unmarried respondents, 14% of females and 28% of males had used a condom at last sex.

**Correlates of Premarital Condom Use**

In multivariate analyses, more variables were correlated with condom use among young men than among young women. Notably, no social or demographic covariates were correlated with condom use among young women, while two such variables, age at sexual initiation and schooling completed at time of premarital sexual initiation, were associated with condom use among men (Table 3). For all four condom use measures, the odds of use increased with age at sexual initiation (odds ratios, 1.1 per year for each). Compared with young men without schooling, those who had some formal education had 2.1–2.6 times the odds of having used a condom at first sex.

Sexually experienced unmarried youth who felt uncomfortable approaching a provider or a pharmacist for contraceptives generally were half as likely as those who did not feel uncomfortable to have used a condom; while among young women discomfort was associated only with condom use at last sex, among young men it was associated with all four measures of condom use (odds ratios, 0.5).

Qualitative data from young men confirm that their discomfort in approaching anyone for contraceptives and their lack of access to these products prevented many from practicing protected sex, especially in rural areas:

“I had seen but had never used [a condom]. These are available in the hospital, but no one gives them to children like us.”—Unmarried male, rural, Rajasthan

“I was hesitant to ask anyone [for a condom] and we didn’t use anything.”—Married male, rural, Rajasthan

“In our village, we don’t have condoms; I can’t buy [them] from outside. As a precaution, I take a bath after having sex.”—Married male, rural, Tamil Nadu

“Anyone who needs condoms in our village can’t get them. They are available only in town. One feels shy to ask for condoms in the shop. This is the reason why many villagers don’t use [them].”—Married male, rural, Andhra Pradesh

Associations between condom use and partner type were significant for both sexes, but patterns differed markedly. Compared with young women who had had premarital sex only with romantic partners, those who had had premarital sex only with nonromantic partners were significantly less likely to have used a condom at last sex (0.2). In contrast, compared with young men who had had sex only with romantic partners, those who had engaged in sex only with nonromantic partners had 1.5–1.6 times the odds of having ever used a condom, having used a condom at last sex and having used condoms consistently.

Qualitative data from young men indicate that the elevated likelihood of condom use with nonromantic partners may partly reflect differences in young men’s perceptions of the risk posed by sex with some types of partners, differences in young men’s preparations before engaging in sex with certain partners, their awareness of the importance of using condoms during encounters with sex workers, and the availability of condoms in such instances:

“That girl was not a sex worker. I read that only sex workers suffer from these diseases.”—Unmarried male, urban, Bihar

"[The sex worker] gave me [condoms] herself, she told me that there are chances of getting some disease if I don’t use [them]... I didn’t take any precaution with my girlfriend, as nothing happens when we do it just once or twice.”—Unmarried male, rural, Bihar

“I didn’t use anything with her as she had been sterilized, and moreover, she was a married woman... I did use condoms when I had sex with sex workers; they gave me condoms... [and] even counseled me that I should practice safe sex.”—Married male, Jharkhand

“She was a virgin... Why be afraid of [contracting a disease]?... I had used a condom when I had sex with a sex worker, she gave me the condom. I didn’t enjoy it.”—Unmarried male, urban, Maharashtra

“I did not use anything with her... I would have been afraid of contracting a disease had I gone to any other girl. She is my uncle’s daughter... [The sex worker] told me I can have sex with her [only if I use a condom]. I told her, ‘I don’t know how to put on condoms and why should I use [them]?’ She just replied that I have to use.”—Unmarried male, rural, Tamil Nadu

Both of the peer-level factors were correlated with condom use among young women, but only one was correlated with use among young men. Young women who reported having peers as confidantes and those who reported having peers who had had premarital sex had elevated odds of having ever used condoms (odds ratios, 3.3 and 1.9, respectively); young men who reported having peers who had had premarital sex were not only more likely than those without such peers to have ever used condoms, but also to have used condoms at first sex and at last sex and to have used them consistently (1.6–2.9). Responses to in-depth interviews indicate that peers serve as a major source of information on contraceptive methods and condom use; among young men, they also provide advice on where to obtain condoms and how to use them, and even help procure them:

“I got to know about [condoms] from TV and [my boyfriend’s] sister, because she had had sex with her boyfriend. She told me about it.”—Unmarried female, urban, Bihar