

# **THE DUREX REPORT IRELAND**

A summary of research into the usage of condoms and attitudes towards them.

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A Durex publication in the interests of health education.

## INTRODUCTION

AIDS has become the leading public health issue of our time.

In its wake, has come much social and ethical debate and an enforced reassessment of sexual behaviour. For most people, sexuality is a deeply personal issue. However, because people may carry the HIV virus - which leads to AIDS-unknown to themselves or others, sexual behaviour has become a prime concern of governments and health professionals.

The World Health Organisation predicts that up to 40 million people will be infected with HIV and that 10 million people will die of AIDS by the year 2000. Recent figures suggest that up to 1,300 people in the Republic of Ireland are known to be HIV positive, some 12% of them heterosexuals infected through conventional sexual intercourse. The number of AIDS cases diagnosed today relates to the sexual behaviour of up to 10 years ago. Medical professionals, worldwide, predict that an increasing number of heterosexuals who have not been in direct contact with so-called 'at risk' groups (homosexuals, bisexuals or intravenous drug users) will be diagnosed as being infected with the virus in the future.

Concern about AIDS has focused attention on the condom - one of the most established and effective methods of contraception. Using a condom is the safest way that sexually active people not in a monogamous relationship can have penetrative sex and protect themselves from HIV.

As a result health educationalists have promoted the condom as a safer sex aid, as well as an efficient contraceptive.

Yet probably all would admit to being disappointed with the success of these campaigns. Changes in behaviour are difficult to achieve quickly, particularly when AIDS is not widespread in the community. However, there is an identifiable change in attitudes to the condom, particularly among the young, and in Ireland, condom usage is higher than that of the pill.

There are many other good reasons for choosing condoms, not merely to help protect against AIDS. As people become more conscious about self medication and health in general, and move towards a more natural lifestyle, they are more aware of the benefits of condoms. Condoms offer a high level of protection from pregnancy, have no side-effects and do not affect the body's system. Condoms can also give protection against diseases other than AIDS - in particular cervical cancer.

LRC Products, which manufactures the brand leader, Durex, has taken a lead in measuring attitudes to condoms and AIDS in Ireland and in sharing this information with government, health education and family planning specialists.

While there are some very welcome signs in this Irish survey that safer sex practices are becoming better understood, there are still significant numbers of people who are prepared to take risks with new partners. More than 1 in 5 single men had unprotected sex with a new partner on at least one occasion during the 12 months leading up to the survey.

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To face the growing problem of AIDS, people need to know what their choices are to protect themselves from HIV. There is a clear need for accurate and accessible information about HIV and ways of minimising the risk of contracting the virus. There is a responsibility on the individual to decide on his or her response to the threat of HIV infection. They may opt to remain celibate, faithful to one partner or to confine themselves to non-penetrative sex. If not, they can practice safer sex by using a condom. We as a manufacturer and marketer see our responsibility as producing condoms of the highest quality and communicating with our customers to ensure they are used properly.

We hope that the information contained in The Durex Report will lead to a greater understanding of sexual behaviour and attitudes. By sharing this information, we hope it can be used to develop more effective campaigns to combat AIDS and other diseases.

**John Noonan**

**Marketing Manager - Durex**

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## **1. HOW THE SURVEY WAS CONDUCTED**

This report summarises the key findings of a major research study commissioned to establish public attitudes to sex education, sexual behaviour and condoms in Ireland.

The survey was conducted amongst 766 men and women and designed to be statistically representative of the adult population aged 17-49 living in the Republic of Ireland. The sample is quota controlled by sex, status, age, social group, region and area. The questionnaire was administered in two parts, the core questions were asked via face-to-face interviews whilst a self-completion booklet covering the most sensitive behavioural topics was used to give respondents complete privacy and confidentiality.

Given the fact that this was a landmark survey, being the first comprehensive serious study of personal sexual mores and behaviour conducted in Ireland - the level of co-operation by people taking part in the research was extraordinarily high. Indeed, despite the intensely personal and sensitive nature of the questions posed in the self-completion element of the study, only 12 individual respondents opted-out entirely from completing that element of the overall questionnaire.

The study was conducted by Irish Marketing Surveys on behalf of LRC Products Ltd, manufacturers of Durex.

## 2. THE CONDOM IS THE MOST POPULAR CONTRACEPTIVE IN IRELAND

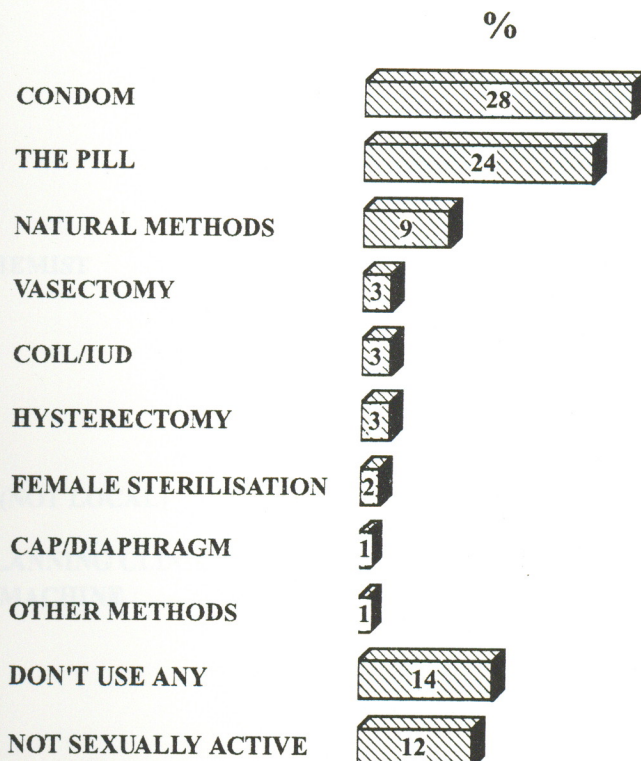
The condom is the most popular contraceptive in Ireland. It is regarded by 28% of the population aged 17 to 49 as their main method of contraception. The comparable figure for the pill is 24%. 9% of this age group rely upon natural methods whilst 26% state they use no method of contraception. Almost half of this latter group are not sexually active.

The condom is particularly popular amongst 25-29 year olds, upper social class groups and, those who live in urban areas.

By contrast natural methods of birth control are practised almost exclusively by married couples aged over 30, and those who live in country areas.

The pill is most popular amongst single females. Being single raises the possibility they may not be in steady relationships and may therefore risk contracting HIV - as the pill offers no protection against sexually transmitted diseases.

### MAIN METHOD OF CONTRACEPTION



### 3. WHO BUYS CONDOMS AND WHERE

#### Who?

53% of condom users normally purchase condoms themselves, 31% rely upon their partner whilst for 16% of couples it is a joint responsibility. 60% of all condom purchasing is made exclusively by men.

#### Where?

At present most condoms are bought from pharmacies - though, interestingly, 17% of purchasers opt for a non-local chemist - indicating that for some buying condoms is embarrassing. Young single men are most likely to seek a pharmacy where they are not known by the staff, and as we shall see, this is also the group who find vending machines an attractive purchase prospect. Hence one can deduce that the anonymity offered by vending appeals to these men.

#### USUAL OUTLET FOR BUYING CONDOMS

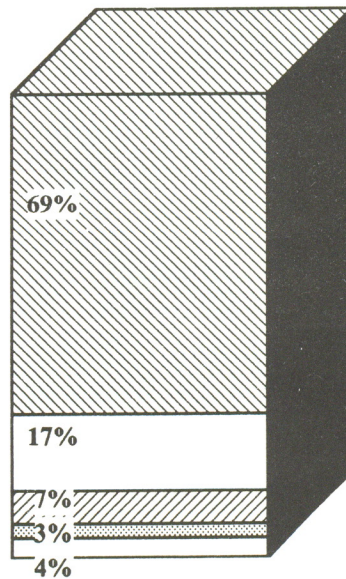
LOCAL CHEMIST

CHEMIST (NOT LOCAL)

FAMILY PLANNING CLINIC

VENDING MACHINE

OTHER



There is virtually universal acceptance (by 99% of the sample) of the principle of condoms being available for sale in Ireland through a variety of outlet types. 90% endorse the sale of condoms (as at present) through pharmacies. 61% believe condoms should also be on sale from vending machines sited in pub, club, college, restaurant or airport toilets. 41% of the sample regard family planning clinics, supermarkets and over the counter in pubs/clubs as appropriate places to obtain condoms.

<u>% Agreement</u>	<u>Should be available</u>
Pharmacies	90
Vending Machines	61
Family Planning Clinics	41
Counter Sales in Pubs/Clubs	41
Supermarkets	39
Smaller Neighbourhood Shops	30

The Pharmacy is easily the preferred outlet. Vending machines would attract a large number of purchasers. A substantial number of single men would seem to prefer to use this source.

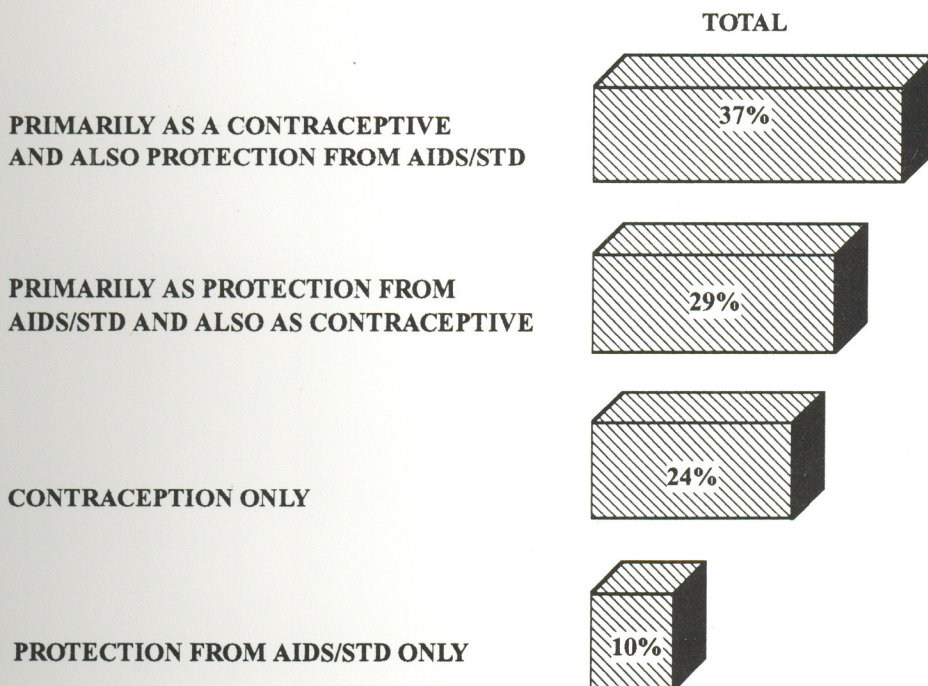


## 4. CONSUMER ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIOUR

### A. Attitudes Towards Condoms

In Ireland although condoms are seen primarily as a contraceptive, 66% of people recognise the dual function of contraception and protection from sexually transmitted diseases. Married people are more likely to regard the condom as purely a contraceptive. Single people are more conscious of the wider implications of condom use.

#### ATTITUDES TOWARDS CONDOMS



## 4. CONSUMER ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIOUR

### B. Sexual Behaviour

57% of Irish people have sex at least once a week. Married people are more sexually active than single people. Just over a third of single people are not sexually active.

	<u>Total</u>	<u>Married</u>	<u>Singles</u>
	%	%	%
Everyday	2	2	2
Several times a week	20	24	14
Once/twice a week	37	45	25
Once/twice a month	12	13	10
Once every 2/3 months	2	1	3
Less often	4	3	7
Not sexually active	16	3	36
No reply	7	9	3

## 4. CONSUMER ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIOUR

### C. Concern about AIDS

There is widespread concern that the Government should be doing more to combat AIDS, and this may be a contributory factor in explaining why such a high proportion (80%) of the survey sample expressed themselves in support of condom advertising.

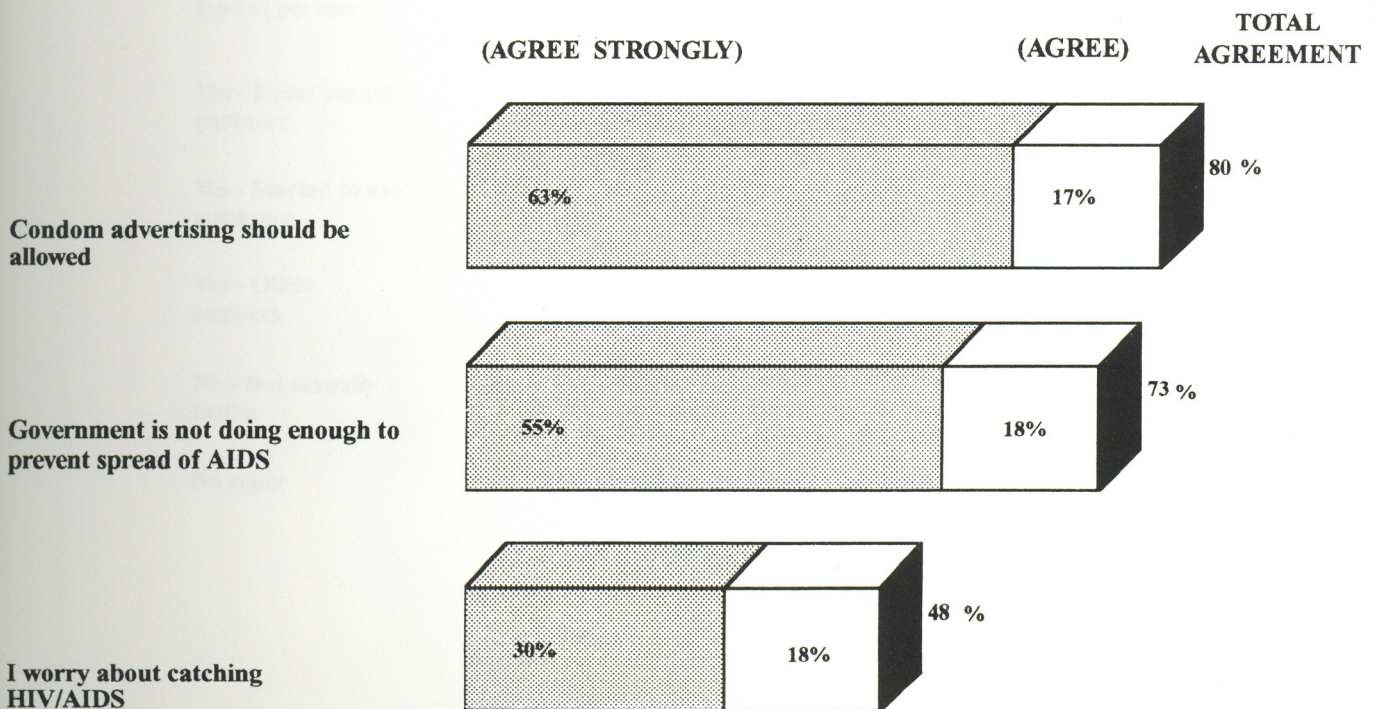
Perhaps of particular relevance in this context is the level of individual personal concern about contracting HIV. 30% of our sample are very worried about the prospect whilst a further 18% express some concern.

Predictably there are major sub-group differences in the degree of concern.

Single young people and students are most concerned about their personal safety. Among 17-24 year olds 67% were worried about contracting HIV with 44% very worried.

Understandably, married couples in monogamous relationships are less concerned.

#### AGREEMENT WITH STATEMENTS



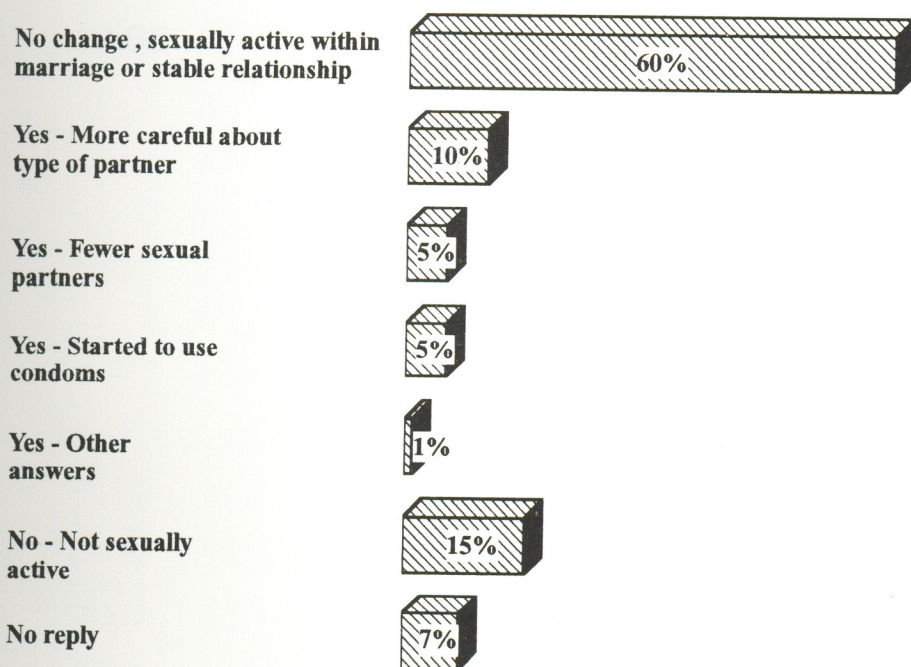
## 4. CONSUMER ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIOUR

### D. Change in Sexual Behaviour Because of AIDS

When asked whether concern about HIV had resulted in changing their sexual behaviour 21% of respondents acknowledged that they had adapted their lifestyles. However, the majority of these people still appear to be putting themselves at risk of contracting HIV by failing to use a condom with new sexual partners. Careful selection of sexual partners and/or a reduction in the number of sexual partners is not an adequate substitute for using condoms.

Single men have more sexual partners on average than other groups and are the group most likely to have changed their behaviour. However, even here only 10% say they use a condom because of their concern about HIV.

#### INCIDENCE OF CHANGING SEXUAL BEHAVIOUR



Although these single males recognise the threat of AIDS, they continue to put themselves at risk. One in five of them had sex with a new partner within the last twelve months and did not use a condom.

This demonstrates that while many people understand health messages, translating attitudinal change into actual behavioural change remains a challenge

Our research showed that whilst the majority of married people are monogamous, single people average at least one sexual partner per year and amongst men the average reaches almost three. Indeed 21% of single men claim to have had at least three sexual partners within the past twelve months.

### NUMBER OF SEXUAL PARTNERS IN PAST 12 MONTHS

(Base: Self-completion Respondents)

#### AVERAGE NUMBER OF SEXUAL PARTNERS

TOTAL		1.38
MALE:	Single	2.72
	Married	1.05
FEMALE:	Single	1.25
	Married	1.03
AGE:	17 - 20	1.86
	21 - 24	2.17
	25 - 29	1.41
	30 - 39	1.16
	40 - 49	1.20

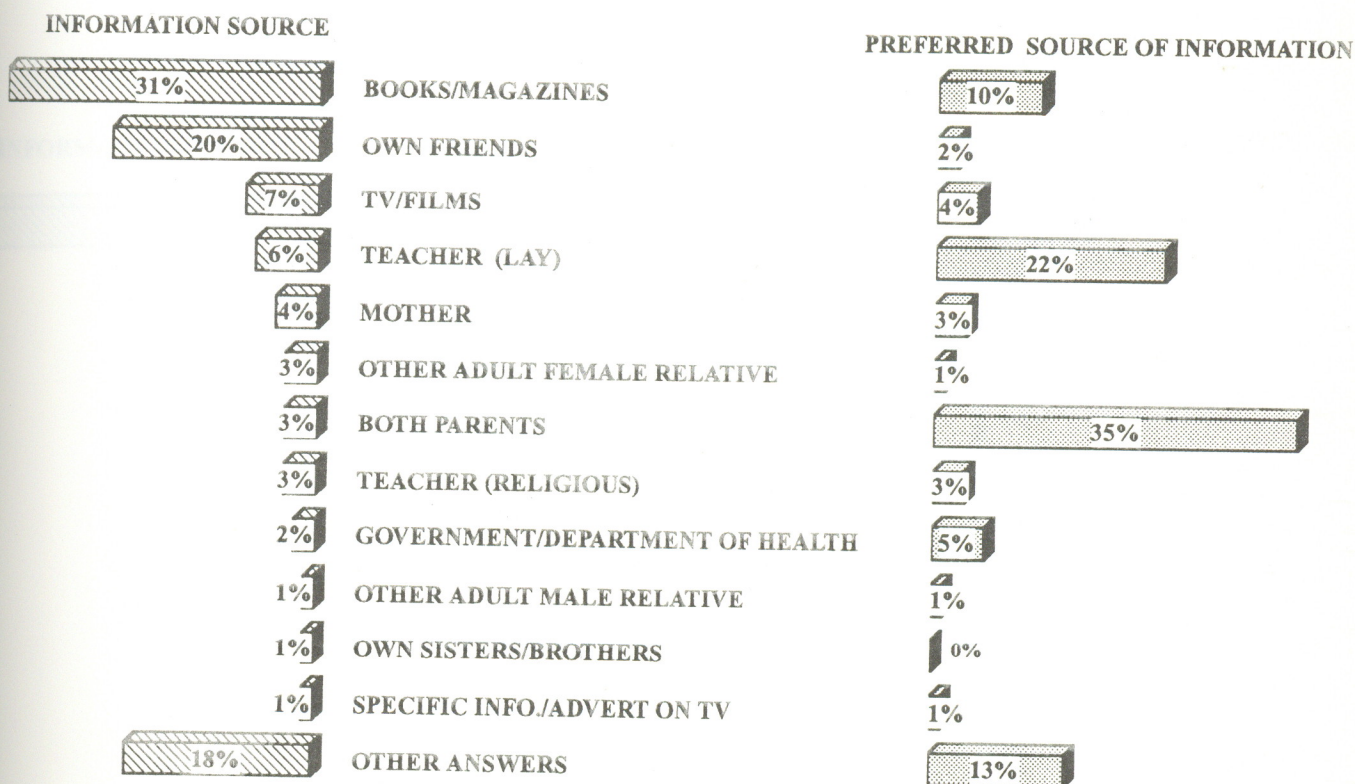
## 5. INFORMATION AND SEX EDUCATION

The survey also highlighted a substantial discrepancy between existing and ideal sources of information on sex education, contraception and AIDS.

### A. Main Sources of Information About Contraception

Respondents felt that parents and school teachers would be the best sources of information on contraception, whereas actually the most common sources were through reading or hearing from friends.

#### CONTRACEPTION: MAIN SOURCES OF INFORMATION



## 5. INFORMATION AND SEX EDUCATION

### B. Main Sources of Information About AIDS

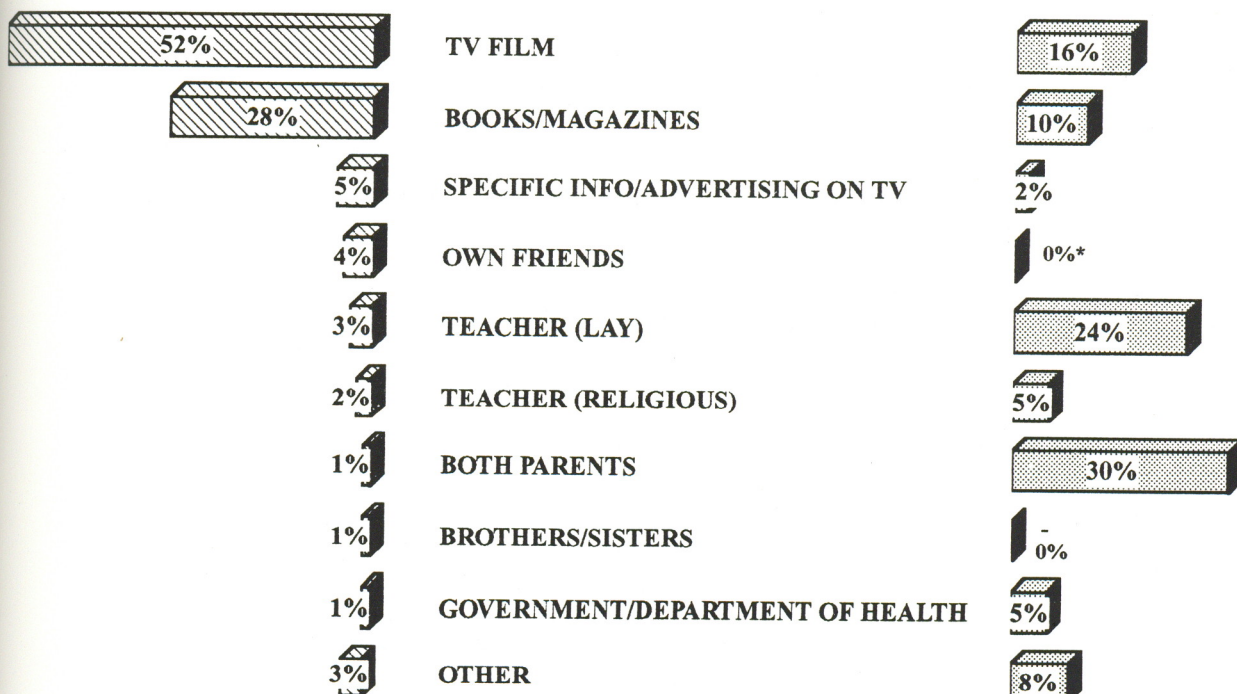
Those surveyed believe the best way of learning about AIDS would be from parents and educators. Unfortunately, very few have received information from these sources, the majority (52%) having acquired their knowledge in the main, from TV programmes and films and 28% from books or magazines. There is little evidence of correct counselling/professional communication about the disease.

73% of the sample believed that the government is not doing enough to stop the spread of AIDS, with 55% holding this view strongly.

#### AIDS: MAIN SOURCES OF INFORMATION

##### INFORMATION SOURCE

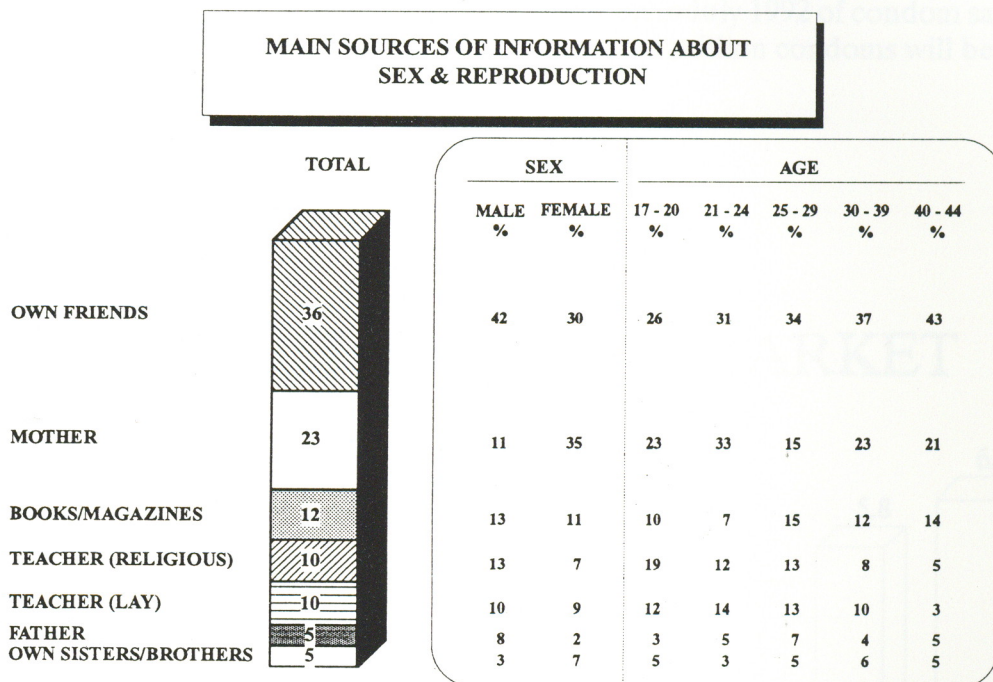
##### PREFERRED SOURCE OF INFORMATION



## 5. INFORMATION AND SEX EDUCATION

### C. Sex Education

The figures suggest that sex and reproduction are now dealt with in the classroom and certainly to a greater extent than in the past.

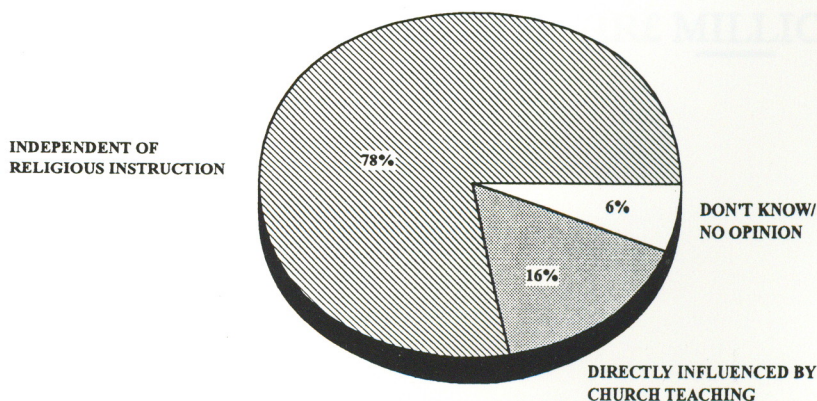


\* NO OTHER SOURCE MENTIONED BY MORE THAN 5% OF RESPONDENTS

The majority of the sample believe that sex education should be conveyed independently of religious instruction.

### ROLE OF CHURCH IN SEX EDUCATION

THE TEACHING OF SEX EDUCATION SHOULD BE .....





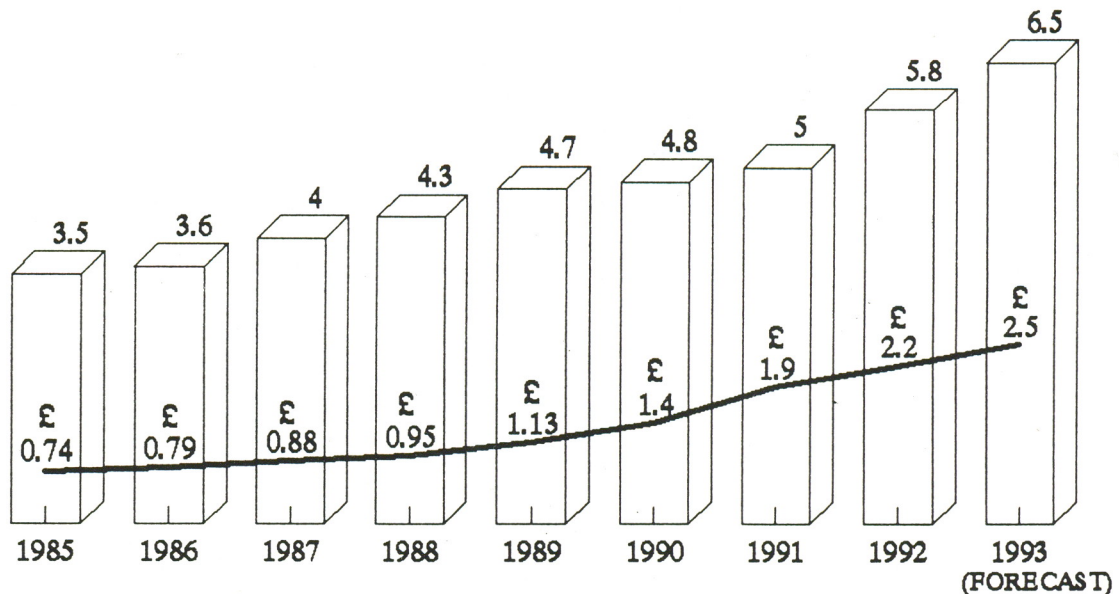
## APPENDIX

### The Irish Condom Market

In response to the growing awareness of AIDS since the mid 1980's, condom sales have increased.

In 1992, 5.8 million condoms were sold at a value of IR£2.2m at retail selling prices. Market growth is forecasted at 12%, following the legalisation in July 1992 of condom sales through retail outlets other than pharmacies. It is estimated that 6.5 million condoms will be sold in 1993.

## THE IRISH CONDOM MARKET



MARKET VOLUME      MARKET VALUE  
(MILLIONS OF CONDOMS)      (IR£ MILLIONS)

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