



Preventing HIV Infections among Truck Drivers



How to use this book

HIV infections are still on the increase because of many reasons one of which is the behaviour of having many sexual partners and low correct and consistent condom use. Long distance truck drivers are one of the key populations that are said to be facilitating the spread of HIV across the African continent.

This is mostly because of the nature of your work which involves a lot of mobility and spending long hours on the road and away from your families. This makes you lack entertainment and female companionship. Because of this, you may use the services of female sex workers in stop over towns and trading centers along the major transport routes. These places have developed a network of infrastructural services that meet your business and recreation needs. This includes infrastructure such as bars, lodges and sometimes designated houses for women who you have sexual relationships with. This results in sexual networks that expose you, community members as well as your wives and regular partners at home leading to high prevalence of HIV among you and populations along the transport corridors.

This book will help you understand how HIV is spread through multiple and concurrent sexual partnerships amidst low levels of correct and consistent condom use. It will also show how as a truck driver, you can protect yourself as well as your sexual partner from getting HIV infected. It will help you realize the risk you put yourself in as well as your wife when involved with many sexual partners.

This booklet provides important information on what you, as a driver and as part of a community can do to prevent the further spread of HIV through reducing the behaviour of having many sexual partners but also using condoms correctly and consistently every time you have sex with a non regular sexual partner.

Everyone of us want to be protected from HIV infection. We all want to protect our loved ones from HIV infection so that we can have an HIV free world. Read this book carefully and discuss it with your friends. Encourage one another to help prevent transmission of HIV by promoting correct and consistent condom use but also reducing the number of sexual partners that you have.



Multiple & Concurrent Partnerships



Truck drivers and MCP

Having multiple and concurrent Sexual Partners

When you have more than one sexual relationship at the same time, it means you are having multiple and concurrent sexual partners (MCP). It also means that your partner is connected with all the people you are having sex with.

Why do many truck drivers have multiple sexual partners?
As truck drivers, you are said to be at high risk of HIV infection because you have many sexual partners. There are different reasons for this. What could some of these reasons be:

- Your life is very mobile. You stay away from your spouses for longer periods of time. 
- Life away from home could be stressful and boring. This may make you think of other ways of finding fun. 
- You may find fun in female sex workers as well as women from surrounding communities who you find in bars and rest houses where you rest after long periods of travel. 

- Because you frequently drive through the same places, some of these relationships turn into regular sexual relationships.
- You may also engage in sex with female sex workers due to the influence of alcohol and other drugs.



Think about this!

Having more than one sexual partner increases the risk of HIV infection. Reduce the number of sexual partners to reduce your risk of being infected with the HIV.

Ask yourself these questions. Think about them and take some time to discuss them with your friends:



- How many sexual partners do I have?
- Do I always use condoms with my non-regular sexual partners?
- Do I know if my sexual partners have other sexual partners that I don't about?
- Do these sexual partners always use condoms when having sex with any other sexual partner?
- Can I get infected with HIV from these partners?

When you stay long in such a relationship, you develop trust with the sexual partner. You may think that you are the only one who is having sex with that partner. You may stop believing that the sexual partner could have other sexual partners besides you.



Think about this!

Think about the following questions and discuss them with your friend.



- Do you have sexual partners who you trust and have unprotected sex with?
- If so what makes you think that your sexual partner does not have other sexual partners that she also trusts and have unprotected sex with?
- Do you ever think you can get HIV or Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs) from the sexual partners that you have unprotected sex with?

Trust in a sexual relationship

- Because of trust, you may start having unprotected sex with your non-regular sexual partner.
- Your sexual partner could have other sexual partners that she trusts and have unprotected sex with.
- Because of this, you become connected into a sexual network of people you are not aware of. Some could be your fellow drivers.
- If one person in the network becomes infected with HIV, you too as well as other people in the network will be at risk of being infected with HIV.



Important Information!

Having more than one sexual partner increases the risk of HIV infection. Reduce the number of sexual partners to reduce your risk of being infected with the HIV.

Should I trust my sexual Partner



I know I am the only one, I trust you dear.

I hope you will not discover that you are not the only one.



Why are these relationships risky?

- You do not stay for a long time with one particular woman. Because of this, you cannot know who else she is having sex with when you are not around.
- Because you frequently pass by and stay temporarily with her, you develop trust. She may even lie to you that you are the only one. She may even say to you that she does not have other sexual partners.

Think about these questions:

- What will happen when you start trusting these sexual partners?
- How many people will you be connected with sexually by having unprotected sex with one sexual partner?
- What if you have more than one sexual partner that you have unprotected sex with?

How can I get HIV in a sexual network?



Why are these relationships risky?

- HIV is easily transmitted from one person to the other through unprotected sexual intercourse. That is the reason why it is easy for a person who has more than one sexual partner and does not use condoms to get infected with HIV or infect others.
- When HIV enters a person's body, it multiplies very quickly in large numbers during the first few weeks after someone has just been infected. You may not know if the person you are having unprotected sex with has just been infected or not.
- When you have unprotected sex with such a person within that period, chances are very high that you can become infected with HIV as well. It is therefore important to always use condoms when having sex with a partner whose HIV status you are not sure of.
- If you are married and have unprotected sex, you risk infecting your wife or regular sexual partner.

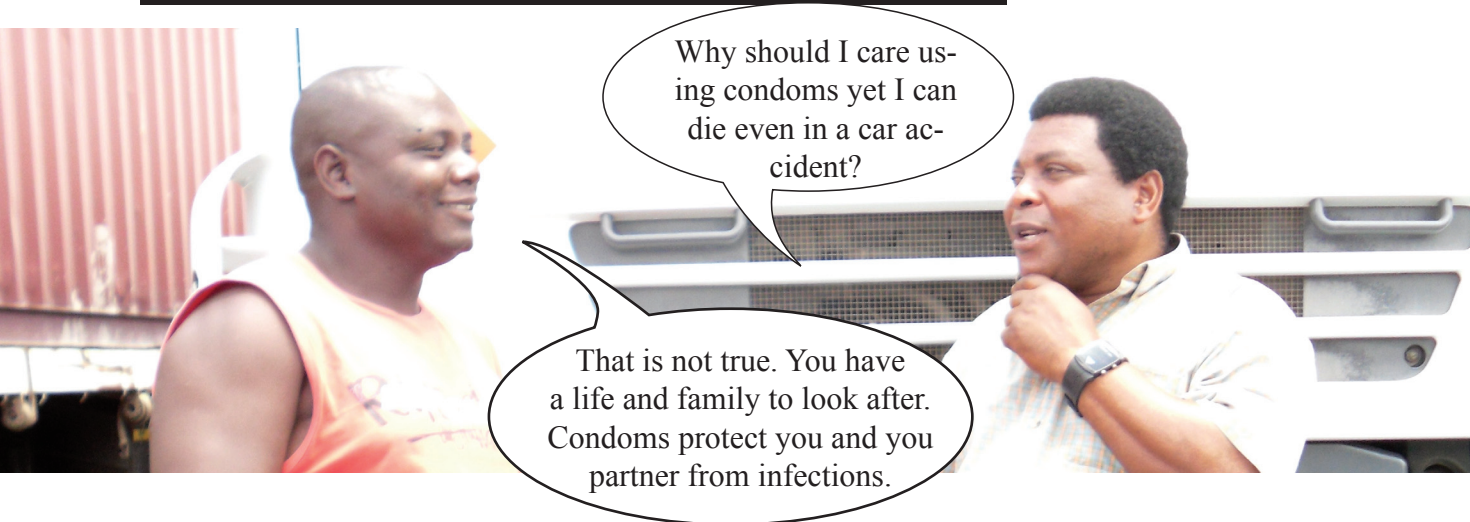
Important Information!

If one person in the sexual network becomes infected with HIV the HIV will most likely be transmitted to all the people in the network.

REMEMBER!

You cannot tell if the person you are having sex with is HIV positive or not. You cannot tell if that person just has unprotected sex with another person who could be infected with HIV.

Condoms and HIV and STI prevention



Most truck drivers do not care about condom use because they think their job is already risky and that they can die any time due to accidents on the road.

This is wrong thinking. There are people who have been in this job for years and haven't died. If they were careless and not used condoms, they should have died by now.



Condoms protect you and your partner from STIs and HIV. If you stay free of HIV, you protect yourself as well as your family from STIs and HIV. This means you can stay longer and safe while working as a driver.



How can a condom protect me from HIV and other STIs?



- Condoms are made of a rubber, which significantly reduces transmission of STIs and HIV.
- Condoms can only give you maximum protection if you correctly and consistently use them every time you have sex. Inconsistent use of condoms means you sometimes use condoms and sometimes not. This can lead to STIs and HIV infection because you can get infected through a single act of intercourse with an infected partner.
- Correct condom use means that you put on the condom correctly to avoid it breaking or slipping off during intercourse.

Condom use and trusted sexual partner

Why should I use a condom with a sexual partner whom I have known for a long time and I trust?

Do not trust the sexual relationships that you develop along the transport route. Always use condoms correctly and consistently to avoid HIV and STI infections.



As truck drivers we are mobile. We do not stay long at one place due to the nature of our jobs

Because of this, some of us have sexual partners in many places along the transport route

The female partners may also have other sexual partners whom they have sex with when we are away.”

We can only protect ourselves and our partners from infections if we always use condoms correctly and consistently every time we have sex.

Many people believe that condoms reduce sexual pleasure. This could be true depending on how one performs sex with a partner. To some, condoms could enhance sexual pleasure because it makes a man take a longer time to ejaculate. If you take long to ejaculate, you increase your arousal level and enjoy sex more. Here are some tips that you can follow to make sex pleasurable with condoms:



Condoms are the only way to protect yourself and your loved one from STIs and HIV besides abstinence. You can get the pleasure if you are open about your sexual needs!

Places to get help

There are organisations that can help you with more information about how you can discuss how to best handle MCP issues amongst you truck drivers. Some of the organisations are:

NATIONAL ORGANISATIONS

Ministry of Health and Social Services
 Head Office: Directorate of Development and Social Welfare Services,
 Tel: 061-203 2602
 All state hospitals and clinics
 Office of the Ombudsman,
 Tel: 061 - 207 3111

Katima Mulilo
 Catholic Aids Action, Tel: 066 - 252 492
 New Start Centre - Katima Mulilo, Tel: 066 - 252 663
 Namibia Red Cross Society, Tel: 066 - 253 415
 National Social Marketing Association (NASOMA), Tel: 066 - 252 2985
 Social Family Health (SFH), Tel: 066 - 253 957

Keetmanshoop
 Catholic Aids Action, Tel: 063 - 223 436
 Christ's Hope International, Tel: 063 - 223 031
 Evangelical Lutheran Church AIDS Programme (ELCAP) Tel: 063 - 257 056
 New Start Centre, Tel: 063-223 436
 National Social Marketing Association (NASOMA) Tel: 063 - 225 128
 Social Family Health (SFH), Industrial Park EPZ, Office No: 1 Floor
 Tel: (063) 225532, Fax: (063) 225532

Rundu
 Catholic Aids Action, Tel: 066-258 822
 LifeLine/ChildLine, Tel: 066-256 663
 Namibia Red Cross Society, Tel: 066 - 256 213
 Social Family Health (SFH), Tel: 066-255 155
 National Social Marketing Association (NASOMA), Tel: 066 -256 487

Windhoek

Aids Care Trust, Tel 061- 259 590
 Catholic Aids Action, Tel: 061-276 350
 Christ's Hope International-Namibia, Tel: 061-309 493
 Development Aid from People to People (DAPP), Tel: 061-258 220
 Evangelical Lutheran Church AIDS Programme (ELCAP), Tel: 061-231 135
 Family Health International, Tel: 061-239 463
 NawaLife Trust, Tel: 061-247 950
 Namibia Social Marketing Association (NASOMA), Tel: 061 -256 427
 Namibia Red Cross Society, Tel: 061-235 226
 Social Family Health (SFH), Tel: 061-244 936

Eenhana

Namibia planned parenthood association (NAPPA), Tel: 065 - 263 005
 Namibia Red Cross Society, Tel: 065 - 263 177

Oshikango

Social Family Health (SFH), Hafeni Kandjala Properties, Erf No: 401
 Tel: (065) 264710, Fax: (065) 26471

Gobabis

Catholic Aids Action, Tel: 062 - 565 441
 Evangelical Lutheran Church AIDS Programme (ELCAP), Tel: 062 - 562 782

Oshakati

Catholic Aids Action, Tel: 065 - 220 423/4
 Development Aid from People to People (DAPP), Tel: 065-220 138
 Namibia Social Marketing Association (NASOMA), Tel: 065-224 695
 New Start Center - Oshakati, Tel: 065-220 423

It is not possible for this small book to provide you with all the answers you need. The aim of this book is to provide information on some questions that you may have. If you want more information about the topic, you can contact some of the organisations that have been mentioned above. Pakachere cannot be held responsible for any problems that may arise in the process of following what has been written in this booklet. This book has been written by Pakachere Institute.

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