

THE GREAT  
**Condom**  
SURVEY  
Sensoa

The Big Condom Survey: how we use, discuss and  
experience condoms in Flanders

**SENSOA**  
TALK(S) ABOUT SEX



**Vlaanderen**  
is zorgzaam en  
gezond samenleven

# Introduction

## Previous research

- effectiveness
- focus on (determinants of) condom use
- errors and problems

## Gaps

- user experiences and perceptions
- Lack of Belgian data

# Methods



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### In-depth interviews

- Maximum variation sampling
- In person and online
- 58 minutes on average
- Focus on user journey and user experience
- Thematic analysis

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### Focus groups

- Healthcare workers, teachers, seks workers, parents of teenagers
- 5 – 12 participants
- Maximum variation sampling
- Thematic analysis

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### Online survey

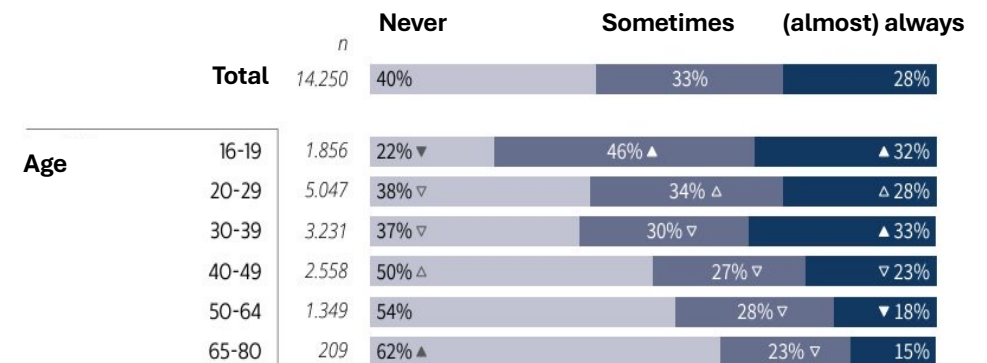
- 16558 participants
- Convenience sampling
- General Flemish population between 16 and 80

# Results

# Frequency

## 1/3<sup>rd</sup> uses condoms inconsistently

- Moving away from classic viewpoint of users and non-users
- Trade-off with every new sexual contact
- Numerous barriers and drivers



# User journey: choosing and buying

## Condoms are considered too expensive

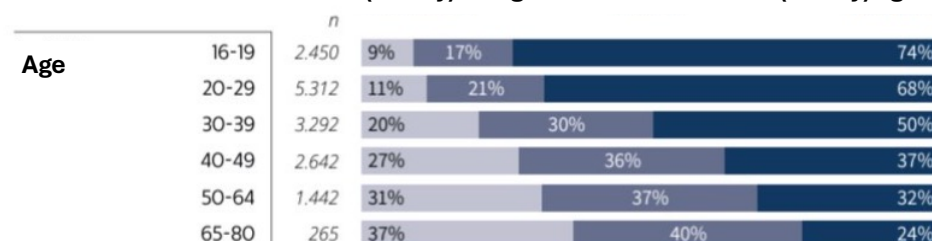
- 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of the teenagers holds back from using a condom due to the price

## Only a minority feels condoms fit well

- Reduces effectiveness
- Reduces pleasure of use

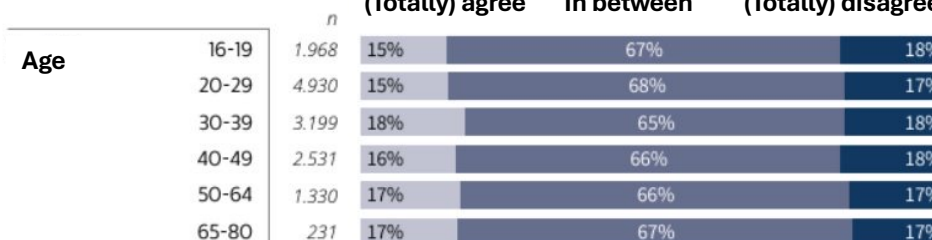
### Condoms are too expensive

(Totally) disagree   In between   (Totally) agree



### I have the feelings condoms fit my (partners) penis well in general

(Totally) agree   In between   (Totally) disagree

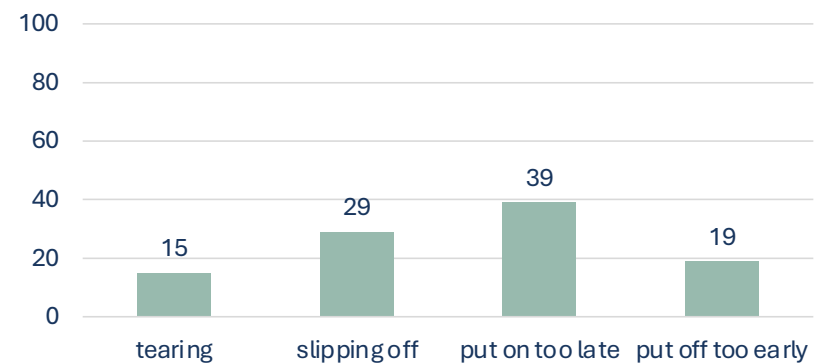


# User journey: errors and problems

## Putting on condoms too late occurs frequently

- More common than tearing or slipping off
- 36% consistently puts on condoms too late

Errors and problems by participants who used a condom during past 6 months



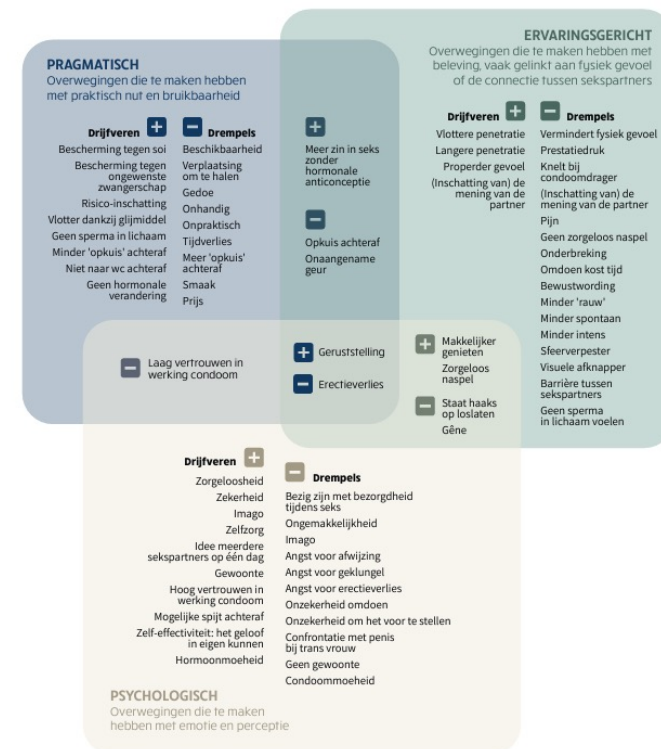
# User experience: drivers & barriers

Trade-off between drivers and barriers with every use

- Pragmatic
- Psychological
- Experiential

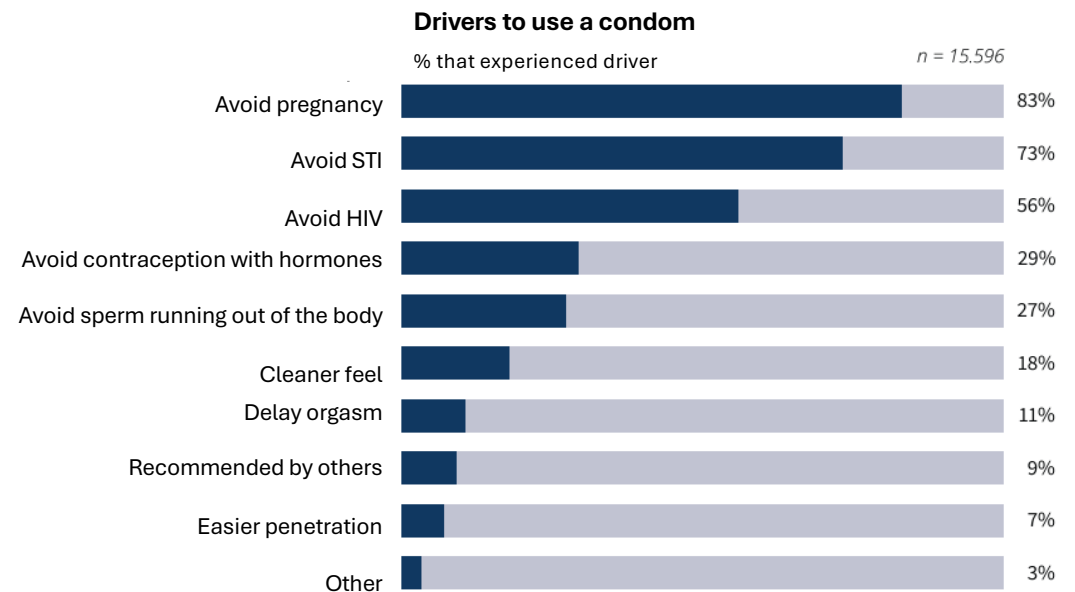
Condoms often represent the opposite of what we value in sex

- Closeness
- Flow
- Letting go



# Popular drivers

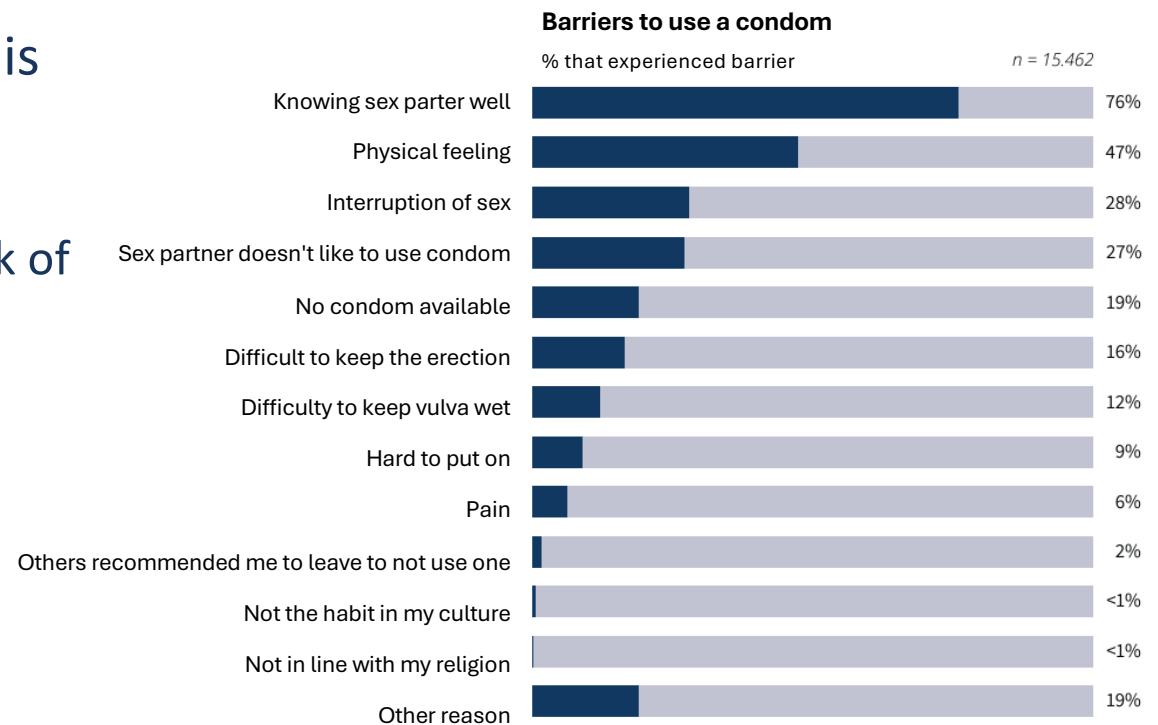
- Mainly used for contraceptive reasons
- Hiv is less top of mind than STI's
- Positive side-effects are popular too
  - Avoiding sperm running out of the body
  - Cleaner feeling
  - Easier penetration



# Popular barriers

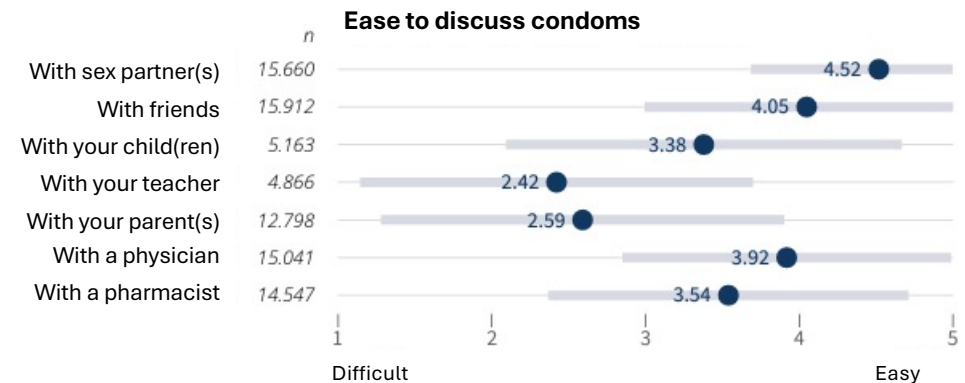
Familiarity with sex partner is main barrier

- Subjective feeling of trust
- 'Introducing condom = 'lack of trust'



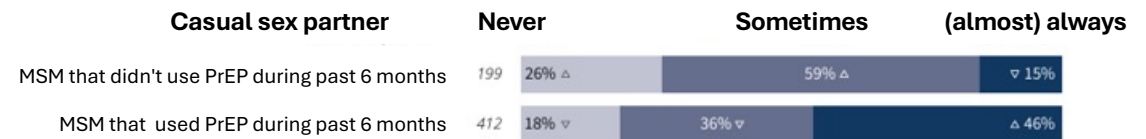
# Talking about condoms

- Ease of discussion depends on conversation partner
- 69% discusses easily with their physician
  - Easier for
    - Men
    - older
    - higher educated

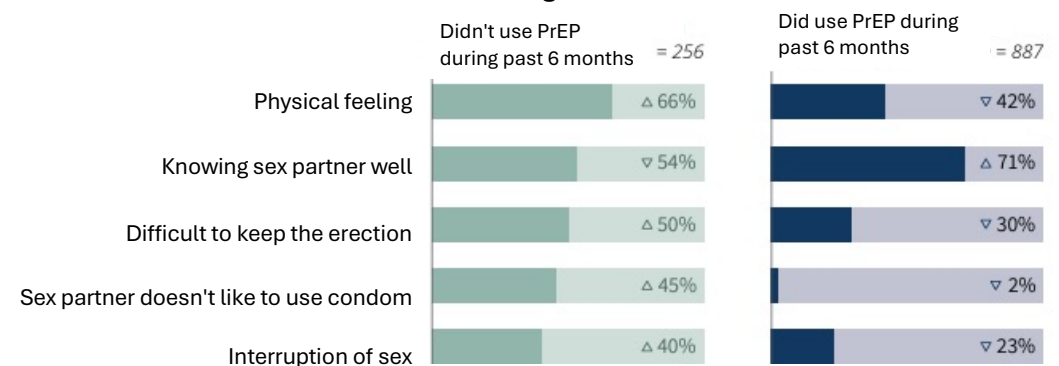


# Specific experience of PrEP users

- Non-use and inconsistent use is higher among PrEP users
- Other barriers
  - Physical feeling is main barrier
  - Trust in erection
  - Less importance to familiarity with sex partner
  - More importance to opinion of the sex partner
- Less drivers because of dynamic prevention and low appreciation for positive 'side-effects'



## Experienced barriers to use condoms by MSM according to PrEP use



## Implications for healthcare practice

# How to talk about condoms?

- Talk the truth: sex with a condom is different
- Focus on what you can do in dealing with this difference
- Take pleasure into account
  - Promote training (for starters or when putting on is difficult)
  - Promote trial and error to find the right condom (e.g. test packages)
  - Promote trial and error to find the right lube in combination with the condom
- Offer free condoms to start a conversation
  - Inform yourself where you can find interestingly prices bulk condoms
    - Buy cheap condoms in bulk through [condooms.be](http://condooms.be) / [condomerie.nl](http://condomerie.nl)

# Policy recommendations

- Findings give insight in necessary steps to improve prevention of sti and hiv
  - Extra concern since the rise of sti- and hiv-numbers
- Recommendations from the Big Condom Survey
  - Make condoms easily accessible
    - further investigations of ways to lower the price/ get a reimbursement
    - Lower threshold to access (e.g. offer for free in residential settings)
  - Educate people on talking about condoms, how to use them, ...
    - Comprehensive sexuality education for teenagers
- Call to organize an expert table on prevention and testing

# More information?

- Want to read the full report (Dutch)?
  - [Grootcondoomonderzoek.be](https://grootcondoomonderzoek.be): results + methodology

## Q&A

Thank you

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PRAAT OVER SEKS



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