

**STD-HIV awareness and perception of risk among men enrolled in Venezuelan army.**

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**Abstract:** Objective: To explore STD-HIV knowledge, identify factors that facilitate risk behaviors and barriers of safe sex and, to explore attitudes and condom use in soldiers enrolled in the Venezuelan army. Methods: This was a qualitative study. 32 men, gathered at random among the battalion, filled out a questionnaire and were interviewed in-depth. Results: The subjects are of about STD-HIV, but have some misconceptions. All the subjects say they have sex with a girlfriend and most of them also with prostitutes and occasional partners. The only safe sex practice they know is condoms, having mixed feelings about it. On one hand, they think the condom is "useful" and "necessary", and on the other, "uncomfortable" and "unpleasant". The few subjects who use condoms with the girlfriends use it "as a birth control method", and with prostitutes and occasional partners as a way to prevent STDs. Most of them reject the possibility of using a condom if the girlfriend asks for it, but they would accept it if the partner is a prostitute. Conclusions: It is necessary to design intervention strategies addressed to these men in order to reinforce their perceptions of risk and to identify risk situations. This includes more information about condom use. Complementary to this campaign, it would be useful to address prostitutes encouraging them to ask their clients to use condoms.