

Background

- Partnership classifications following a “Main/Steady/Primary” or “Casual/Non-steady/Irregular” dichotomy are commonly used in research on sexual risk behavior, however no operationalized definitions have been established.
- Youth tend to have dynamic/ephemeral partnerships.
- Main/Casual dichotomy fails to describe the characteristics and qualities of relationships that influence riskier or safer sex, particularly amid concurrency of partnerships and rates of unprotected sex.^{1,2,3}
- To understand how partnership types affect sexual risk behaviors, classifications used must be relevant to the study population.
- The purpose of this study was to examine the influence of partnership characteristics on condom use among young African American (AA) women.

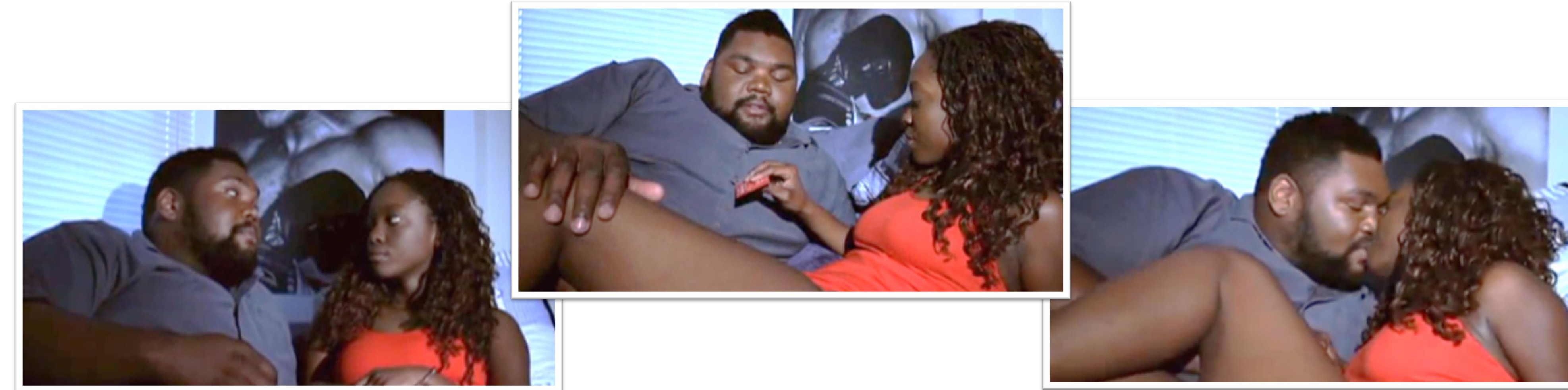


Table 1: Selected characteristics of participants sexually active in past 3 months (N=331)

Characteristic	n	%
Number of male sex partners		
1	255	77.0
2	54	16.3
3+	22	6.6
Baseline STI Results (n=328)		
Chlamydia positive	39	11.9
Gonorrhea positive	6	1.8

Table 2: Classifications & Characteristics of Sexual Partnerships (N=434 partnerships)

Classification	n	%
Boyfriend	205	47.2
An ex-boyfriend	91	21.0
Friend with benefits	89	20.5
Someone I want to have a relationship with	80	18.4
One-night stand	22	5.1
Someone I have sex with, but not necessarily a friend	17	3.9
Fiancé	14	3.2
Father of my child	11	2.5
Husband	1	0.2
Other		
Close friend / Best Friend / Friend	7	1.6
Complicated	1	0.2
“Trade Boy”	1	0.2
First Love	1	0.2
Number of Classification categories (n=429)		
1 Category	347	80.9
>1 Category	82	19.1
One-time encounter	116	26.7
Main	307	70.7
Casual	127	29.3
Condom Use (n=392)		
Consistent (“Always”)	172	43.8
Inconsistent (“Sometimes” or “Never”)	220	56.1

Table 3: Comparing partnership classifications to “Main” or “Casual” (N=434)

Partnership Type	n	Main	% total	p-value
Boyfriend	204	199	97.5	<0.0001
Fiancé	14	14	100.0	0.0133
Friend with benefits	89	38	42.7	<0.0001
One-night stand	22	0	0	<0.0001
Someone I have sex with, but not necessarily a friend	17	4	23.5	<0.0001
Father of my child	11	10	90.0	0.1877
Someone I want to have a relationship with	79	53	67.1	0.3791
An ex-boyfriend	91	61	67.0	0.4835
Husband	1	1	100.0	1.0000
Other				
Close friend / Best Friend / Friend	7	2	28.6	0.0245
Complicated	1	1	100.0	1.0000
“Trade Boy”	1	0	0	1.0000
First Love	1	0	0	1.0000

Table 4: Potential Predictors of Inconsistent Condom Use (N=434)

Partnership Type	OR	95% CI
Boyfriend	2.05	1.37-3.09
Father of my child	3.19	0.66-15.21
Friend with benefits	0.46	0.28-0.75
Someone I have sex with, but not necessarily a friend	0.88	0.31-2.49
An ex-boyfriend	0.83	0.50-1.38
Someone I want to have a relationship with	0.81	0.49-1.36
One-night stand	0.61	0.23-1.57
Fiancé	2.67	0.72-9.84
Main Partner	2.17	1.39-3.41
Casual Partner	0.46	0.29-0.72
Using non-barrier birth control	2.49	1.62-3.79
Belief that partner has other partners	0.65	0.43-0.96
Belief it is likely to acquiring STD from partner	1.16	0.64-2.08
Planning on having sex with partner again	2.20	1.40-3.48

Results (cont'd)

- Of the 392 partnerships with report on condom use, 56.1% had inconsistent condom use.
- More likely to report inconsistent condom use if:
 - partner was a “Boyfriend” [2.05 (1.37-3.09)]
 - reported use of non barrier birth control [2.49 (1.62-3.79)]
 - partner was “Main” [2.17 (1.39-3.41)]
 - reported that they would have sex with the partner again [2.20 (1.40-3.48)]
- More likely to report consistent condom use if:
 - partner was a “Friend with benefits” [0.46 (0.28-0.75)]
 - partner was “Casual” [0.46 (0.29-0.72)]
 - participant believes their partner has other partners [0.65 (0.43-0.96)]

Discussion

- Sexual partnership classifications among older adolescents are more nuanced than main and casual; more precision may be needed to accurately tailor counseling messages.
- While consistent condom use was found more often for partnerships that would be considered less stable (e.g. one night stand, friend with benefits) relationships that were more intimate (e.g. someone I want to have a relationship with, ex-boyfriend) had higher rates of inconsistent condom use.
- Counseling messages should reinforce the need to use condoms with partnerships that are intimate but sporadic.

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Results

- 331 women who had sex in the past 3 months reported 434 sexual partnerships; 19.1% were classified using > 1 category.
- Most commonly reported partnerships were “Boyfriend” (47.2%), “ex-Boyfriend” (21.0%), “Friend with benefits” (20.5%) and “Someone I want to have a relationship with” (18.4%).

