

UNIVERSITI TEKNOLOGI MARA

**THE LEVEL OF CONDOM USE SELF-EFFICACY
(CUSES) AND ITS ASSOCIATION WITH
KNOWLEDGE OF SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED
INFECTIONS AMONG PLHIV ATTENDING
PUBLIC HEALTH CLINICS AT HULU LANGAT,
SELANGOR, MALAYSIA**

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ABSTRACT

Background: The National Action Plan to end AIDS by 2030 has significantly reduced the incidence of HIV, halving the rate over the past decade in Malaysia. Despite these efforts, HIV transmission remains prevalent among high-risk groups such as sex workers and men who have sex with men (MSM). Condom use self-efficacy is critical in preventing the spread of HIV among people living with HIV (PLHIV). Knowledge of sexually transmitted infections (STI) is a crucial factor in promoting safer sexual behaviors, yet there is scarce data on its association with condom use self-efficacy, particularly among PLHIV.

Objectives: This study aims to determine the level of CUSES and its association with factors such as STI knowledge, demographic, and behavioral factors among PLHIV attending public health clinics in Hulu Langat, Selangor.

Methods: A cross-sectional study was conducted using proportionate stratified sampling across three public health clinics. Eligibility criteria included being 18 years or older, able to read and comprehend the Malay language, and not diagnosed with psychiatric illness or learning difficulties that may impede their ability to answer the questionnaire. Data was collected from December 2023 to March 2024 through self-administered questionnaires assessing demographic characteristics, sexual practice, clinical factors, knowledge of STI and condom use self-efficacy. Multiple linear regression was performed to identify factors associated with condom use self-efficacy.

Results: The mean score for condom use self-efficacy was 77.72 (SD = 12.88) and the mean score of STI knowledge was 30.87 (SD = 5.50). Higher STI knowledge was significantly associated with increased condom use self-efficacy ($B = 0.73, p < 0.001$). Additionally, higher household income ($B = 9.27, p < 0.001$), recent sexual activity within the last 3 months ($B = -4.34, p < 0.001$), engaging in receptive anal sex ($B = 7.06, p < 0.001$), and not using a condom during the last sexual intercourse ($B = -4.43, p < 0.001$) were also significantly associated with condom use self-efficacy.

Conclusion: The study confirms that good STI knowledge will increase condom use

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

HIV infection still poses a great challenge in curbing and controlling the spread of the virus. According to AIDS Monitoring Report, Malaysia recorded 86,142 people living with HIV (PLHIV) with an annual incidence of 3,177 by the end of 2022. The state of Selangor exhibited the highest concentration of cases, representing 31% of the national total, with 966 new infections, 135 AIDS cases, and 145 deaths within one year [1]. The National Action Plan to end AIDS by 2030 has been instrumental in reducing HIV incidence by half over the past decade [2]. This plan underscores Malaysia's commitment to addressing the HIV epidemic, particularly among key populations such as men who have sex with men (MSM) and sex workers.

In recent years, there has been a notable shift in the primary mode of HIV transmission from people who inject drugs (PWID) to sexual transmission, primarily involving MSM and sex workers [3]. In this context, primary care clinics play a vital role in managing PLHIV, offering accessible HIV testing, counselling, and antiretroviral therapy (ART). However, consistent condom use among high-risk populations remains a challenge, despite these efforts. Addressing condom use self-efficacy (CUSES) is essential to promoting safer sexual practices among PLHIV.

Condom use has been identified as one of the most effective means of preventing the spread of HIV [4,5]. Despite being a highly effective preventive measure, the use of condoms is often hindered by lack of education, cultural and religious beliefs, and economic constraints, which contribute to the ongoing transmission of HIV [6,7]. The consistent use of condoms among PLHIV remains low, highlighting the need for targeted interventions to address this issue [8-10]. In Malaysia, condom usage rates among key populations in Malaysia remain inconsistent, with 75% usage in men who have sex with men (MSM), 41.8% usage in transgender (TG), and only 40.8% usage in female sex workers (FSW) [11].

"Condom use self-efficacy" defined an individual's confidence in their ability to use a condom correctly [12] and is directly linked to successful condom use [13]. Higher