



Review article

Interventions Promoting Condom Use Among Youth: A Systematic Review



Alcira de Vries, M.Sc.^{a,*}, Chantal den Daas, Ph.D.^b, Inge J. M. Willemstein, M.Sc.^a,
 John B. F. de Wit, Ph.D.^c, and Janneke C. M. Heijne, Ph.D.^{a,d}

^aCentre for Infectious Disease Control, National Institute for Public Health and the Environment, Bilthoven, The Netherlands

^bHealth Psychology Group and Epidemiology Group, Institute of Applied Health Sciences, University of Aberdeen, Aberdeen, United Kingdom

^cDepartment of Interdisciplinary Social Science, Utrecht University, Utrecht, The Netherlands

^dDepartment of Social Medicine, Care and Public Health Research Institute (CAPHRI), Maastricht University, Maastricht, The Netherlands

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 A B S T R A C T

In many European and other high-income, Western countries, condom use has been decreasing among youth. A variety of promotional strategies to increase condom use exists. Our systematic review aimed to identify effective elements in interventions aimed at increasing condom use in youth. We searched databases (2010–2021) for intervention studies promoting condom use among youth in Western, high-income countries. The primary outcome was condom use; the secondary outcome was sexually transmitted infection (STI) diagnoses. Effectiveness per intervention was defined based on the percentage of comparisons that showed significant increases in condom use and significant decreases in STIs. We compared the effectiveness of interventions for different participant-, intervention- and methodological characteristics. We included 74 papers describing 85 interventions in the review. Overall, the median intervention effectiveness was 33.3% (interquartile range = 0%–66.7%) for condom use and 0% (interquartile range = 0%–100%) for STI diagnoses. Intervention effectiveness for condom use was significantly higher in interventions tailored towards females and males specifically, compared with interventions applied to both sexes combined. Our findings show the difficulty in designing effective interventions to increase condom use among youth. Interventions aimed at either females or males were more effective in increasing condom use.

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**IMPLICATIONS AND
CONTRIBUTION**

This review contributes to research by providing a comprehensive overview of interventions aiming to improve condom use and which characteristics are related to the effectiveness of interventions. Findings imply that condom use is difficult to improve, and that interventions should take sex- and gender differences into account.

Condom use among youth has been decreasing over the past 10–15 years in many European countries, as well as in other Western, high-income countries [1–3]. In the Netherlands, the proportion of males (12–24 years) who used a condom during

their last one-nightstand decreased from 74% in 2005 to 55% in 2017, for females this decreased from 85% to 61% [4,5]. In addition, young age is a risk factor of contracting sexually transmitted infections (STIs) compared with older people in many countries [6–8]. In the United States of America and Europe, the highest number of chlamydia diagnosis is among young people [6,7]. Also, the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control has recently reported increases in gonorrhea diagnoses among young heterosexual populations [9]. This demonstrates the importance of improving condom use in this young population.

Conflicts of interest: The authors declared no potential conflicts.

* Address correspondence to: Alcira de Vries, M.Sc., National Institute of Public Health and the Environment, P.O. Box 1, 3720 BA, Bilthoven, The Netherlands.

E-mail address: Alcira.de.vries@rivm.nl (A. de Vries).

Numerous interventions have been developed to promote condom use among young people. Condom use may be influenced by many different determinants stemming from various behavioral theories, e.g. knowledge of condoms and/or STIs, beliefs about capabilities (i.e., self-efficacy), and intentions to use condoms [10–13]. Furthermore, condom use can be promoted using various different behavior change techniques [14]. Interventions promoting condoms use can also be delivered in many different settings (e.g., education-based) and through one of many methods of delivery (e.g., radio campaigns or text messages). Developments in the usage of social media and mobile devices over the last decade have yielded even more opportunities for health promotion. This results in a variety of interventions that may each target different determinants of condom use through different methods, but are all aiming to increase condom use.

Systematic reviews can act as valuable tools to gain an overview of the many different possible interventions and to assess their effectiveness. Previous reviews focused on condom use in low- and middle-income countries [15,16], or on the use of contraception [17–21] or dual protection [22,23], which, due to its focus on preventing pregnancy, differs from interventions aiming to improve condom use which address both risk for pregnancies and STIs. Furthermore, systematic reviews often included only specific study designs, mostly randomized controlled trials (RCTs) [24], behavioral interventions [25], specific subpopulations, e.g. college students [26], and above all, most have become outdated [27]. This limits their comprehensiveness and translatability to our current target population. To our knowledge, there currently is no recent systematic review on condom use interventions targeted at young people in Western, high-income countries. Therefore, we aim to provide an overview of interventions to increase condom use among youth in Western, high-income countries, and to identify effective elements in these interventions.

Methods

We conducted a systematic review. The corresponding registration number in PROSPERO is CRD42021253738. Our study is conducted and reported in accordance with the PRISMA guidelines. Study materials are available upon request.

Search strategy and criteria

We used the following electronic databases; Embase, PubMed, Scopus, PsycINFO and Web of Science. The search was conducted on the 13th of December, 2021. Our predefined Population, Intervention, Comparison, Outcome, Study designs guided the in- and exclusion criteria and were as follows: young people (population), interventions to increase condom use (intervention), compared to control conditions or over time (comparison), condom use and STI diagnoses (outcome) and all study designs (study designs).

We focused on interventions aimed at improving condom use specifically, or sexual health in general, such as sexual education programs at school. The search strategy focused on the combination of three main concepts, condom use, general young population, and interventions. The search strategy also contained explicit exclusion terms for certain geographical areas and for sexual minorities and other subgroups, as these subgroups were considered to be too specific to be applicable to the general

population. These minorities may, however, still be present in the included studies as part of the general population. The full search strategy can be found in the [Supplementary Material](#), Text 1.

We included experimental and observational studies with at least one comparison on the primary outcome condom use: this could either be between an intervention- and control group, or before and after the intervention in the same group. Observational studies often report on interventions in real-life settings, and therefore are of added value. We included studies from 2010 to 2021 performed in European high-income countries as defined by the United Nations, the United States of America, Canada, Australia and New Zealand [28]. Furthermore, the studies had to be focused on young people, defined as a reported age range, median or mean age between 16 and 25 year old. Studies with a broader age range were also eligible for inclusion when the intervention was targeted towards young people (e.g. college students) and a substantial proportion of included participants were between the ages 16 and 25.

Studies were excluded if the primary goal of the intervention was to improve any other health behavior than sexual behavior. For example, an intervention aiming to reduce binge drinking that also measured the effects of the binge drinking intervention on condom use would be excluded. Studies were also excluded if they reported intentions to use condoms rather than actual condom use or if the only available condom use measure combined condom use with condom fails or errors (e.g. breakage, slippage etc.).

Deduplication of the records was performed using EndNote and Rayyan, after which the screening was also performed using Rayyan. Two reviewers (JH and AdV) independently screened the titles and abstract for inclusion and categorized them into either include, exclude or maybe. All disagreements between the reviewers and records that were labeled at least once as maybe were discussed by the two reviewers: titles and abstracts were read again and discussed, after which a final decision was made. Records that were excluded were labeled with the reason for exclusion. We established a list of reasons on which records were excluded; region, population (e.g. incarcerated youth), topic/publication type (e.g. epidemiological reports), intervention (e.g. interventions to increase HPV vaccine uptake), outcome (e.g. condom use intention), study design (e.g. only a postintervention measure). If a study had multiple reasons for exclusion, the reason highest in the above list was selected. The full-text screening was performed by the same two reviewers in a similar fashion. Lastly, we performed a forward- and backward search and followed the same procedure for selection as the initial selection.

Data extraction

To extract the data, we created an extraction form in Qualtrics. Data were extracted independently by four reviewers in total and each paper was extracted by two reviewers to minimize potential errors and bias by the reviewers. In case of uncertainties regarding the data in a paper, the reviewers discussed and resolved the matter. If needed, we contacted the corresponding author of the paper for additional information to resolve uncertainties.

We extracted data on participant characteristics (e.g. mean age, sex) and intervention characteristics, including the name, setting, mode of delivery, duration, and, if stated in the paper, the behavioral model(s) used during intervention development. Extracted data on methodological characteristics included study

characteristics (e.g. study design) and outcome characteristics (e.g. type of outcome).

For each intervention, our primary outcome was self-reported condom use. We extracted data on the type of outcome variable (categorical or continuous) and descriptive measures (e.g. means, standard deviations) of the outcome at each time point (baseline/follow-up) and in each group (intervention/control). We also extracted data on each comparison of the outcome measurement, including the type of analysis, measure of effect, (un)adjusted effect size and variance and variables for which was adjusted and p values. We also assessed the secondary outcome STI diagnoses, if available. For STI outcomes, the same, above-mentioned, data as for the condom outcomes were extracted.

Risk of bias assessment

To assess the risk of bias, we used the criteria as stated in the Cochrane risk of bias tools for RCTs, cluster RCTs and non-randomized studies [29,30]. The assessed domains for RCTs were risk of bias in the randomization process, due to deviations from interventions, bias due to missing outcome data, bias in the selection of the reported results, and for cluster RCTs also bias due to timing of identification/recruitment of participants. For non-randomized studies the domains were risk of confounding, bias in selection of participants, bias due to classification of interventions, bias due to deviations from intended interventions, bias due to missing outcome data and bias due to selection of the reported results. All risk of bias tools also contain a domain on risk of bias in measurement of the outcome. We did not assess this, since all included studies assessed self-reported condom use, and therefore no differences in bias in measurement of the outcome between studies was expected.

Judgements on the risk of bias for each domain were made based on the signaling questions as stated in the risk of bias tools. For (cluster) RCTs, we followed the algorithms as suggested in the risk of bias tools. For nonrandomized studies, we used the tables from the risk of bias to that were designed to reach a judgement for each domain. Disagreements in the risk of bias judgements were resolved by one author (AdV), who thoroughly examined the support/explanation given for the judgement, the criteria as stated in the tools and the information in the paper. If needed, uncertainties were discussed with the other authors.

Data synthesis

Data were cleaned and prepared for analyses using Microsoft Excel and STATA/SE 17. Preparations included combining the two files of extracted data per paper. Differences and possible mistakes in the extracted data between the two reviewers were resolved by analyzing the corresponding papers.

We synthesized each intervention's effectiveness. In case of multiple interventions in one paper, each intervention counted separately. Also, if a unique study was reported in multiple papers, we considered the papers as different follow-up measures of the same study and intervention. Intervention conditions that differed in their content or mode of delivery were considered unique interventions. The extracted data on intervention characteristics included a description of the intervention. During data synthesis, we further specified characteristics into the setting and different levels of the mode of delivery. Interventions were classified using the Setting Ontology and the Mode of Delivery Ontology [31,32]. In short,

the setting could either be physical (e.g. group session) or nonphysical (e.g. text messages), and the facility of the setting could be a community-, educational-, health care- or residential facility. The mode of delivery was categorized into the persons it was delivered to (individual, pair or group), the direction of information (unidirectional or interactive) and the material of the intervention (electronic, human interactional, printed material, television/radio or visual information). The duration of the intervention was classified into single session/administration (one time intervention), short (up to six months) or long (six months or more). For interventions that had components of multiple categories, the most prominent category was selected, and therefore categories are mutually exclusive. Missing values in the information characteristics variables are due to the study not providing sufficient detail. Lastly, study designs were classified into RCT, cluster RCT or other. The category other consisted of all non-RCT study designs (e.g. randomized trials and longitudinal studies) that were grouped together as more specific subgroups would become too small.

Due to high levels of heterogeneity in measures of condom use, types of comparisons, effect measures and analyses, we were unable to perform meta-analyses. Meta-analyses would, thus include too few interventions per analysis to provide meaningful results. Therefore, we calculated an overall score of effectivity per intervention. Since condom use could be measured in multiple ways (e.g. different types of sex/partners) at different follow-up times per intervention, one intervention can have multiple comparisons. We first determined the effectiveness per comparison (i.e. statistical test determining the effectiveness of the intervention, thus a change in condom use over time or compared to a control condition). The extracted p values for each comparison of condom use were formed on the basis of which we determined intervention effectiveness per comparison (if $p < .05$). If the p values were unavailable, we based a statistical significant increase in condom use on confidence intervals (significant if the confidence intervals for odds ratio's and risk ratio's did not include the value 1, or 0 for other measures of effect) or on written texts stating that the association was (not) significant.

We then calculated the overall effectiveness score per intervention by dividing the number of effective comparisons by the total number of comparisons. For example, an intervention with only one comparison can have an effectiveness score of either 0% or 100%, whereas an intervention with 10 comparisons (i.e., five follow-up times for two condom measures (condom use with steady partners or with casual partners)) of which 6 effectively increased condom use has an effectiveness score of 60%. Interventions that showed a decrease in condom use were considered as no effect. As a high number of interventions with only one or two comparisons would consequently result in a high number of interventions with 0%, 50% or 100% effectiveness, the overall intervention effectiveness scores across interventions would not be normally distributed and median values are needed. Studies were eligible for synthesis when either p values or confidence intervals were available for comparisons between intervention- and control groups or premeasures and postmeasures.

To analyze characteristics related to the effective interventions, we performed Kruskal-Wallis tests, which test the equality of the medians. Statistical significance was set at $p \leq .05$. We compared effectiveness across interventions stratified by participant characteristics (region, age and sex), intervention

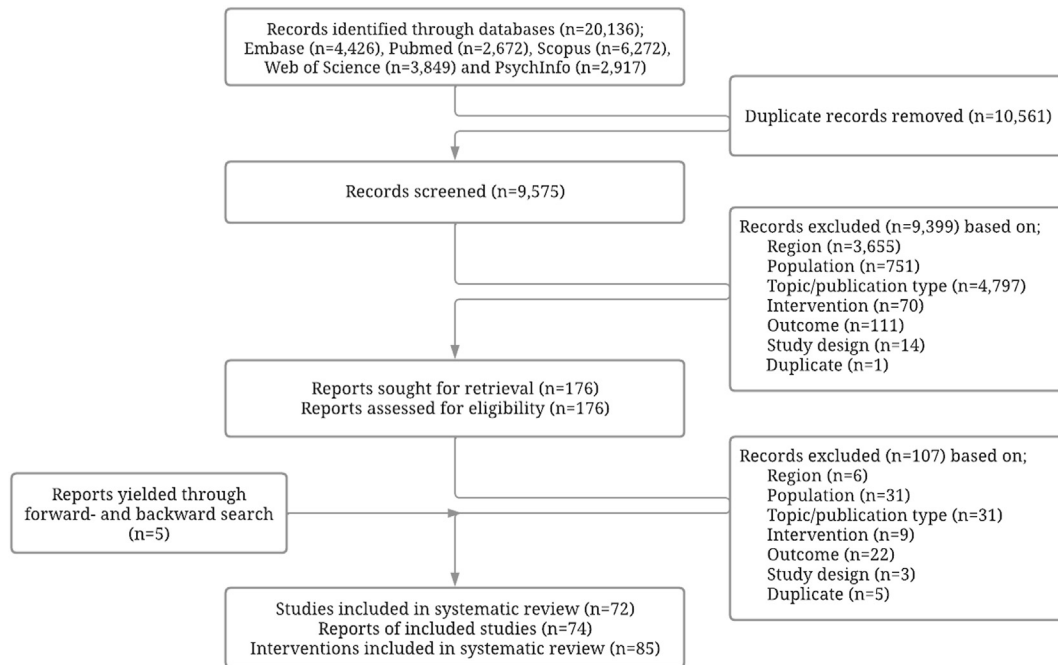


Figure 1. Flowchart of the paper selection and inclusion process.

characteristics (setting, mode of delivery, duration, and whether a behavioral model was used during intervention development). We also assessed methodological characteristics, consisting of study characteristics (design and sample size) and outcome characteristics (type of measure, period of follow-up, type of partner and type of sex). To assess the effect of behavioral models to interventions we also performed separate analyses in a subset of interventions per behavioral model for the models that were reported in ≥ 5 interventions. Sensitivity analyses were performed to analyze whether results were different for males and females and when using a subset of interventions that only reported multiple comparisons of the condom outcome. We did this to check for any possible bias as a result of the extensiveness of comparing the intervention's effect. All descriptive and statistical analyses were performed using STATA/SE 17.

Results

Study selection

We identified a total of 20,136 records, resulting in 9,575 records after deduplication (Figure 1). After screening titles and abstracts, 176 were selected to read in full text to assess eligibility, resulting in 74 papers of 72 unique studies included in the review (Figure 1). Some studies reported on multiple interventions. The included studies reported on 92 unique interventions. Of these interventions seven are only included in our descriptive- but not statistical analyses since they did not include statistical analyses, resulting in an ultimate sample of 85 interventions. The majority of studies were (cluster) RCTs (56.9%), had a sample size of 100–499 participants (37.8%), were published between 2014 and 2017 (41.9%) and were conducted in the United States (68.9%) (Table 1).

Primary outcome: condom use

Each unique intervention has its own effectiveness score, indicating the proportion (%) of comparisons in which condom use significantly increased (Table 1). A histogram of the non-normal distribution of these scores can be found in the Figure S1. Of the 85 interventions, 48 interventions (56.5%) reported one or more statistically significant increases in condom use. Overall, the median value of the effectiveness scores of the included interventions was 33.3% (interquartile range = 0.0%–66.7%) (Table 2). This means that the intervention with the median value of effectiveness significantly increased condom use in one of its three comparisons.

Starting with participant characteristics, no differences in median effectiveness were seen between interventions conducted in different geographical regions, or interventions targeted at young people with different ages (Table 2). However, differences in effectiveness were seen between interventions targeted to the different sexes of the study population ($\chi^2 = 13.62, p = .001$). Stratified analyses revealed that interventions aimed at males only ($\chi^2 = 8.56, p = .003$) and interventions aimed at females only ($\chi^2 = 7.44, p = .006$) had a higher median effectiveness compared with interventions aimed at a population consisting of both males and females. For intervention characteristics (setting, mode of delivery, duration of intervention), we found no difference in the median value of effectiveness scores in increasing condom use (Table 2). Also, for using a theoretical behavioral model, there was no difference in the median value of effectiveness between interventions that either reported to have used a behavioral model or not. However, analyses per behavioral model revealed that interventions using the Theory of Gender and Power had a significantly higher median score of effectiveness ($\chi^2 = 6.75, p = .009$) at increasing condom use compared with interventions that reported to have used a

Table 1
Study characteristics presented for the first intervention, intervention characteristics and effectiveness scores presented per intervention

Authors	Year	Design	Participants, n	Region	Age, mean	Sex	Name of intervention/ condition	Setting	Mode of delivery	Behavioral model(s)	Condom use			STI	
											Comparisons, n	Follow-up ^b	Effectiveness	Effectiveness	
Armstrong et al. [33]	2010	Other	174	USA	23	Males		health-care facility	human interactional		2	short	100%		
Aronson et al. [34]	2013	Other	57	USA	21	Males	Brothers Leading Healthy Lives (BLHL)	educational	human interactional	IMBSM, Big Man Little Man Complex	2	short	100%		
Ballester-Arnal et al. [35]	2017	Other	467	Europe	21	Both	B-PAPY (Brief Program for AIDS Prevention in Young)	educational	human interactional	behavioral change theories	25	both	8%		
Ballester-Arnal et al. [36]	2014	Other	239	Europe	21	Both	Talk ^a		human interactional	IMBSM	6	short	0%		
							Website ^a		electronic	IMBSM	6	short	0%		
							Attitude discussion ^a		human interactional	IMBSM	6	short	0%		
							Seropositive participant ^a		human interactional	IMBSM	6	short	0%		
							Fear-induction ^a		visual information	IMBSM	6	short	0%		
Bannink et al. [37]	2014	Cluster RCT	1,702	Europe	16	Both	Role-play ^a		human interactional	IMBSM	6	short	0%		
							E-Health4Uth	educational	electronic		3	short	67%		
							E-health4Uth + consult	educational	electronic		3	short	33%		
Berenson et al. [38]	2012	RCT	1,155	USA	20	Females	Clinic-based ^a	health-care facility	human interactional	HBM	1	long	0%	0%	
							Clinic-based + phone call ^a	health-care facility	human interactional	HBM	1	long	100%	0%	
Bull et al. [39,40]	2016, 2017	Cluster RCT	852	USA	15	Both	Youth All Engaged! (YAE)	educational	electronic	Integrated Theory of mHealth	4	both	50%		
Bull et al. [41]	2012	Cluster RCT	1,578	USA	20	Both	Just/Us		electronic		3	both	33%		
Calloway et al. [42]	2014	Other	129	USA	18	Both	Playing it Safe	educational	human interactional	HBM & SCT	1	short	0%		
Carey et al. [43]	2014	RCT	1,010	USA	29	Both		health-care facility	visual information	IMBSM, SDT & SLT	6	long	0%	33%	
Carvalho et al. [44]	2016	RCT	347	Europe	20	Males	Motivational intervention ^a		electronic	HAPA	4	short	75%		
							Volitional intervention ^a		electronic	HAPA	5	short	80%		
Cordova et al. [45]	2020	RCT	50	USA	19	Both	Storytelling 4 Empowerment	health-care facility	electronic	ecodevelopmental and empowerment theories	2	short	0%		
Cornelius et al. [46]	2013	Other	40	USA	15	Both	Becoming A Responsible Teen (BART)		human interactional		1	short	0%		
Cunha-Oliveira et al. [47]	2017	Other	1,303	Europe	19	Both		educational	human interactional	ARRM& IMBSM	4	long	25%		
Daley et al. [48]	2019	Cluster RCT	4,789	USA	NA	Both	Teen Outreach Program (TOP)	educational	human interactional	positive youth development (PYD)	6	both	33%		
Dermen et al. [49]	2011	RCT	154	USA	21	Both	HIV ^a	educational	human interactional		1	long	100%		
							HIV + alcohol ^a	educational	human interactional		1	long	0%		
DiClemente et al. [50]	2014	RCT	701	USA	17	Females	HORIZONS	health-care facility	human interactional		6	long	100%	50%	
DiClemente et al. [51]	2021	Other	560	USA	21	Females	HORIZONS + GMET	educational	human interactional	SCT	3	long	100%	0%	
							HORIZONS COMPAS	educational	human interactional	SCT	3	long	0%	0%	
Escribano et al. [52]	2016	Other	716	Europe	15	Both		educational	human interactional	SLT & IMBSM	3	both	0%		
Escribano et al. [53]	2015	Other	626	Europe	15	Both	¡Cuidate!	educational	human interactional	SCT & theories of reasoned and planned action	8	both	25%		
Espada et al. [54]	2017	Cluster RCT	1,563	Europe	17	Both	COMPAS	educational	human interactional	SLT & IMBSM	1	long	0%		
							¡Cuidate!	educational	human interactional	SCT& TPB	1	long	0%		
Estrada et al. [55]	2015	RCT	160	USA	15	Both	Brief Familias Unidas	educational	human interactional		3	long	33%		
Estrada et al. [56]	2017	Cluster RCT	746	USA	14	Both	Familias Unidas	educational	human interactional		2	long	50%		
Ferrer et al. [57]	2011	Other	176	USA	NA	Both	Social-cognitive ^a	educational	human interactional	IMBSM	2	both	0%		
							Social-cognitive-emotional ^a	educational	human interactional	IMBSM	2	both	100%		
Francis et al. [58]	2018	Other	195	USA	20	Females		residential facility		integrative model of behavioral prediction, & TGP	3	short	67%		
García-Retamero et al. [59]	2014	Other	700	Europe	19	Both	Positive framed ^a	educational	printed material		NA	NA	NA		
							Negative framed ^a	educational	printed material		NA	NA	NA		

Table 1
Continued

Authors	Year	Design	Participants, n	Region	Age, mean	Sex	Name of intervention/ condition	Setting	Mode of delivery	Behavioral model(s)	Condom use		STI	
											Comparisons, n	Follow-up ^b	Effectiveness	Effectiveness
García-Retamero et al. [60]	2015	Other	1,230	Europe	20	Both	Positive framed ^a	educational	human interactional		1	short	100%	
Gimenez-García et al. [61]	2018	RCT	225	Europe	21	Both	Negative framed ^a Peer-led ^a	educational	human interactional	IMBSM & participatory learning	1	short	100%	
Gold et al. [62]	2011	RCT	7,606	Australia	NA	Both	Expert-led ^a	educational	human interactional	IMBSM & participatory learning	10	short	50%	
Grycynski et al. [63]	2020	RCT	300	USA	16	Both	Nurse delivered ^a	health-care facility	human interactional	Precaution Adoption Process model, ToPB & Bandura's concept of self-efficacy	5	short	33%	
Hadley et al. [64]	2016	Other	170	USA	15	Both	Computer delivered ^a Work It Out Together	health-care facility	electronic	The Social-Personal Framework for HIV-Risk Behavior & SLT	4	both	0%	
Hennessy et al. [65]	2013	RCT	1,139	USA	NA	Both	iMPACCS	health-care facility	television & radio		1	long	100%	
Howard et al. [66]	2011	Other	254	USA	NA	Females	Sex 101	health-care facility	electronic	TRA & ITM	1	short	100%	
Jackson et al. [67]	2016	Other	372	USA	19	Both	Becoming a Responsible Teen (BART)	health-care facility	electronic		1	short	0%	
Jenner et al. [68]	2016	RCT	850	USA	15	Both	Caryn Forya iCuide!e!	health-care facility	human interactional		1	long	0%	
Jones et al. [69]	2012	Other	70	USA	NA	Both	Safer Sex Intervention Project Reach	educational	human interactional	HPM	NA	NA	NA	
Kelsey et al. [70]	2016	RCT	2,198	USA	14	Both	SiHLE	health-care facility	human interactional	SCT & ITM	3	long	0%	
Kelsey et al. [71]	2016	RCT	2,108	USA	17	Females	The Strong African American Families-Teen (SAAF-T) program	health-care facility	human interactional		3	long	0%	
Kirby et al. [72]	2010	RCT	805	USA	NA	Females	If I were Jack	educational	human interactional		2	long	0%	
Klein et al. [73]	2011	RCT	178	USA	16	Females	HIV/AIDS: Science, Behavior, and Society	community facility	electronic	SCT & TGP	1	short	100%	
Kogan et al. [74]	2012	Other	502	USA	16	Both	Tailored ^a	community facility	human interactional		2	long	50%	
Levy et al. [75]	2021	RCT	149	Europe	21	Both	Nontailored ^a	educational	electronic	social cognitive models	3	short	0%	
Lim et al. [76]	2011	RCT	994	Australia	NA	Both		educational	electronic		4	long	0%	
Lohan et al. [77]	2018	Cluster RCT	831	Europe	15	Both		educational	electronic		NA	NA	NA	
Marsiglia et al. [78]	2013	Other	358	USA	22	Both		educational	human interactional		1	short	0%	
Mevisse et al. [79]	2011	RCT	218	Europe	21	Both		educational	electronic	ARRM, extended parallel process model	2	short	50%	
Montanaro et al. [80]	2018	Other	317	USA	19	Both		educational	electronic	ARRM, extended parallel process model	2	short	50%	
Morales et al. [81]	2020	Cluster RCT	699	Europe	15	Both		educational	human interactional	TPB	3	short	0%	
Morales et al. [82]	2015	Cluster RCT	1,030	Europe	16	Both	COMPAS	educational	human interactional	IMBSM, SLT & TPB	3	long	67%	
Morrison-Beedy et al. [83]	2013	RCT	738	USA	17	Females	COMPAS iCuide!e!	educational	human interactional	SLT & IMBSM	1	long	0%	
Nebor et al. [84]	2015	Other	181	Europe	NA	Both		health-care facility	human interactional	IMBSM	18	both	22%	
Negash et al. [85]	2020	RCT	271	USA	NA	Both		community facility	human interactional	SCT	5	short	60%	
Nielsen et al. [86]	2019	RCT	433	Europe	20	Both	Skyddsåslaget (protection team)	educational	visual information	TPB & Integrated Model	5	short	67%	
Norton et al. [87]	2012	Other	198	USA	19	Both		educational	electronic	Behavioural Model	4	long	0%	0%
Pakarinen et al. [88]	2019	Cluster RCT	683	Europe	NA	Both		educational	visual information	IMBSM	8	short	0%	
Redding et al. [89]	2014	Other	828	USA	16	Females		health-care facility	human interactional	TTM	1	short	0%	
											7	long	29%	(continued on next page)

Table 1
Continued

Authors	Year	Design	Participants, n	Region	Age, mean	Sex	Name of intervention/ condition	Setting	Mode of delivery	Behavioral model(s)	Condom use			STI
											Comparisons, n	Follow-up ^b	Effectiveness	Effectiveness
Reyna et al. [90]	2014	RCT	734	USA	16	Both	Reducing the risk (RTR)	educational	human interactional	fuzzy-trace theory, social learning, social inoculation, and cognitive behavior theories	3	long	33%	
Reyna et al. [90]							Reducing the risk+ (RTR+)	educational	human interactional	fuzzy-trace theory, social learning, social inoculation, and cognitive behavior theories	3	long	33%	
Rinehart et al. [91]	2019	RCT	244	USA	16	Females	Texting for Sexual Health Education and Empowerment (t4she)		electronic	HBM	2	both	0%	
Sapiano et al. [92]	2012	Other	615	USA	29	Females	Sisters Informing Sisters about Topics on Aids (SISTA)	community facility	human interactional	SCT & TGP	3	both	100%	
Serowoky et al. [93]	2015	Other	24	USA	16	Females	iCuidate!	health-care facility	human interactional	TRA	NA	short	NA	
Shafii et al. [94]	2019	RCT	272	USA	21	Both	e-KISS	health-care facility	electronic	IMBSM	3	short	33%	0%
Sieving et al. [95–97]	2011, 2013, 2014	RCT	253	USA	16	Females	Prime Time	health-care facility	human interactional	SCT & the resilience paradigm	1	long	80%	
Snitzman et al. [98]	2011	Other	1,383	USA	15	Both		community facility	television & radio		1	long	0%	
Snitzman et al. [99]	2011	Other	1,346	USA	15	Both		community facility	television & radio	Bandura's social cognitive theory of mass communication	1	long	0%	
Starosta et al. [100]	2016	RCT	422	USA	19	Females					4	short	25%	
Walsh-Buhi et al. [101]	2016	Cluster RCT	7,976	USA	15	Both	Teen Outreach Program (TOP)	educational	human interactional		54	short	17%	
Wingood et al. [102]	2011	RCT	135	USA	24	Females	SAHARA	health-care facility	electronic	SCT & TGP	2	short	50%	
Wingood et al. [103]	2013	RCT	848	USA	22	Females		health-care facility	human interactional	SCT & TGP	3	long	33%	67%
Yarber et al. [104]	2018	Other	67	USA	NA	Females	Kinsey Institute Home-based Exercises for Responsible Sex (KIHERS)	residential facility	printed material	sex therapy approach & IMBSM	1	short	100%	
Yoost et al. [105]	2016	Other	50	USA	16	Females		educational	electronic		1	long	100%	
Zellner et al. [106]	2015	Other	192	USA	20	Both		community facility	human interactional	Self-efficacy Model, the Theory of Change Model, & HBM	1	short	100%	

IMBSM = Information-motivation-behavior-Skills Model; HBM = Health Belief Model; SCT = Social Cognitive Theory; SLT = Social Learning Theory; SDT = Self-determination Theory; HAPA = Health Action Process Model; ARRM = AIDS Risk Reduction Model; TPA = Theory of Planned Action; TGP = Theory of Gender and Power; ToRA = Theory of Reasoned Action; HPM = Health Promotion model; TTM = Trans Theoretical Model; TPB = Theory of Planned Behavior.

^a Names indicate the condition of the intervention in case of multiple intervention in one study.

^b Short term was defined as <6 months, long term as ≥ 6 months.

Table 2
Analyses of median values of intervention's effectiveness scores in increasing condom use

	Total		Median	IQR		χ^2	p value
	n	%		Q1	Q3		
Total of interventions	85	100.0	33.3	0.0	66.7		
Participant characteristics							
Region							
Australia	2	2.4	16.7	0.0	33.3	1.26	.532
Europe	29	34.1	8.0	0.0	60.0		
USA	54	63.5	33.3	0.0	100.0		
Total	85		33.3	0.0	66.7		
Age ^a							
<20	48	60.8	26.8	0.0	55.0	1.21	.548
20–24	29	36.7	33.3	0.0	100.0		
25–29	2	2.5	50.0	0.0	100.0		
Total	79		33.3	0.0	66.7		
Sex							
Females	20	23.5	73.3	12.5	100.0	13.62	.001
Males	4	4.7	90.0	77.5	100.0		
Both	61	71.8	0.0	0.0	50.0		
Total	85		33.3	0.0	66.7		
Intervention characteristics							
Setting							
Nonphysical	12	14.1	12.5	0.0	41.7	0.68	.409
Physical	73	85.9	33.3	0.0	75.0		
Total	85		33.3	0.0	66.7		
Setting – facility ^a							
Community facility	7	11.1	60.0	0.0	100.0	3.68	.298
Educational facility	38	60.3	33.3	0.0	60.0		
Health-care facility	16	25.4	33.3	0.0	100.0		
Residential facility	2	3.2	83.3	66.7	100.0		
Total	63		33.3	0.0	100.0		
Mode of delivery - persons delivered to ^a							
Individual	40	48.2	33.3	0.0	90.0	1.06	.588
Pair	4	4.8	41.7	16.7	50.0		
Group	39	47.0	8.0	0.0	60.0		
Total	83		33.3	0.0	75.0		
Mode of delivery - direction of information							
Unidirectional	22	25.9	16.7	0.0	66.7	0.35	.553
Interactive	63	74.1	33.3	0.0	80.0		
Total	85		33.3	0.0	66.7		
Mode of delivery - material of intervention ^a							
Electronic	25	30.1	33.3	0.0	75.0	4.89	.299
Human interactional	49	59.0	33.3	0.0	66.7		
Printed material	1	1.2	100.0	100.0	100.0		
Television & radio	3	3.6	0.0	0.0	100.0		
Visual information	5	6.0	0.0	0.0	100.0		
Total	83		33.3	0.0	75.0		
Duration of intervention ^a							
Single session/administration	28	34.1	33.3	0.0	70.8	0.51	.774
Short (<6 months)	40	48.8	33.3	0.0	83.3		
Long (\geq 6 months)	14	17.1	22.6	0.0	50.0		
Total	82		33.3	0.0	66.7		
Behavioral model for intervention development							
Did not report a behavioral model	24	28.2	33.3	0.0	100.0	0.42	.516
Reported a behavioral model	61	71.8	33.3	0.0	66.7		
Total	85		33.3	0.0	66.7		
Methodological characteristics							
Study characteristics							
Study design							
Cluster RCT	13	15.3	33.3	0.0	50.0	0.43	.807
RCT	36	42.4	33.3	0.0	77.5		
Other ^b	36	42.4	16.5	0.0	100.0		
Total	85		33.3	0.0	66.7		
Sample size							
1–100	7	8.2	100.0	0.0	100.0	1.39	.708
101–500	38	44.7	29.2	0.0	75.0		
501–1000	19	22.4	33.3	0.0	50.0		
1000+	21	24.7	16.7	0.0	50.0		
Total	85		33.3	0.0	66.7		
Outcome characteristics ^c							
Type of measure							
Categorical	45	46.9	33.3	0.0	60.0	1.53	.465

(continued on next page)

Table 2
Continued

	Total		Median	IQR		χ^2	p value
	n	%		Q1	Q3		
Continuous	40	41.7	0.0	0.0	100.0		
Last sex	11	11.5	50.0	0.0	100.0		
Total	96		33.3	0.0	70.8		
Follow-up							
Short (<6 months)	56	55.0	33.3	0.0	90.0	2.10	.147
Long (\geq 6 months)	48	46.0	0.0	0.0	58.3		
Total	104		25.0	0.0	77.5		
Type of partner							
Casual	7	7.1	0.0	0.0	50.0	0.89	.641
Steady	6	6.1	26.7	0.0	100.0		
Unspecified	86	86.9	33.3	0.0	66.7		
Total	99		28.6	0.0	66.7		
Type of sex							
Vaginal	24	19.0	0.0	0.0	70.0	6.58	.254
Anal	4	3.2	10.0	0.0	40.0		
Oral	5	4.0	0.0	0.0	0.0		
Vaginal/anal	17	13.5	0.0	0.0	0.0		
Vaginal/anal/oral	7	5.6	0.0	0.0	0.0		
Unspecified	69	54.8	25.0	0.0	60.0		
Total	126		0.0	0.0	60.0		

IQR = Interquartile range.

^a The number of outcomes in this variable is lower than the total due to missing data.

^b Other designs include all studies that are not a (cluster) RCT.

^c The total number of outcomes under the section outcome characteristics is higher than the total number of interventions, because studies could report more than one condom measure.

different behavioral model (Table 3). Finally, study characteristics (study design and sample size) and outcome characteristics (type of measure, follow-up period, type of partner, and type of sex) showed no significant differences in the median value of effectiveness scores in increasing condom use (Table 2). Additional information on the type of condom use measure can be found in Table S1. In short, eight different types of measure (e.g. condom use during the last sex act or a percentage indicating the consistency of condom use) were used, which did not significantly differ in the median value of effectiveness.

Secondary outcome: sexually transmitted infections

11 interventions from nine studies also assessed STI outcomes. Two only included descriptive analyses, leaving nine interventions for analyses. The assessed STIs were mainly chlamydia (n = 6) and gonorrhea (n = 5), but also included trichomoniasis (n = 4), syphilis (n = 1), HIV (n = 1), and high-risk HPV (n = 1). STI outcomes were assessed between 3 and 36 months postintervention, either as a part of the study or based on self-reported test outcomes. Of the nine interventions, three interventions reported statistically significant decreases in STIs and six reported no significant decreases in STIs (Table 4), resulting in a median value of the effectiveness score of 0%. Of the three effective interventions, one intervention significantly decreased high-risk HPV but not nonviral STIs (chlamydia, gonorrhea and trichomoniasis), one intervention decreased chlamydia infections, but not gonococcal infections, and one intervention decreased STIs (chlamydia, gonorrhea, trichomoniasis, syphilis or HIV) on the long term follow-ups (>7 months) but not on the short term follow-ups (\leq 7 months). Two of the three interventions that showed decreases in STIs also showed a significant increases in condom use. The small number of studies that measures STI outcomes hinder any statistical analyses.

Sensitivity analyses

To check for possible differences in intervention effectiveness for interventions that measured condom use in multiple ways (i.e., more comparisons), we repeated the main analyses of condom use among a subset of interventions that had two or more comparisons (73% of interventions) and three or more comparisons (54% of interventions). We also conducted the main analyses stratified by gender. This both did not change the findings (data not shown).

Risk of bias assessment

Risk of bias assessments revealed that 1% of all studies had a low overall risk of bias, 5% moderate, 92% high, and 1% critical risk of bias (Table S2). Since we included different types of study designs, the assessed domains of bias are different between study types. Each domain represents a specific aspect of a study in which bias may be introduced. For RCTs and cluster RCTs the domain with the highest proportion (94% and 50%, respectively) of studies with a high risk of bias was domain two; deviations from intended interventions (e.g. failures in implementing the intervention). The majority of high risk of bias judgments in this domain resulted from underreporting of adherence to the interventions. For other designs, domain one; confounding (65%) had the highest proportion of studies with a high risk of bias. The high number of studies with a high risk of bias meant that analyses excluding studies with a high risk of bias were not possible.

Discussion

Our review found low median values for intervention's effectiveness in improving condom use and reducing STI's among young people. Interventions conducted among each sex separately demonstrated a higher median value of effectiveness

Table 3

Univariate analyses of the effect of using a particular behavioral model compared to interventions that used another model, only including models used in ≥ 5 interventions

	Model reported	n	Median	Q1	Q3	%	χ^2	p value
Overall		61	33.3	0.0	66.7	100.0		
Behavioral model								
Social learning theory	No	53	33.3	0.0	75.0	86.9	1.97	.160
	Yes	8	0.0	0.0	33.3	13.1		
Information-motivation-behavior-skills model	No	40	33.3	0.0	77.5	65.6	1.36	.244
	Yes	21	0.0	0.0	50.0	34.4		
Theory of planned behavior	No	54	31.0	0.0	75.0	88.5	0.01	.934
	Yes	7	33.3	0.0	50.0	11.5		
Social-cognitive theory	No	49	28.6	0.0	50.0	80.3	0.93	.335
	Yes	12	46.7	0.0	100.0	19.7		
Theory of gender and power	No	56	16.5	0.0	55.0	91.8	6.75	.009
	Yes	5	100.0	66.7	100.0	8.2		

compared with interventions conducted among both sexes combined. We did not find a difference in effectiveness in increasing condom use between interventions that were either based on a behavioral model or not. However, analyses of the most frequently reported models showed that interventions that applied the Theory of Gender and Power had a significantly higher intervention effectiveness compared with interventions that reported applying other behavioral models.

The main strength of this systematic review is its broad scope. Our review provides a comprehensive overview of all study types on any intervention aimed at improving condom use among youth in Western, high-income countries. However, the broadness of the review also resulted in a high level of heterogeneity in reported measures for condom use (e.g. the type of sex and partner), types of comparisons (e.g. compared over time or between intervention- and control groups) and analyses to measure the effects on condom use (e.g. generalized estimating equations and analysis of variance). This heterogeneity hampered the performance of meta-analyses to assess the strength of intervention effectiveness. However, we did base our analyses on whether an intervention significantly increased condom use for each of the comparisons rather than the effect size of each comparison. As a result, interventions with a small but significant increase are treated the same way as interventions with a high increase in condom use. Another limitation is the variation in the duration of the interventions, specifically in the short category, as these interventions could

range between a few hours and a few months. However, since majority of short interventions had a duration between 5 and 10 hours and were divided over multiple sessions in a time period of 2–3 months, we expect the variation to be of little influence on the findings. Another limitation is that in some categories the number of interventions was relatively small. This may have reduced the analyses' power in detecting differences between the groups. Also, we did not extract information on the levels of the Social-Ecological model that were targeted, which may be of interest to assess in future research. Last, we only focused on an increase in condom use and treated decreases in condom use as the intervention having no effect. However, only three interventions found negative effects or a significantly higher increase of condom use in the control condition. Reasons included a decrease in condom use among the full sample, or small subgroup analyses. We, therefore, expect the impact of such negative effects on our findings to be negligible. Last, based on the risk of bias assessment, some concerns may arise on the reliability of the results. However, this higher risk of bias is mostly inevitable due to the nature of the included interventions. For example, in RCT studies, one of the assessed topics that increased risk of bias was whether the participant is aware of the intervention. In our context this is inevitable and also less relevant than it would be in e.g. a drug trial. For this reason, we expect the assessed risk of bias to be an overestimation of the actual risk of bias. Additionally, since we did not find a difference in the effectiveness scores between (cluster) RCTs and other designs, we expect our results to be robust.

Our study found a low overall median value of intervention effectiveness scores. This means that overall, the majority of interventions showed improvements in condom use for only few of the comparisons. This is in line with previous literature that demonstrate mixed findings on the effectiveness of condom use interventions [15,16,19,24–26,107–109]. Altogether, this shows that condom use is a behavior that may be difficult to improve by interventions. However, it remains unknown to what extent an increase in condom use affects STI transmission. Small increases in condom use in a large population may already affect STI transmission and consequently positively impact sexual health. In our review we included STI outcomes, yet the low number of studies that measured this makes it difficult to form any conclusions. More research is needed how improvements in condom use affect the transmission of STIs.

Table 4

Values of the effectiveness scores of interventions that measures STI outcomes, for both effectiveness in decreasing STIs and increasing condom use

Authors	Effectiveness scores	
	STIs	Condom use
Berenson et al. [38]	0%	0%
Berenson et al. [38]	0%	100%
Carey et al. [43]	33%	0%
DiClemente et al. [51]	0%	100%
DiClemente et al. [51]	0%	0%
DiClemente et al. [50]	50%	100%
Nielsen et al. [86]	0%	0%
Shafii et al. [94]	0%	33%
Wingood et al. [103]	67%	33%
Overall median	0%	33%

However, we did find a difference in intervention effectiveness between the sexes to which the interventions were aimed. Interventions aimed at either females or males were more effective in increasing condom use than interventions aimed at both sexes combined, which suggests that sex-specific interventions may be more effective in improving condom use. This is in line with a systematic review of meta-analyses that found that behavioral interventions to promote condom use that are successful when tailored for example to gender [108].

Our review could not demonstrate a difference in effectiveness between interventions that were based on behavioral models compared with interventions that were not. This was unexpected, as research has demonstrated that interventions based on theoretical behavior models effectively improve condom use [19,108]. A possible explanation include that our review only included the reported behavioral models, but not to what extent the used behavior change techniques were actually in line with the constructs of the reported behavioral models as this is often not reported in publications. This would, therefore, be of interest for future research. However, when focusing only on studies that did report a behavioral model, we did find that interventions using the Theory of Gender and Power had a significantly higher effectiveness than interventions that used another behavioral model. In existing literature, this theory has been applied to HIV risk and demonstrates how different gender-specific factors, e.g. power imbalances, put females at a higher risk for HIV and presumably other STIs [110]. Though this theory mainly focuses on gender, some aspects of condom use may depend on biological sex, more specifically on genitalia. Power imbalances in a sexual context, for example, may exist as a result of gender, but also from having a penis as opposed to having receptive sex with a person with a penis. The latter involves both dependance on and convincing of the partner to use a condom. Effective interventions in our review aimed at females for example focused on communication-, relationship- and negotiation skills [73,92,102,103]. On the other hand, effective interventions aimed at males for example focused on information about sexual and reproductive health, STI transmission and condom use, personal and social motivations, responsibility, and the protection of partners [33,34].

Only recently has gender become less binary, and therefore research on condom use interventions among transgender and gender diverse persons is lacking. Since in most research, including interventions in our review, sex and gender are interwoven, it is unclear whether interventions should target aspects that are sex-specific or gender-specific. The higher effectiveness of sex- and/or gender-specific interventions do, however, illustrate that when improving condom use, one size may not fit all, and that both sex- and gender differences should be taken into account.

In conclusion, our systematic review suggests that condom use remains a behavior that is difficult to improve by interventions. More research is needed into how changes in condom use affect the transmission of STIs. Tailoring interventions to different genders and/or sex may increase an intervention's effectiveness, which is something future interventions should take into consideration.

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Supplementary Data

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