

**“IN LOVE WE TRUST”: BARRIERS TO CONDOM USE
AMONG FEMALE MIGRANT UNIVERSITY STUDENTS
IN HANOI, VIETNAM**



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**“IN LOVE WE TRUST” : BARRIERS TO CONDOM USE AMONG FEMALE
MIGRANT UNIVERSITY STUDENTS IN HANOI, VIETNAM**

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ABSTRACT

This qualitative research is designed to explore barriers to condom use practices faced by female migrant university students who live in rental houses outside the university in Hanoi. To identify these barriers, factors that were investigated include: The students' daily life in rental houses, sexual lifestyles of the students, the meanings attached to sex before marriage, norms concerning condom use practices, and the influence of social environments of the female students on their sexually-related decisions. Field data have been collected based on informal interviews with at least 35 sexually experienced migrant university students (15 females and 20 males), 5 focus group discussions (3 male groups and 2 female groups), and 6 in-depth interviews with 2 males and 4 females. Data were also taken from the researcher's participant and non-participant observations on the daily lives of students. In this research, thematic analysis has been applied. The Ecological Systems Theory developed by Urie Bronfenbrenner that emphasizes the relations among multiple systems of influence on a person's development was used to guide the study and as a major theoretical perspective in data analysis. Findings show that factors related to the ecological macro-systems which influence the students in making sexually related decisions are the family, the university, the community, the rental house conditions, the mass media, and peer influences. Other factors related to the ecological macro- and micro-systems which hinder the chances of female migrant university students succeeding in condom negotiation when having sex in their intimate relationship and thus ensuring that their male partners use condoms are: (1) lack of sex education; (2) social stigma against youth sexuality; (3) lack of trusted sources on sexuality and reproductive health information; (4) the influence of traditional gender norms applied to girls (i.e. gender ideology of motherhood and female ignorance about sex before marriage); and (5) the imbalance of gender power in intimate relationships.

KEY WORDS: CONDOM USE / MIGRATION / UNIVERSITY STUDENTS /
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