

**Background;** People in the military are part of a social group with particular risk factors- isolation, often being far from home, working in extremely stressful environments, and lacking independent decision making power. Sex may be the only outlet people have to be themselves. Putting all this together creates a risk for STI exchange. By the dictates of their profession, military personnel are at higher risk of contracting sexually transmitted infections (including HIV/AIDS) than the general population.

**Problem statement;** Military populations, in general, have increased vulnerability to HIV infection, compared to the general civilian populations. Given that condoms have been acknowledged as being effective in preventing HIV transmission, the fact that HIV incidence among the military personnel is higher than the national prevalence is indicative of low use of the condoms.

**Objective;** The purpose of this study was to assess the factors that influence utilization of condoms among soldiers in Bombo barracks.

**Methodology;** The study used a cross sectional design; The study population consisted of resident soldiers of Bombo military barracks and Bombo military referral hospital administration staff. This was achieved through a process of probability sampling in which multistage and simple random sampling were carried out. The major data collection technique used in this study was face to face interviews with the soldiers. A self designed structured questionnaire was used for data collection during the current research.

**Results;** Assessment of condom use among the soldiers revealed that only 284 (83%) of the soldiers had had sexual intercourse by study time. Of those who had had sex, only 121 (42.6%) had used a condom during their encounter. The prevalence of condom use among the soldiers at Bombo barracks was 43%.

The results also show that the prevalence of condom use among the soldiers at Bombo barracks was 43%. Majority of the soldiers in Bombo Barracks were knowledgeable enough about condom use 211(74%). According to the bivariate results, knowledge did not have an influence on condom use

among the soldiers. Of the socio economic factors, those which had an influence on condom use among the soldiers were Education level ( $p = 0.003$ ), price of the condoms ( $p= 0.009$ ), current rank in the army ( $p = 0.000$ ). The behavioral factors that had a statistically significant influence on condom use were living with a spouse ( $p=0.000$ ), use of any substances of abuse like Marijuana ( $p= 0.021$ ) and number of sexual encounters had per week ( $p = 0.000$ ).

**Conclusion;** The prevalence of condom use among the soldiers in Bombo barracks is still low (42.6%) and this was found to be associated with socio economic and behavioral factors.

**Recommendations;** It is recommended that more health education be done among the soldiers to sensitize them about the effectiveness of condoms.

The UPDF administration should make VCT among the soldiers mandatory since performing a personal risk assessment can help individualize the risk factors that make one personally "vulnerable" to infection. By better understanding the personal risk, the soldiers will be able to make more informed decisions on how to protect themselves that is by use of condoms.