness from *in vivo* studies by Dr. Susan Weller suggests a 69% reduction in risk, or a 31% failure rate in preventing HIV transmission. This led her to state that "it is a disservice to encourage the belief that condoms *will prevent* sexual transmission of HIV."

Different studies show different failure rates, but we must consider the result of an individual relying on condoms over several years of their sexual activity. Whatever the failure rate for one sexual act with a condom, it is unacceptable when compounded over 5 to 10 years using condoms. In addition, experts agree that condoms are useless in the prevention of some diseases. One such disease is human papillomavirus, which infects over 40% of some groups and which is the precipitating agent for the vast majority of cancers of the cervix, vulva, vagina, and penis. "Several studies have shown that condoms do not protect against this virus." (44)

21. Condom producers are constantly trying to justify and promote condoms as preventive from AIDS, by presenting them in ideal conditions. They say e.g.: if condoms are used consistently and correctly they are highly effective; in fact the perfect users failures rate is only 3%." (10-27-39)
22. However the reality is quite different. From the data collected so far in this booklet we see a different reality emerging: the reality of a very great failure of condoms and then the possibility for a lot of people to get and spread AIDS. From statistics released by the various Institutions favoring condoms, we can conclude that only very few people are able to use condoms consistently and correctly. "Health Central" answers as follows to the question "How reliable are Condoms?": "Properly used, condoms are very reliable in preventing pregnancy and the spread of sexual transmitted diseases..... Condoms are portable and low tech, but according to a survey I once read, a lot of guys don't even know how to put them on. They unroll

them wrong, or they put them on at the wrong time. They have a little sex, and then just before the point of no return, they stop to put the condom on. Uh oh, too late.” (47) And what about all the other factors listed in No 28?

23. Since condoms are so unreliable, somebody says that one of the most urgent needs is to make women independent of condoms: “The worldwide AIDS epidemic will get much worse unless products that help women prevent HIV infection are available soon, warned researchers from a number of prominent institutions at a symposium this week.” The reason is that “Several years of study have shown that, especially in developing country, condom use is “universally difficult to achieve, especially in stable relationships.” (49)
24. Quite wisely a secondary Level “Teacher’s Guide on AIDS Control”, even though it does not have a Catholic approach to the problem, presents condoms with great prudence as follows: ““using condoms during sexual intercourse can lower the chances of getting AIDS, but it does not always work. Condoms are not always available, they may break during use and if a man does not know how to use a condom correctly, the AIDS virus can be spread” (“Teacher’s Guide on AIDS Control”, Ministry of Education and Health, Republic of Uganda, p. 15).
25. It is sensible then to ask: are condoms protecting people, or are they a great risk in catching HIV virus? Are condoms possibly one of the reasons why HIV virus is spreading so fast?
26. Certainly it is time to know the real impact of the actual failures of condoms in terms of spreading AIDS. Unfortunately this side of the coin is not highlighted by those in favor of condoms. They go on to say: The research shows that latex condoms are highly effective against sexual transmission of HIV when used consistently and correctly during sexual intercourse.” (1) However to advertise condoms saying that the ‘perfect users failure rate’ is as low as 3%, and ignoring all the rest, means to be responsible for the possible death of thousands and thousands of people, especially here in Papua new Guinea.
27. In fact by advertising condoms in this way, an ever-greater number of people will be encouraged in using condoms, increasing the number of those already having risky sex. These people are very confident that condoms can protect them, because of what they have heard from the propaganda. But they are not informed of the limitations of condoms, and they do not realize how they are dangerously exposing themselves to AIDS. “Health Central News” reported on January the 28th 2000 as Follows” Seat belts and condoms are two safety measures promoted to reduce risk and save lives. But in Saturday’s issue of The Lancet, three British researchers pose an interesting question: Is it possible that some people using these safety devices take new risks, such as driving faster or having sex with more partners, to compensate for an increased feeling of safety? Condom-promotion policy could increase rather than decrease sexual exposure, if it has the unintended effect of encouraging greater sexual exposure activity.” (8).

28. It is too easy to say that AIDS is spreading because a lot of people are not using condoms. The other side of the problem can also be true: AIDS is spreading because condoms are 'de facto' unreliable for the vast majority of the people, and because many people unnecessarily expose themselves to the risk of catching AIDS, believing the condoms propaganda and conforming to the condoms mentality.
29. Now, if it is true what we said in No. 13, the health authority has to intervene fairly and as soon as possible. It is very hard to understand why, when the deadly effect on only a few people causes the meat from England to be banned in Europe, or millions of Firestone tyres are withdrawn from the market in USA, and hundred of planes are grounded any time a small manufacture defects discovered in a plane, and medicines are withdrawn from the market because of some side effects, and weapons are going to be prohibited in USA because of the irresponsible use of some citizens. while at the same time no one takes notice that condoms might be de facto a means of spreading AIDS, contributing to the death of thousands and thousands of people who put their trust in condoms. Consistency would necessitate that condoms also be condemned as being unsafe and thus should be withdrawn from the market.

PART 7
CHASTITY AND FAITHFULNESS
THE ONLY SAFE WAY TO AVOID AIDS

30. Fortunately there IS something very effective against AIDS, and that is **Chastity** for those who are single, and **faithfulness** for those who are married.
31. It is not very hard to prove that chastity and faithfulness are very effective against AIDS. It is a matter of fact. Certainly it is true that:
- **100% of those following abstinence before marriage will never get infected, except by accident: e.g. by infected needles, or blood transfusion.**
 - **100% of those being faithful to an uninfected partner in the marriage will never get infected, except by accident as for above.**
32. It is however very hard to convince the public and health authorities to fight AIDS through such a means. The reason is that it demands self-discipline and the support of a lot of moral values, and because big money is involved. At this moment the wave is pushing us in the opposite direction. We are living in a time when condom propaganda emphasizes the so-called sexual human rights, and the two are supporting each other. Very frequently we hear slogans like: ***“Have a sexual relationship as you like, at any age, with anybody. It is your right. Do not be afraid. Your condoms will protect you.”***

It is obvious that a lot of people, the weakest among them, fall into the trap, and those already in it become more and more complacent.

33. Consequently it is very hard to talk of chastity and faithfulness in such a context and those in authority conform themselves to the present trend. So more and more people become convinced that chastity and faithfulness are impossible and ineffective to protect them from AIDS. It seems to them that the only remaining possibility is to entrust themselves and the others to condoms
34. However, even though this way is ridiculed by a lot of propagandists supporting condoms, it is interesting to know that among those in favor of condoms, we can find people and agencies admitting that abstinence or **chastity and faithfulness are the only perfect means to avoid AIDS.** (6-10-17-22-23-28-29-33-36-39-42) “Abstinence” writes: “Abstinence is a common practice all over the world. Historically, abstinence has probably been the single most important factor in preventing pregnancy.” (28) On a similar note “Community Public Health Administration” says: “Abstinence is the only completely effective way to guarantee that pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases will be prevented...” (36)
35. The agency “Sexually transmitted Diseases and Complications” states: “Postponing Sex Is the only solution: Postponing sexual activity until marriage with an uninfected mate is the only way for adolescents to be 100% sure of avoiding STD infection and pregnancy. Most of them can accomplish this if properly instructed and encouraged. In fact it was the normal expectation until the "sexual convulsion" of the 1960's. Likewise, single adults, including those with previous sexual experience, would be wise to save sex for a mutually monogamous lifetime partner. It is unrealistic to expect people to use condoms *consistently and correctly* with every act of intercourse for a long period of time. Delaying sex until marriage is the most medically sound advice we can give people in today's environment.” (44)
36. **Another surprise is that Chastity and faithfulness are acknowledged by everybody, including the USA, as the best means of avoiding AIDS and are used by a lot of youth.** On the 9 of August 2000 ABC reported as follows: “Government demographers credited pro abstinence organizations along with a swath of other groups –including churches, parents and school sex-education programs...” (42). And on the 13 of July 2000 the ABC News reported the result of research in the American Schools, with clear signs of limiting the sexual activity, with good consequence for the restraint of the HIV virus. The explanation given was: This means fewer U.S. high school students are engaging in sexual activity that puts them at risk for HIV infection...The researchers attributes the change to **the widely repeated message of sexual abstinence** and condom use”. (6) And in the same article of 9 August 2000 ABC Bronwyn Mayden, executive director of Campaign for Our Children, which promotes abstinence” said: “In the past, abstinence was a joke. It is not a joke – it is OK. Kids are really concerned about catching STDs”. ABC News reported also as follows: “Peter Brandt, director for the Focus on the Family ministry, said more abstinence is the obvious reason why the

birth rate has fallen. He said the notion that contraceptives should get credit comes from people who 'play little tricks with the data..' (42)

37. **Finally it is interesting to know that Chastity and faithfulness are also advertised by some agencies**, to the point that 'Website Pregnancy Resource Center' informs us about the characteristics of two different styles of sexuality as follows:

- **SMART SEXUALITY:** *Chaste lifestyle: Postponing sexual activity until marriage; husband and wife remain mutually faithful:*
No risk of STD's – Health - Supportive partner while pregnant - Children have two parent family - Retain self-respect - Respected by others - Fond memories of past relationships - Clean conscience - Enjoy adolescence.

- **RISKY SEXUALITY:** *Dangerous life style: having more than one sexual partner; no long-term commitment to monogamy:*
One in four get STD's – Risk of AIDS, PID, cervical cancer – Alone while pregnant – Single parenthood – Not respected by the opposite sex – Painful memories of past relationships – Guilt, shame, and secrecy – Forced to grow up too soon. (23)

CONCLUSION

From what we have seen so far from the condom promoting Agencies, we can conclude:

- If we consider all the factors present in the use of condoms as prevention from AIDS, we can state that the risk of getting infected in the first year is as high as 100 % among those involved in risky sex behavior. If somebody does not get infected, it is only because the partners were not infected. However to tempt good luck for too long, is suicidal.

- Advising people to use condoms means to put them at risk of getting AIDS, and just spreads AIDS. In fact, because of such confidence in condoms more and more people will be attracted to using condoms, and they will have 100 % risk of getting AIDS if they have sex with an infected partner

- The real way to stop AIDS is to advise those who are single, widow or widowed to be chaste (or abstinent), and those who are married to be faithful.

- In the meantime, while we hope scientists will be able to find a vaccine or other medicine to stop AIDS, we have to raise people's consciousness.

- This awareness, however, in order to be effective, must be enriched by many other moral values: self respect, respect for others, esteem and protection for the

monogamous family and heterosexuality, respect for Divine Law, respect for the parents, prayer and so on. To educate to avoid AIDS, and at the same time to destroy human values, by promoting or justifying: pre-marital sex, multipartner sex, homosexuality, same sex marriages, pornography and so on, is self-contradictory and will only compound the problem.

- The health authorities are the ones which have the greatest responsibility in stopping AIDS. This is why they can't afford to overlook ways of raising awareness. Instead of solving the problem, they aggravate it.
- We advise those in authority to invest in and to support campaigns which want to stop AIDS by offering an awareness supported by human values and which foster chastity and faithfulness. This alone is effective. In the past and in the present the sexually transmitted diseases spread not because of those values, but because those values were neglected by some people. Chastity and faithfulness are values already in place and protecting people, thanks to the preaching of the Churches and of anybody of common sense. Here in Vanimo Diocese we have set in place a policy to raise people's awareness. The way that all our schools and the villages have responded is very positive. We have every reason to believe that this is the way to go, and we invite everybody to do the same.

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SYNOPSIS

The Diocesan Family Apostolate of Vanimo are offering to the public some research into the effectiveness of condoms. They have investigated the claims that the condom producers themselves make about their own products.

The results are surprising.

1. A lot of people complain about the ineffectiveness of condoms as a contraceptive: the failure rate is around 15% in one year, and 48% in four years of using condoms. The condom producers say that condoms are effective only if they are used “consistently and correctly”. They admit that condoms are effective only with highly motivated couples.
2. Condoms are less effective against AIDS for various reasons:
 - you can catch AIDS any time you have sex;
 - HIV virus is much smaller than sperm;
 - spermicides increase the risk of catching the HIV virus;
 - some condoms are not recommended for HIV virus prevention, nevertheless they are used;
 - inconsistent use, bad handling, faulty or illegal condoms on the market;
 - a false sense of security can lead to an increase in sexual activity or risky sexual behavior.

The conclusion is obvious: Condoms DO NOT STOP AIDS. Consequently those engaging in risky sex behavior are dangerously exposing themselves to the risk of catching the HIV virus. It could be argued that condoms may be one of the reasons why the incidence of HIV virus is rising not falling.

3. From the condom promoting agencies it appears that the only 100% effective means to avoid HIV virus is chastity before marriage, and faithfulness to the spouse once married. This way, at first despised, is now acknowledged, advertised and even followed by an increasing number of youth in USA.

Chastity and faithfulness have been the clear and consistent teaching of the Catholic Church. The Church continues to uphold these common sense moral teachings for the good of not just its own members, but for all of us.