Condom Use

Next, we turn to our hypotheses that teenagers’ communication with both their parents and their partners influences their condom use, and that teenager-partner communication mediates the role of parent-teenager communication. To demonstrate mediation, we must show the following: that parent-teenager communication is associated with partner communication, that both teenager-partner and parent-teenager communication are associated with condom use, and that the association between parent-teenager communication and condom use is weakened when teenager-partner communication is controlled. We have already established that the first association exists; we now focus on the remaining steps.

We used logistic regression analysis to assess the effect of parent-teenager communication on condom use at most recent intercourse and linear regression analysis to assess its effect on lifetime condom use. The results indicated that partner communication was only marginally related to condom use during most recent intercourse ($b=.172, p=.07$), but greater partner communication was significantly associated with greater lifetime use ($b=.203, p=.001$).

To examine the relationship between parent-teenager communication and condom use, we conducted two series of regression analyses that paralleled those used to examine teenager-partner communication. The first included sexuality discussions, responsiveness and their interaction; the second included risk discussions, responsiveness and their interaction. Each was applied to condom use during most recent intercourse and lifetime condom use.

In the analyses pertaining to sexuality discussions, the interaction between these discussions and parental responsiveness significantly increased the likelihood of both condom use at last intercourse and lifetime use (Table 2, page 120). Probing these interactions yielded similar results (not shown): When parental responsiveness was high, sexuality discussions were significantly associated with increased condom use during most recent intercourse ($b=.212, p=.02$) and lifetime condom use ($b=.110, p=.03$). However, at low levels of responsiveness, and responsiveness was significantly associated with increased condom use both at most recent intercourse and over the teenager’s lifetime (Table 2). The probe of these interactions showed that at high levels of responsiveness, risk discussions were positively related to condom use during most recent intercourse ($b=.454, p=.004$) and lifetime condom use ($b=.232, p=.01$). However, at low levels of responsiveness,