# SEXUAL BEHAVIOR

## And its link to drug use among Method Mexican adolescents and Young adults

Filiberto Itzcóatl Gaytán Flores, Midiam Moreno López, Michelle Bretón Cirett, Jorge Ameth Villatoro Velázquez, M.D., María de Lourdes Gutiérrez López, M.C. SALUD National Institute of Psychiatry, Mexico.





e-mail: itzcoatl@imp.edu.mx

keywords: Sexual behavior, Drug consumption, Mexican adolescents, Young adults. to have had sexual relationships at least once.

## Introduction

Sexual activity, combined with drug use among adolescents and young adults, is an important matter for several health organizations around the world, mainly because of the risks of getting a sexually transmitted disease (STD). According to the National Institute of Geography and Statistics of Mexico (INEGI), about 30%

of the Mexican population is among 10 and 24 years old, demonstrating that this is a high risk group of primary concern (INEGI, 2005).

Sexual behavior is strongly related to several aspects of life, it's a part of a framework that helps us to shape our own subjectivity, from which, we establish relations with the society and the world. So, it is important to talk about the relationship that adolescents and young adults have between sexual behavior and substance use, especially because of the important increase of alcohol and drugs use in our country. (S.S., CONADIC, INPRFM & INSP, 2009; Villatoro & cols, 2009).

It is well known that drugs are linked to sexual behavior, because they alter consciousness; however, despite all the information we have about drugs use and its adverse effects, it's consumption is an ancient custom that is still current. (Bellis & Hughes, 2004). A good example is alcohol use, as an uninhibitor that increases the possibility to engage in sexual relationships. Adolescents and young adults use alcohol to ease interaction and to approach potential sexual partners, (Abrahamson, 2004). Another common belief is that alcohol use in small quantities boosts self confidence; but in fact, alcohol use has the potential risk, to make people vulnerable to non consensual sex, and it diminishes the person's capacity to practice safe sex. (Johnson

Usually drug users, are also sexually active, which increases the possibility to practice unsafe sex, and therefore make them more vulnerable to STDs and unplanned pregnancies (Bellis & Hughes, 2004). According to INEGI (2009), during 2008, 18.3% of Mexican newborns had a teenage mom (INEGI, 2009).

According to UNAIDS (2008) there are 33 million people living with HIV worldwide, 45% of new cases are in the 15 to 24 years old group, and it is estimated that 370,000 adolescents under 15 years old became HIV positives on 2007.

In Mexico until 2008, there were 37,307 reported cases of HIV between ages 15 to 29, 90% of this cases, were infected by sexual contact. That same year there were 919 diagnosed cases in men aged 15 to 29, of which 97.2% were sexually transmitted. For women the same age, 270 cases were diagnosed during that year, 99,2% of them became infected by sexual contact. (De Luca et al., 2010).

At last it is interesting and important to review the knowledge that adolescents and young adults have about HIV transmission and prevention and their sexual behavior related to it, particularly because research shows that despite the information they may have on this matters, they still have several sexual partners and don't know how or decide not to use condoms properly (Villaseñor, Caballero, Hidalgo & Santos, 2003; Robles et al., 2006).

## Results

were saved in a computer.

among other related topics.

and 4,577 females.

From the sample, 40,2% of men and 37,0% of women, mentioned

To explore the relationship between drug use and sexual behavior

This study is part of the 2008 National Household Survey (ENA),

The sample size was 51,227 interviews, the whole sample was

the data was collected through a face to face interview and the answers

questioned about drug use, and a subsample (22, 962 subjects) were

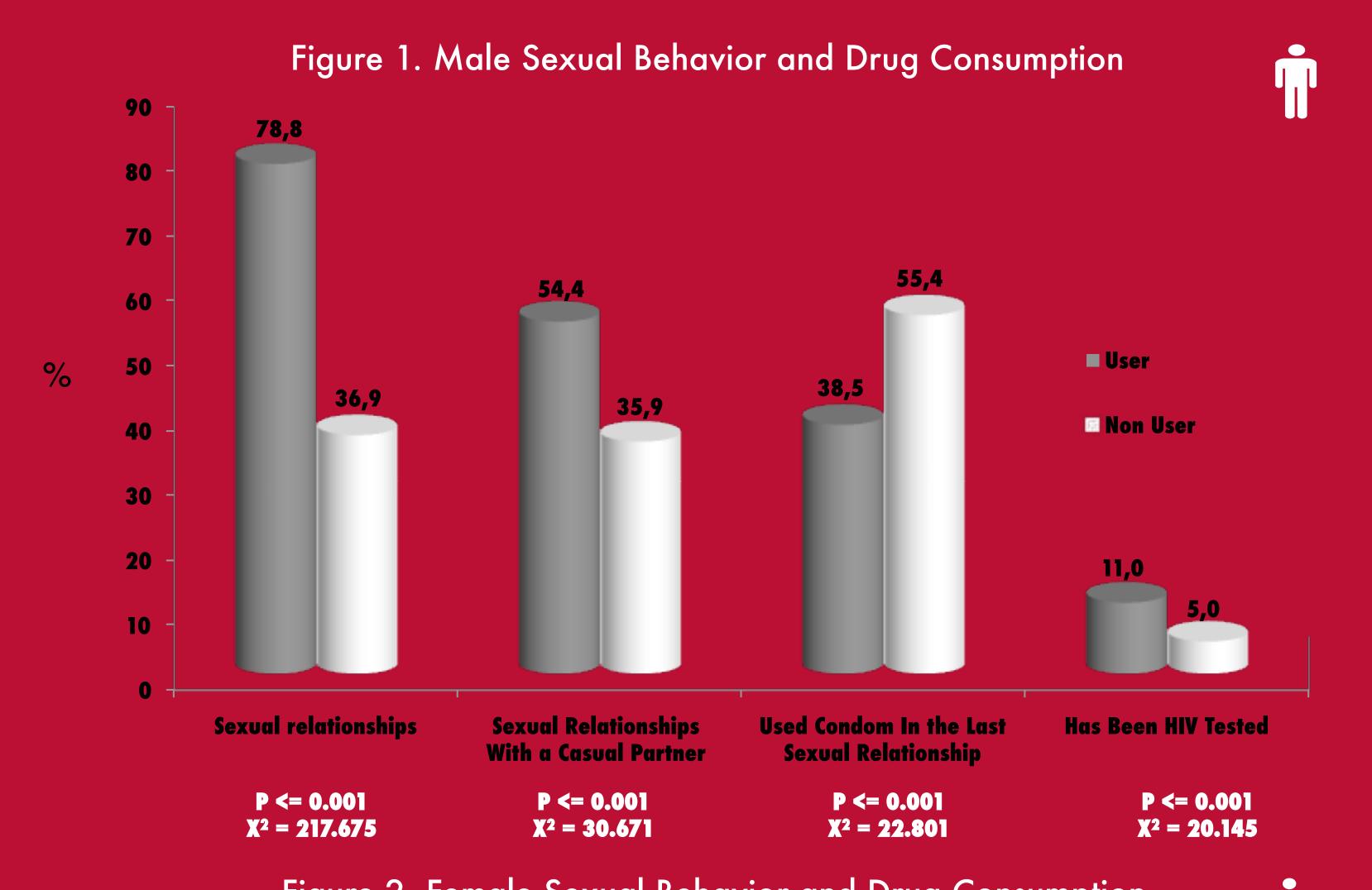
also questioned about sexual behavior and HIV transmission beliefs

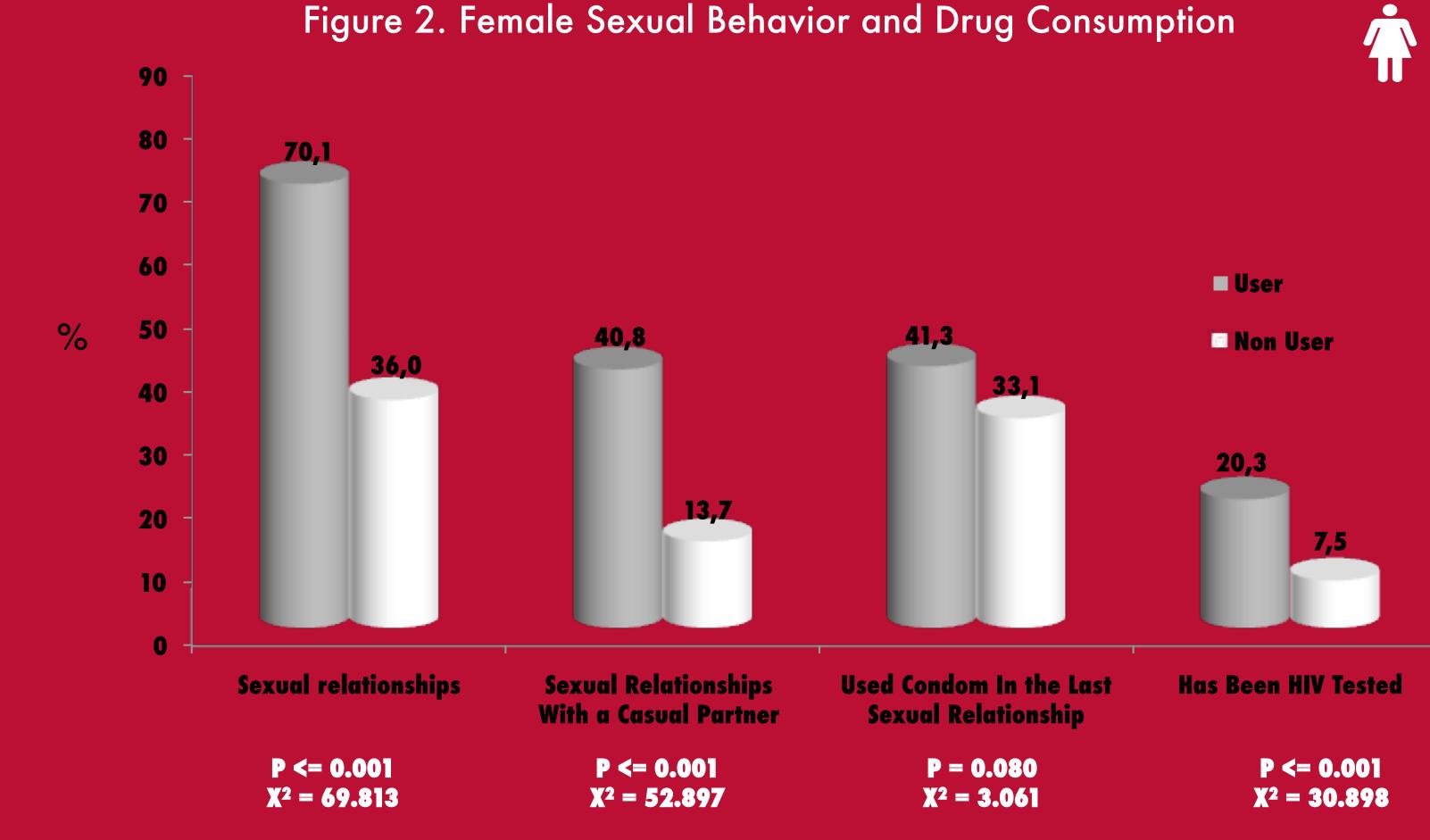
The present study includes only the 12 to 25 age group of the referred

subsample, therefore the final sample was 8,859 subjects: 4,282 males

of Mexican adolescents and young adults (12 to 25 years old).

A chi-square analysis was made to know if there were significant differences (p<=0.001) between drug users and non users (NU) regarding their sexual behavior. For men, all the sexual behavior measured variables were significant; while for women the only item that wasn't significant was use of condom in the last sexual relationship (Figures 1 and 2).





For male drug users (MDU) (7,6%), 78,8% have had sexual relationships, while the 36,9% of the male non users (MNU) have done so. It is also observed that MDU used condom less compared with MNU in their last sexual relationship (38,5% and 55,4% respectively). Finally, 54,4% MDU and 35.9% of MNU have had sexual relationships with a non-regular partner (Figure 1).

For female drug users (FDU) (3,2%), 70,1% have had sexual relationships at least once, against 36,0% of women who are not users (FNU). Likewise, 40,8% of FDU had sexual relationships with a non-regular partner, against 13,7% of FNU. An interesting data was

found for women, FDU have actually used a condom in their last sex relation more frequently than FNU (41,3% and 33,1% respectively) eventhough this difference wasn't statistically significant (Figure 2). Additionally, 17,8% of men and 10,8% of women, have had sexual relationships under the influence of alcohol or drugs. Also, 9,6% of MDU, reported to have had sexual relationships in exchange for money or drugs, against 8,2% of FDU.

It was also found that from MDU, 11,0% have been tested for HIV, in contrast to 5,0% of MNU. Also 20,3% of FDU and 7,5% of FNU have been HIV tested.

In regard to the degree of knowledge that users of both sexes have on HIV forms of transmission, the results show that 95,3% of MDU who have had risky sexual relationships know that "they can be infected if they use a syringe previously used by another person", 94,5% of these users think that "they can be protected of HIV if they use condom correctly".

For women, there were statistically significant differences only for the item "Can a person avoid HIV if she or he stops injecting drugs and using another way to consume them?" This shows that the sexually inactive FDU are better informed about this matter than FDU that are sexually active (Table 1).

Table 1. Knowledge about HIV Infection by User Type and Sex	User with risky sexual relationships	User without risky sexual relationships	User who has not had sexual relationships		
	%	%	%	$X^2$	p
NEN					
Can someone get HIV by injecting with a needle previously used by someone else?	95.3	85.1	83.5	9.277	0.010
A healthy looking person can be infected with HIV/AIDS?	81.9	86.7	77.3	2.214	0.331
Can someone avoid HIV by switching to another form of using drugs instead of injecting?	68.6	64.1	70.7	0.865	0.649
Can people protect themselves from HIV by using condom properly?	94.5	94.2	78.5	16.691	<=0.001
OMEN					
Can someone get HIV by injecting with a needle previously used by someone else?	90.4	96.7	85.8	3.788	0.150
A healthy looking person can be infected with HIV/AIDS?	65.3	82.2	82.8	5.069	0.079
Can someone avoid HIV by switching to another form of using drugs instead of injecting?	68.2	43.6	75.8	10.788	0.005
Can people protect themselves from HIV by using condom properly?	87.8	86.7	82.4	0.599	0.741

## Conclusions

The results of this study indicate that drug consumption among Mexican adolescents and young adults, is related to their sexual behavior. It was observed that drug users in both sexes presented the highest percentages in all sexual behavior items measured. These seems to indicate that people, who use drugs, more often tend to have sex in risky situations, such as having sex for money, having sex with non-regular partners, using condom inconsistently or having sex under the effects of alcohol or drugs. These results confirm those obtained in sexual behavior in this population.

As we know, the population between 10 and 25 years old, is seen by health institutions, as a sector that 's particularly vulnerable to certain problems such as STDs, especially HIV/AIDS. These diseases are generally derived from the practice of risky sexual behaviors as those analyzed in this paper.

Finally, we reinforce the important role that health professionals have in the constant instrumentation of informative campaigns and preventive programs aimed at this population. Nevertheless, the efforts must include all the involved actors, such as educational and health institutions and family, to effectively modify the context and cultural references on which the adolescents and young adults in Mexico shape their sexual behavior.

 Abrahamsom, M. (2004). Alcohol in courtship contexts: Focus-group interviews with Young Swedish women and men. Contemporary Drug Problems, 31, 3-29

• Bellis, M. & Hughes, K. (2004). Pociones sexuales. Relación entre alcohol, drogas y sexo. ADICCIONES, 16 (4), 249-• De Luca, M., Magis, C., Bravo, E., Rivera, P., Ortíz, R. & Gayet, C. (2010). La epidemia del SIDA en México al 2008. Gaceta Médica, 146 (1), 45-49 Instituto Nacional de Estadística, Geografía e Informática. (2005). Población total por entidad federativa, edad desplegada

y grupos quinquenales de edad según sexo. Consultado el 6 de septiembre de 2010, de: http://www.inegi.org.mx/sistemas/ TabuladosBasicos/Default.aspx?c=10398&s=est. • Instituto Nacional de Estadística, Geografía e Informática. (2009). Porcentaje de nacimientos registrados de madres adolescentes (menores de 20 años) por entidad federativa, 2004 a 2008. Consultado el 9 de septiembre de 2010, de:

http://www.inegi.org.mx/est/contenidos/espanol/soc/sis/sisept/default.aspx?t=mpob29&c=3865&e=01&s=

Johnson, T. & Stahl, C. (2004). Sexual experiences associated with participation in drinking games. The journal of general

 Medina-Mora, ME., Villatoro, J., Rodríguez Ajenjo C., Gutiérrez, ML., Moreno, M., Fleiz, C., Juárez F., Gaytán, F., López, MA., Sánchez, V., Bretón, M., Razo, M., Magaña, EN., Rojas, E., Téllez, M. & Hernández, M. (2009).Quinta Encuesta Nacional de Adicciones. Reporte de Resultados Nacionales.Consejo Nacional contra las Adicciones, Secretaría de Salud. Instituto Nacional

de Psiquiatría, Instituto Nacional de Salud Pública, México. ONUSIDA. (2008). Informe sobre la epidemia mundial del sida. Ginebra: ONUSIDA. Robles, S., Piña, J., Frías, B., Rodríguez, M., Barroso, R. & Moreno, D. (2006). Predictores de conductas relacionadas con el

uso inconsistente de condón en estudiantes universitarios. Psicología y salud, 16 (1), 71-78.

• Villaseñor, A., Caballero, R., Hidalgo, A. & Santos, J. (2003). Conocimiento objetivo y subjetivo sobre el VIH/SIDA como predictor del uso de condón en adolescentes. Salud Pública de México, 45 (Supl.1), 73-80.