

SEXUAL RELATIONSHIP POWER, CONDOM USE AND VIOLENCE AMONG WOMEN LIVING WITH HIV IN CANADA

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CONFERENCE
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CHIWO  Étude sur la santé sexuelle et reproductive des femmes vivant avec le VIH au Canada
Canadian HIV Women's Sexual and Reproductive Health Cohort Study



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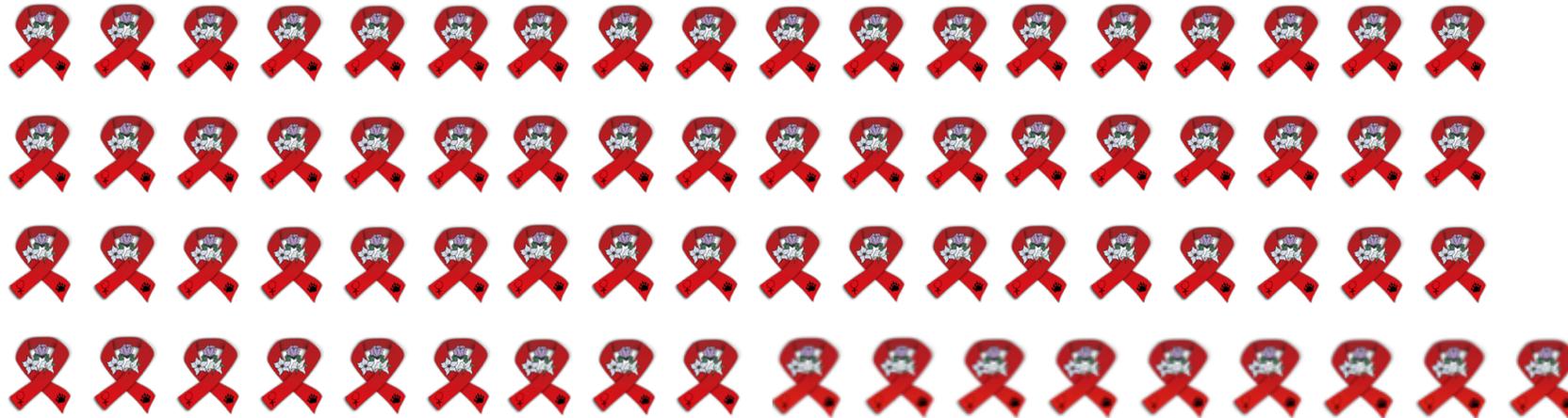
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LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

CHIWOS acknowledges the land on which we gather is the unceded ancestral traditional territories of the Coast Salish ~
thex^wməθk^wəy'əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh
Úxwumixw (Squamish) and mi ce:p k^wət^wiləm (Tsleil-
Waututh)

HONOURING ~ THEIR VOICES FOREVER HEARD

*We honour and remember the **73** self-identified women living with HIV who were participants in CHIWOS from across Canada who have passed away and are no longer with us.*



*In memory of Marisol Desbiens
CHIWOS PRA and valued
colleague*



CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

- We have no conflicts of interest to declare



BACKGROUND & OBJECTIVES

- Lower sexual relationship power (SRP), including controlling behaviours within intimate relationships, has been linked with increased HIV-risk,¹ low condom use,² and experiences of violence.^{3,4}
- Among women living with HIV (WLWH), **few studies have examined associations between SRP, and condom use and violence**
- The *objective* of this study was to measure the psychometric properties of the relationship control (RC) sub-scale of the sexual relationship power scale (SRPS) and associations with condom use and experiences of violence among women living with HIV in Canada who have had consensual sex in the last month.

1. Jewkes, R. K., K. Dunkle, M. Nduna and N. Shai (2010). "Intimate partner violence, relationship power inequity, and incidence of HIV infection in young women in South Africa: a cohort study." *Lancet* **376**(9734): 41-48. 2. Pettifor, A. E., D. M. Measham, H. V. Rees and N. S. Padian (2004). "Sexual power and HIV risk, South Africa." *Emerg Infect Dis* **10**(11): 1996-2004. 3. Closson, K., J. J. Dietrich, M. Beksinska, A. Gibbs, S. Hornschuh, T. Smith, J. Smit, G. Gray, T. Ndung'u, M. Brockman and A. Kaida (2019). "Measuring sexual relationship power equity among young women and young men South Africa: Implications for gender-transformative programming." *PLoS One* **14**(9): e0221554. 4. Pulerwitz, J., S. L. Gortmaker and W. DeJong (2000). "Measuring sexual relationship power in HIV/STD research." *Sex Roles* **42**(7/8): 637-660.

Table 1- Responses to SRPS RC sub-scale items

Item: Response Options:

1. Strongly Agree (SA)
2. Agree (A)
3. Disagree (D)
4. Strongly Disagree (SD)

If I asked my partner(s) to use a condom, s/he would get violent

If I asked my partner(s) to use a condom, s/he would get angry

Most of the time we do what my partner wants to do

My partner won't let me wear certain things

When my partner and I are together I am pretty quiet

My partner has more say than I do about important decisions that affect us

My partner tells me who I can spend time with

If I asked my partner to use a condom, s/he would think I'm having sex with other people

I feel trapped or stuck in our relationship

My partner does what s/he wants, even if I do not want her/him to

I am more committed to our relationship than my partner is

When my partner and I disagree, s/he gets her/his way most of the time

My partner gets more out of our relationship than I do

My partner always wants to know where I am

My partner might be having sex with someone else

METHODS/MEASURES

- Baseline data (2013-2015) was drawn from WLWH (≥ 16 years) enrolled in the Canadian HIV Women's Sexual and Reproductive Health Cohort Study (CHIWOS) who reported having consensual sex in the last month
- Peer Research Associates collected questionnaire data in British Columbia, Ontario, and Quebec
- Pulerwitz's RC sub-scale⁴ (Items listed in table) was trichotomized and low/medium scores were compared to high scores (higher scores=greater SRP equity)

METHODS/ANALYSIS

- Exploratory factor analysis and Cronbach's alpha assessed scale reliability
 - Multinomial logistic regression examined associations between RC and **condom use** (never, consistent [ref], and inconsistent), any **violence** ([sexual, physical and/or emotional], never [ref], previous but not in the last 3 months, current [in the last 3 months]), and **physical and/or sexual violence** (never [ref], previous but not in the last 3 months, current [in the last 3 months]),
 - All models adjusted for **education, age, ethnicity, income, housing stability, and gender discrimination.**
-

RESULTS

Total CHIWOS sample n=1422

n=85
skipped
section
8

Total 1337

n=41 reported
never having
consensual
sex or PNTA

Total 1296

n=645 reported
not having
consensual sex in
the past 6 months
or PNTA

Total 651

N=169 reported
not being
sexually active in
the past month
or PNTA

Total 482

n=9 didn't
answer the
scale items

**Final
Total
473**

85% ≥high
school
education

Age

- 15% 16-29
- 38% 30-39
- 33% 40-49
- 15% ≥50

**Province of
residence**

- 43% Ontario
- 29% British
Columbia
- 28% Quebec

Ethnicity

- 42% White
- 24% Indigenous
ancestry
- 27% Black
- 32% Mixed or
other

66% made
<20k/year
personal
income

81% on
antiretroviral
therapy

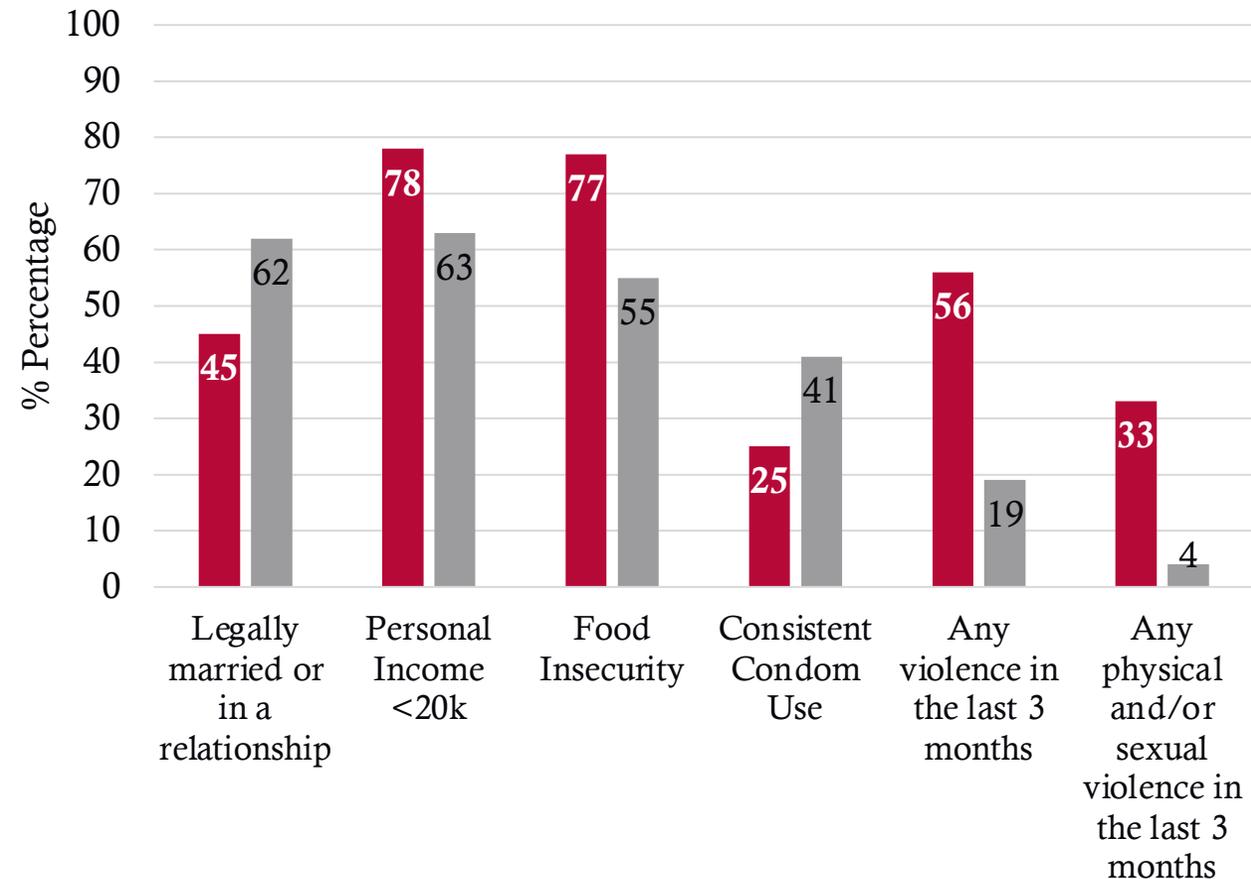
78% reported
undetectable
viral load

- Overall, 473 WLWH (33% of cohort) were included in this analysis. Median age=39 (IQR=33-46), 81% were on antiretroviral therapy, and 78% reported an undetectable viral load.

RESULTS CONT

Bivariate differences between low/medium RC vs. high RC among WLWH

■ Low/Medium RC ■ High RC



- WLWH that had high RC were more likely to be **legally married or in a relationship** (62% vs. 45%, p-value=0.007) and more likely to use **condoms consistently** (41% vs. 25%, p=0.002)
- WLWH with low/medium RC had **lower personal income** (78% <\$20K/year vs. 63%, p=0.012), experienced greater food insecurity (77% vs. 55%, p<0.001) experienced higher **gender discrimination scores** (median=24 [12-31] vs. 16 [10-26], p<0.001), experienced greater **violence in the last 3 months** (56% vs. 19%, p<0.001, and experienced greater **physical and/or sexual violence in the last 3 months** (33% vs. <5%, p<0.001).

RESULTS CONT

- Keeping potential confounding factors constant, WLWH:
- With **high RC** scale scores had **lower odds of Inconsistent** vs. consistent condom use (aOR:0.39(95%CI:0.18-0.85))
- With **high RC** scores had **lower odds of current (in the last 3 months) but not previous violence of any kind** (aOR=0.14(0.04-0.47)) (vs. never), and **lower odds of current but not previous physical and/or sexual violence (vs. never)** (aOR=0.05(0.02,0.17)).

Table 2- Adjusted models examining the relationship between RC sub-scale scores and 1. consistent condom use (n=382), and 2. Any Violence (n=371)

		Adjusted Odds Ratio (95%CI)	
Model 1 –Condom use*	Categories	Inconsistent vs Consistent	Never vs Consistent
Relationship Control sub-Scale	Low/Medium (≤ 2.82)	Ref	Ref
	High (> 2.82)	0.39 (0.18,0.85)	0.56 (0.31, 1.04)
Model 2- Any Violence		Previous but not current vs. never	Current in the last 3 months vs. never
Relationship Control sub-Scale	Low/Medium (≤ 2.82)	Ref	Ref
	High (> 2.82)	1.03 (0.31, 1.59)	0.14(0.04,0.47)
Model 3- Physical and/or Sexual Violence		Previous but not current vs. never	Current in the last 3 months vs. never
Relationship Control sub-Scale	Low/Medium (≤ 2.82)	Ref	Ref
	High (> 2.82)	0.65 (0.27,1.6)	0.05 (0.02,0.17)

All models adjusted for education, age, income, relationship status, food security, having children, meeting monthly housing costs, experiences of racism, experiences of sexism, resilience, and belief that ARVs change risk of passing HIV

DISCUSSION/CONCLUSION

- We found good reliability and validity for the RC SRP (Cronbach's $\alpha=0.915$) sub-scale among WLWH in Canada.
- The **majority of WLHV in our study had high RC sub-scale scores**
- Our results align with previous studies, finding that **high Relationship Control** was associated with **reduced experiences of recent violence and increased consistent condom use.**
- Programs that prioritize **building safety and support** for women are critical to addressing violence and promoting positive sexual health outcomes.



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