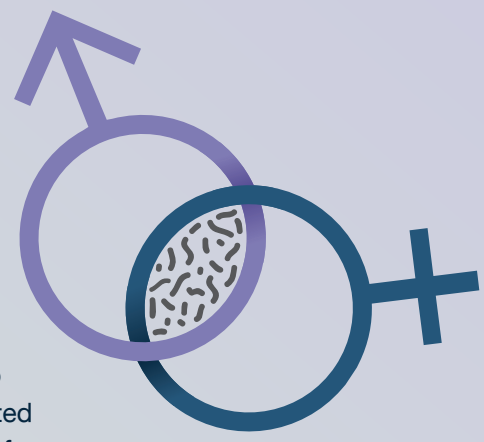
Trends in sexual behavior, sexual networks, and STI testing among persons reporting opposite-sex partners

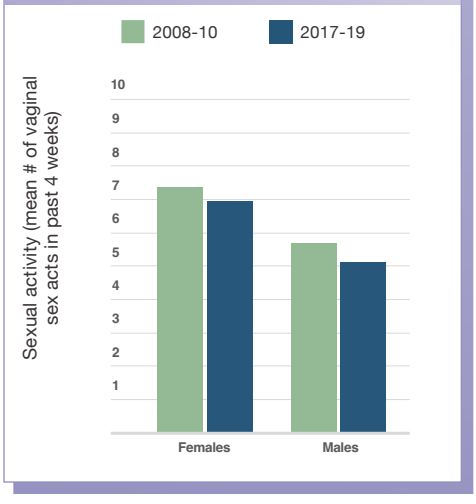


As STI rates continue to rise across the United States, it is important to understand how sexual behaviors, networks, and STI testing impact changes in STI incidence. New findings from the Coalition for Applied Modeling for Prevention, published in **Archives of Sexual Behavior**[1], highlight complex changes from 2008 to 2019 among persons aged 15-44 reporting opposite-sex partners. Changes highlighted in the publication include shifts in the number of opposite-sex partners, condom use for vaginal sex, STI screening and testing, and racial/ethnic diversity among partners.

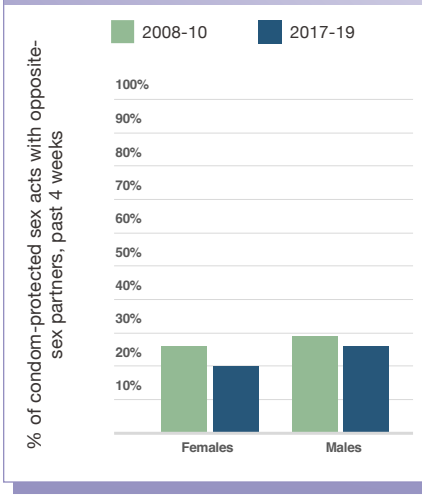
Finding Highlights

From 2008 to 2019, reports of sexual activity, condom use during vaginal sex, and sex with partners of the same racial/ethnic background (racial/ethnic homophily) decreased among those aged 15-44 reporting opposite-sex partners.

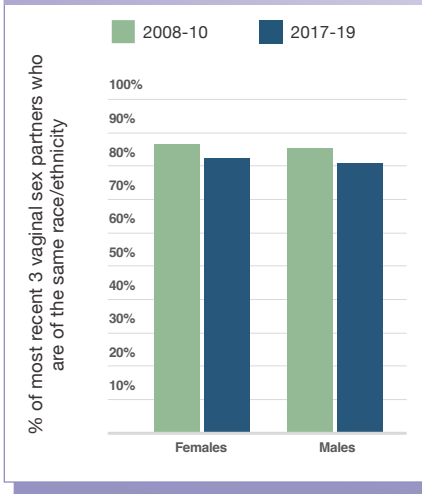
TRENDS IN SEXUAL ACTIVITY AMONG FEMALES & MALES AGED 15-44



CONDOM USE AMONG FEMALES & MALES AGED 15-44

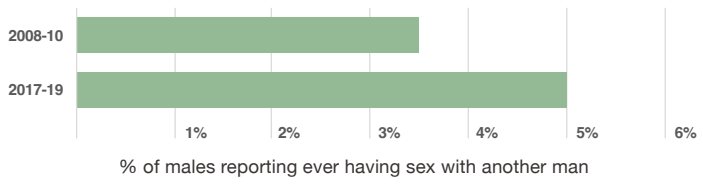


RACE/ETHNICITY OF SEX PARTNERS AMONG FEMALES & MALES AGED 15-44

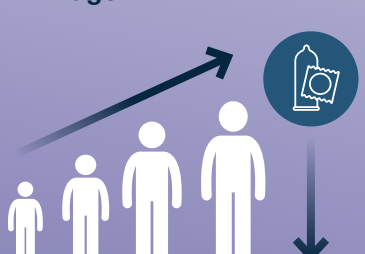


Findings show that the proportion of males with female sex partners who also reported sex with male partners increased during this time.

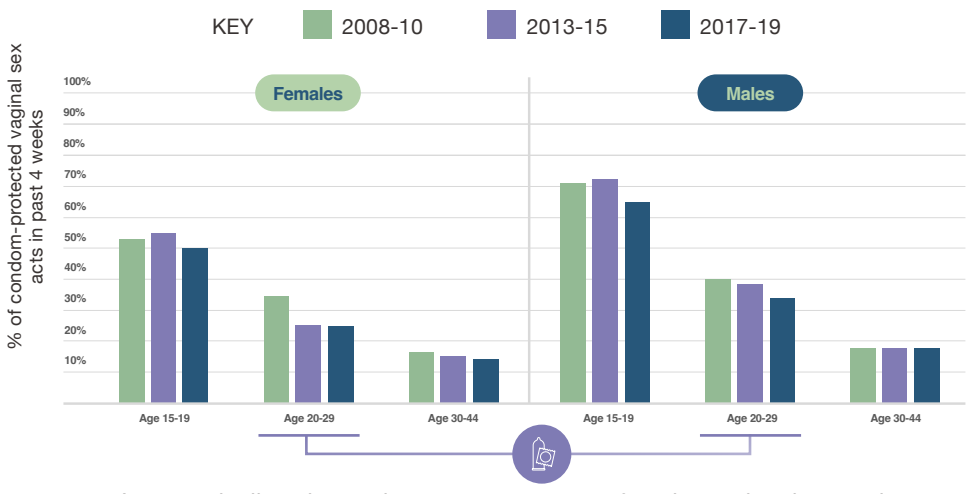
REPORTED SEX WITH ANOTHER MAN AMONG MALES AGED 15-44



Older survey participants reported less condom use, suggesting that condom usage decreases with age.



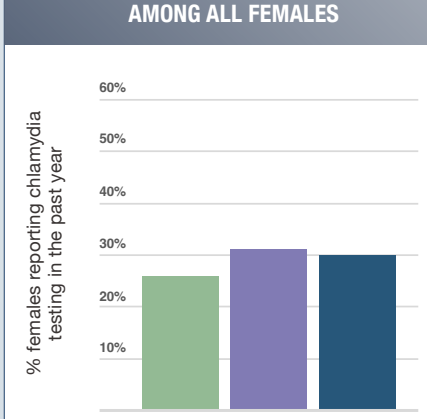
COMPARING CONDOM USAGE BY AGE AMONG FEMALES & MALES



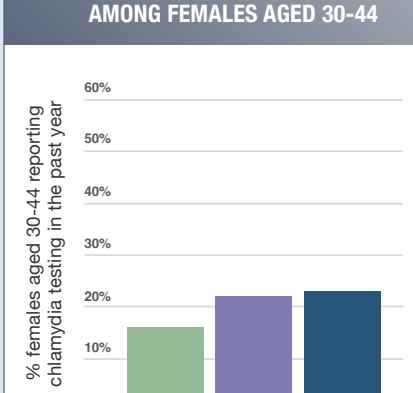
Largest declines in condom use were among females and males aged 20-29.

Reported condom usage was highest among non-Hispanic Black respondents, followed by Hispanic and then non-Hispanic White respondents.

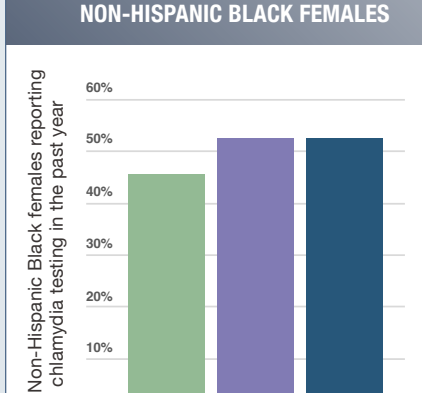
CHANGES IN CHLAMYDIA TESTING AMONG ALL FEMALES

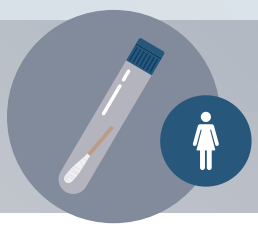


CHANGES IN CHLAMYDIA TESTING AMONG FEMALES AGED 30-44



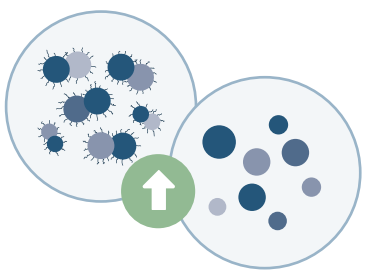
CHANGES IN CHLAMYDIA TESTING AMONG NON-HISPANIC BLACK FEMALES





Chlamydia testing among females increased overall, with Non-Hispanic Black females seeing the highest rates of testing.

Public Health Implications



Findings from this work highlight behavior changes that could lead to increases in STI transmission. The most significant changes were seen among those aged 20-29, an age group that has also experienced the greatest increase in reported gonorrhea and chlamydia diagnosis rates during the study period.[2]

Understanding these changes and addressing their impact on STI outcomes must be prioritized.
We can move towards addressing these outcomes using a variety of public health strategies, including:

Expanding STI screening recommendations and increasing efforts to achieve universal screening.

Expanding research into how sexual behaviors and networks contribute to increases in reported gonorrhea and chlamydia diagnoses.

Developing and scaling innovative and culturally appropriate behavioral interventions.

[1] *Katz, D.A., Copen, C.E., Haderxhanaj, L.T. et al. Changes in Sexual Behaviors with Opposite-Sex Partners and Sexually Transmitted Infection Outcomes Among Females and Males Ages 15–44 Years in the USA: National Survey of Family Growth, 2008–2019. Arch Sex Behav 52, 809–821 (2023). https://doi.org/10.1007/s10508-022-02485-3*

[2] *Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Sexually Transmitted Disease Surveillance 2021. In. Atlanta: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services; 2023*

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*These findings rely on National Survey of Family Growth (NSFG) data. The language used to describe participants (i.e., "female" and "male") has been pulled directly from the survey and refers to the participant's indicated or, in some cases, assumed sex. Note that at the time this survey was conducted, questions did not ask about gender identity, which may differ from a participant's sex at birth.

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