



CWHS

Data Points

RESULTS FROM THE 2009 CALIFORNIA WOMEN'S HEALTH SURVEY

Having multiple sexual partners is a well-known risk factor for sexually transmitted diseases (STDs). The risk of acquiring and transmitting a STD increases even more if sexual partnerships overlap in time for a person and/or her sex partners. These concurrent sex partner networks increase the likelihood of acquisition and transmission of STDs.^{1,2} To identify people with concurrent-partner risk for appropriate STD testing and counseling regarding risk reduction, including condom use, providers need to ask about concurrent partnerships (CP) as part of routine risk assessment during healthcare visits. The California STD Control Branch sought to: (1) assess prevalence of CP among women and their sexual partners; and (2) compare levels of provider discussion, chlamydia testing, and condom use among women with or without CP.

In 2009, 2,579 California Women's Health Survey participants ages 18 to 49 were asked about the number of sex partners they had had in the previous 12 months. CP was determined with two questions pertaining to the respondent and her sex partners: (1) *Thinking of your current or most recent male sex partner, did you have sex with anyone while you were still in a relationship with someone else?*; and (2) *At any time within the past 12 months, did any of your male partners have sex (of any type) with someone else while they were still in a sexual relationship with you? Would you say Yes, definitely, Not sure, it is possible, No, very unlikely?* Additional responses included Refused module, *Don't know/not sure*, and *Refused*; these respondents were excluded from this analysis. CP was coded as present if the

respondent reported Yes, definitely or Not sure, it is possible for either themselves or their partner; otherwise, CP was coded as not present.

Women were included in the analysis if they were ages 18 to 49 and sexually active (based on their report of one or more sex partner in the previous year). Analysis of provider risk assessment and chlamydia testing in the previous year was restricted to respondents who had seen a provider in the previous year. Responses were weighted by age and race/ethnicity to reflect the 2000 California adult female population. Proportions were stratified by age (18 to 25 years; 26 to 49 years) and race/ethnicity. Age strata were based on national recommendations for annual chlamydia screening among women ages 25 and younger. Significance was determined with the use of Chi square testing and defined as *P* value less than .05. Because of small sample sizes, results for Asian/Other women were not included in the analysis.

Highlights of the results are as follows (Figure 1 and 2):

- Overall, 15 percent of women reported CP in the previous 12 months, with a significantly higher proportion reported among women ages 18 to 25 (29.4 percent) than among older women ages 26 to 49 (11.9 percent); and a higher proportion among African American/Black women (35.0 percent), than among Hispanic women (19.3 percent) and White women (5.4 percent).

Women's Reported Sexual Health Services in Relation to Sexual Risk: Role of Concurrent Partnerships, 2009

California Department of Public Health
Center for Infectious Diseases
Division of Communicable Disease Control
Sexually Transmitted Disease Control Branch
Survey Research Group
Chronic Disease Surveillance and Research Branch

Public Health Message:

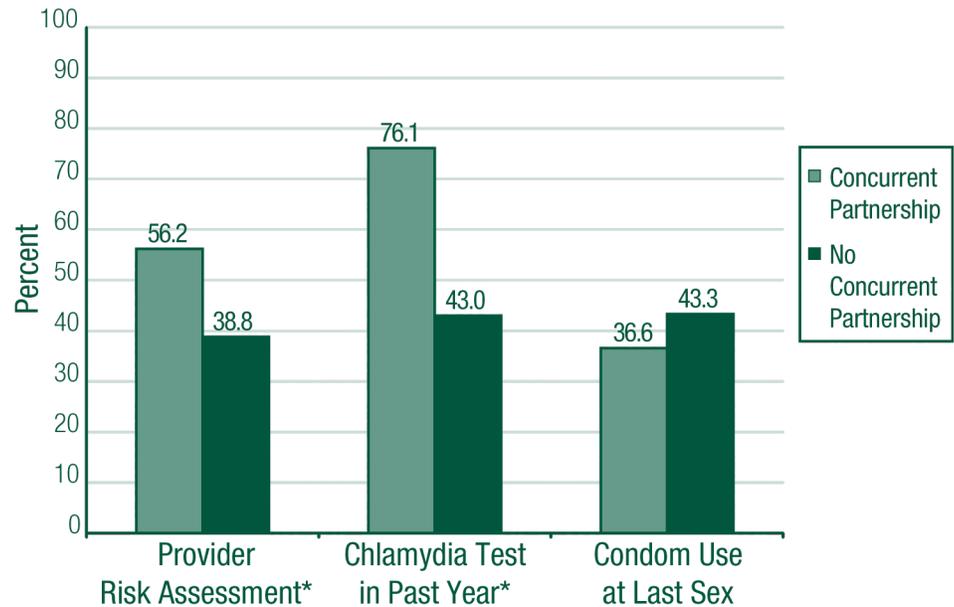
Concurrent partnerships are not uncommon among Californian adult women of reproductive age. Less than half of women with CP had had a provider risk assessment when accessing care in the previous year. More than half of older women with CP had not had a chlamydia test. Routine provider risk assessment can minimize missed opportunities to identify high-risk women for appropriate STD testing and risk-reduction counseling.

Issue 8, Summer 2012, Num. 10

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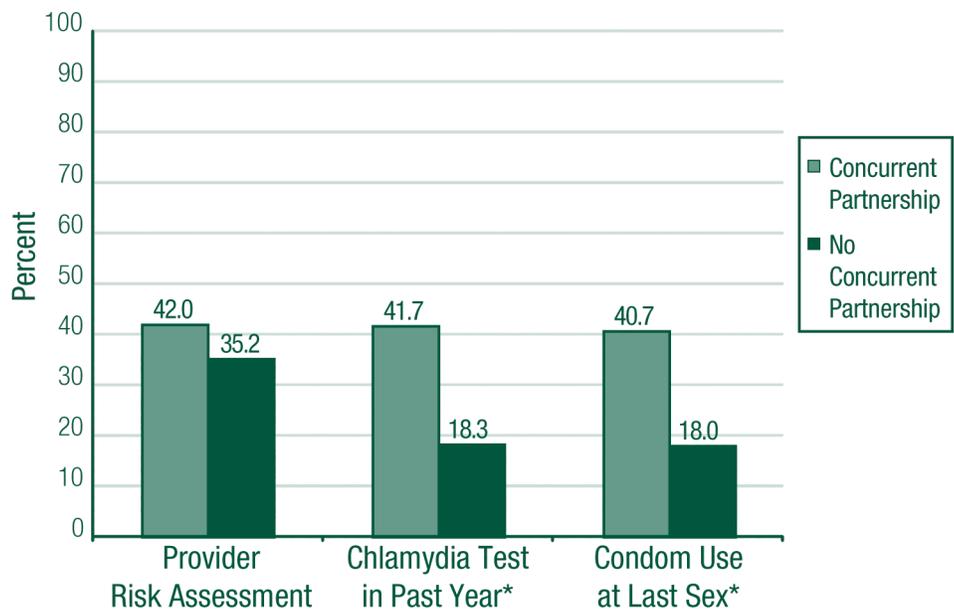
Figure 1
Provider Risk Assessment, Chlamydia Testing, and Condom Use at Last Sex, by Concurrent Partnership for Women Ages 18 to 25, 2009



* $P < .05$

Source: California Women's Health Survey, 2009

Figure 2
Provider Risk Assessment, Chlamydia Testing, and Condom Use at Last Sex, by Concurrent Partnership for Women Ages 26 to 49, 2009



* $P < .05$

Source: California Women's Health Survey, 2009

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- Overall, 87 percent of women had seen a provider in the previous year; of these, 45.8 percent had had a discussion with their provider regarding their sexual behavior. A significantly higher proportion of young women had had a provider discussion (53.9 percent), than with older women (42.3 percent). Among women who had had a medical care visit in the previous year, a significantly higher proportion of those with CP reported having a discussion with their provider (46.9 percent), than women without CP (35.7 percent).
- A significantly higher proportion of young women with CP had had a provider discussion (56.2 percent), than young women without CP (38.8 percent); the proportions of older women with provider discussion were not significantly different, by CP status (42.0 percent among older women with CP, versus 35.2 percent among older women without CP).
- The proportion of women with chlamydia testing in the previous year was significantly higher among women with CP (56.0 percent) than among those without CP (21.9 percent). A significantly higher proportion of young women reported chlamydia testing in the previous year (64.3 percent) than older women (42.3 percent). A significantly higher proportion of young women reporting CP had had chlamydia testing in the previous year (76.1 percent) than younger women without CP (43.0 percent). Similarly, a statistically significant higher proportion of older women with CP had had chlamydia testing in the previous year (41.7 percent) than women without CP (18.3 percent).
- Condom use at last sexual encounter was significantly more frequent among women with CP (39.3 percent) than those without CP (21.9 percent). A significantly higher proportion of young women reported condom use (38.8 percent) than older women (21.4 percent). There was no statistical difference in condom use among young women with CP, but a higher proportion of older women with CP reported condom use (40.7 percent) than older women without CP (18.0 percent).

- 1 Adimora AA, Schoenbach VJ, Taylor EM, Khan MR, Schwartz RJ. Concurrent partnerships, nonmonogamous partners, and substance use among women in the United States. *Am J Public Health*. 2011;101(1):128-136.
- 2 Aral SO, Leichliter JS. Non-monogamy: risk factor for STI transmission and acquisition and determinant of STI spread in populations. *Sex Transm Infect*. 2010;86 Suppl 3:iii29-36.

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