Using Internet for Sex Hookups May Protect

BY MARY ELLEN SCHNEIDER
New York Bureau

NEW YORK — Many researchers and clinicians view Internet use to find sex partners as a risk factor for sexually transmitted diseases, but it may also have some protective qualities, research indicates.

It’s important to consider an individual’s intent when that individual goes online to find sex partners, said Dr. Kees Rietmeijer, medical director of the STD control and clinical program at the Denver Public Health Department.

When most people think about the Internet and STDs, they think about sites such as manhunt.net, but dating sites such as eHarmony.com are also part of this equation, he said, adding that the risk of acquiring an STD may in fact be lower in cases where someone finds a romantic partner online with whom they later have sex.

“We have to start thinking not only about how the Internet can increase risk for STDs, but also how online partnering and online behavior can reduce these risks, even among prospective sex partners,” Dr. Rietmeijer said at a joint conference of the American Sexually Transmitted Diseases Association and the British Association for Sexual Health and HIV.

For example, a survey of more than 500 women who met with a person who answered their online personal ad found that they engaged in extensive e-mail correspondence before having a face-to-face meeting and that they used this exchange to negotiate safety, boundaries, sexual preferences, and condom use and to discuss STD status.

However, the survey also revealed that the women engaged in risky sexual behavior. For example, 30% reported that they engaged in risky sexual behaviors (Sex. Res. Soc. Policy 2007;4:27-37).

Obese Women Face Much Higher Risks Of Both Urinary and Anal Incontinence

BY KERRI WACHTER
Senior Writer

SAVANNAH, GA — Obesity appears to confer a fourfold increased risk for urinary incontinence and twofold increased risk for anal incontinence, according to a study presented as a poster at the annual meeting of the Society of Gynecologic Surgeons.

In a study of more than 400 women, those who were obese were four times more likely to suffer from urinary incontinence than were their normal-weight counterparts, after adjustment for demographics, medical history, menopausal status, parity, and number of C-sections. Obese women were also twice as likely to have anal incontinence than were normal-weight women, reported Dr. Chi-Chung Grace Chen of the department of gynecology and obstetrics at the Cleveland Clinic Foundation, and her colleagues.

The researchers questioned obese and morbidly obese women (body mass index greater than or equal to 30 kg/m²) who were contemplating having bariatric surgery and normal-weight woman (BMI less than 30) who were receiving routine gynecologic care (Surg. Ob. 2007;4:27-37).

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The prevalence of urinary and anal incontinence was 25% for obese women, compared with 10% for normal-weight women.

Obesity was associated with increased severity of urinary and anal incontinence, the researchers wrote.

The prevalence of urinary incontinence severity, 44% of obese women and 74% of normal-weight women were classified as slight. More obese women had moderate (32%) or severe (23%) urinary incontinence than did normal-weight women (20% and 6%, respectively). Likewise, obese women had more severe anal incontinence, with a mean Rockwood score of 21, compared with 15 for normal-weight women. All of the findings were statistically significant.

Dr. Chen reported that she had no relevant financial relationships to disclose.