GENDER-RELATED PSYCHOSOCIAL AND CULTURAL FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH CONDOM USE AMONG CHINESE MARRIED WOMEN

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The present study explored the interplay of psychosocial, gender, and cultural factors on Chinese married women’s condom use. A total of 433 Chinese married women residing in Hong Kong participated in the study. Correlation results showed that participants’ conservative gender attitudes toward sexuality and sexual decision making were related to less accurate HIV/AIDS knowledge and less concern about contacting the disease from their husbands. About 34.4% of the sexually active participants never used condoms in the past 6 months, and current condom use was associated with egalitarian gender attitudes, positive feelings about condom use, and concerns about contacting HIV/AIDS from their husbands. Among all participants, 32.5% reported that they would not use condoms in their future sexual encounters. Future condom use was related to shorter duration of marriage, accurate HIV/AIDS knowledge, egalitarian gender attitudes, current condom use, and positive feelings about condom use. Results from the logistic regression analyses showed that egalitarian gender attitudes toward sexuality and positive feelings about condom use were the most salient predictors for current and future condom use.

The growing number of women infected with HIV/AIDS is a dominant feature of the evolving epidemic. Worldwide, women now represent 43% of all adults living with HIV/AIDS, and this proportion has been steadily increasing over time in both developed and developing countries (United Nations Program on HIV/AIDS & World Health Organization [UNAIDS & WHO], 1999). Hong Kong, a special administrative district of China, has also noted the rapid narrowing of the male to female ratio in HIV/AIDS infection, from 10:1 in 1985 to 2.6:1 in 2000 (Hong Kong Department of Health, 2000). There is a paucity of studies on women and HIV/AIDS in Hong Kong or any other Chinese communities. The present study will explore how various psychosocial, gender, and cultural factors associate with HIV/AIDS infection and prevention among Chinese married women in Hong Kong.

Research has shown that the natural course of HIV/AIDS and its prevention efforts are different for men and women. Worldwide, HIV/AIDS is predominantly transmitted through unprotected sexual contacts (Quinn, 1996). However, women’s risk of HIV/AIDS infection from unprotected sex with infected men is esti-