

Implementation of a territory-wide safer sex campaign in Hong Kong

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Issues

Condom as a tool to prevent HIV and sexually transmitted infection has been promoted for 20 years in Hong Kong. Safer sex is still a taboo in the society.

Description

Red Ribbon Centre launched a territory-wide safer sex campaign with the support of Information Services Department to promote the practice of safer sex and to minimise the taboo of condom in the society. The campaign, with tagline “Use a condom for safer sex”, consisted of three core elements: (a) media publicity - an API and a dom dom song was produced to deliver the safer sex message in an airy tune. It came with a media campaign, including radio programmes, print and multimedia advertisements on public transport, internet chatrooms and publicity at government buildings; (b) condom distribution network – Condoms were made available at over 200 venues including clinics, universities, trade unions and public toilets to raise the public awareness of safer sex and to improve the accessibility of condom; and (c) sex education workshops – Workshops on sex education was organised to promote a knowledge-based sex education approach in teachers and social workers and equip them with the skills to manage sexual health enquiries and promote safer sex.

Lessons Learned

Social marketing strategy is useful to alter the public conception of condom. Multi-sectoral participation is the key of success for a territory-wide safer sex campaign. Misconceptions on safer sex are still common in various professionals, including medical, nursing, social workers and teachers. Many people perceive that general public do not need to have easy access to condom and talks alone are effective enough to promote safer sex.” Even health centres of universities were reluctant to distribute condom to their students.

Recommendations

Safer sex promotion should also address the taboo carried by condom. Various professional sectors have to be empowered to promote safer sex in different settings.

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