

CHAPTER 6



HIV/AIDS

The first HIV/AIDS cases in El Salvador and Guatemala were registered in 1984, while the first cases in Honduras and Nicaragua were recorded in 1985 and 1987, respectively. Since then, the number of persons infected with HIV has increased at an accelerated pace, particularly in Honduras, Guatemala, and El Salvador. As of year 2002, Honduras had officially reported the most cases (17,199), followed by Guatemala (4,923), El Salvador (4,278), and Nicaragua (997). In all of the countries, the main transmission route of HIV is by sexual contact, principally heterosexual. Also, in all of the countries, men account for the majority of the cases, however, the male/female ratio of reported cases is rapidly reaching parity. The men and women most affected by the epidemic are 20–34 years of age. In general, the epidemic is concentrated in the urban and commercial areas of each country. The results of sentinel surveillance studies conducted in each country show that HIV infection is relatively high among commercial sex workers and men who have sex with men.

This chapter examines knowledge of sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and HIV/AIDS, how HIV/AIDS is transmitted, and what can be done to prevent it. Since many questionnaire items were different for Nicaragua, and similar for the other three countries, data and discussion focus on El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras. Whenever the Nicaraguan data is comparable it is included in the following presentation.

Knowledge of Gonorrhea and Syphilis

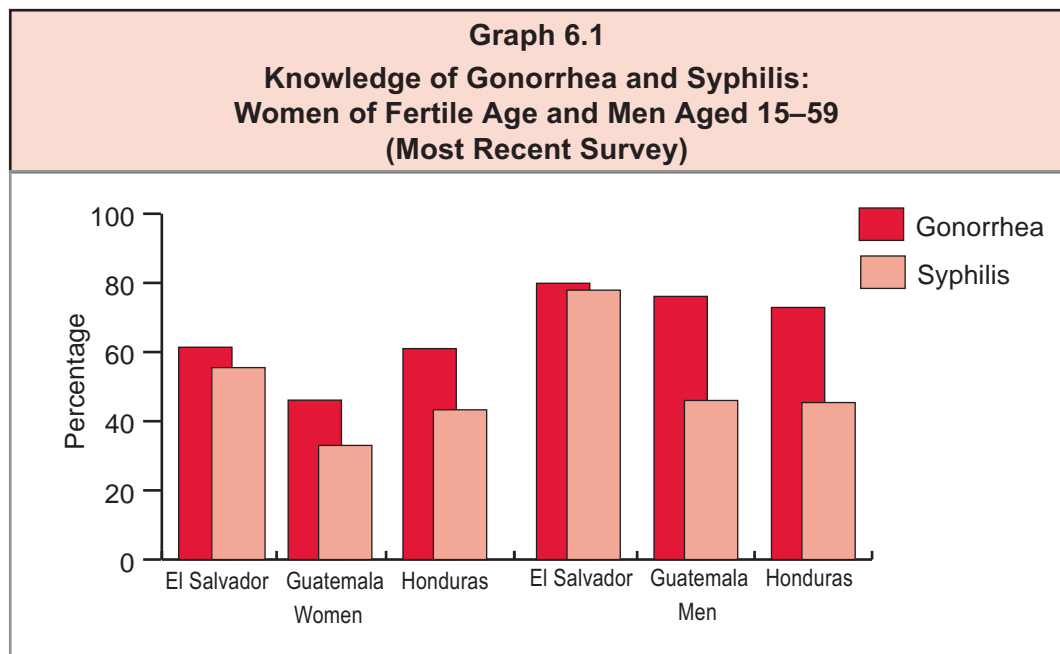
In the most recent surveys in El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras, respondents were asked if they had ever heard of a number of specific STIs and of HIV/AIDS. In Nicaragua, respondents were asked if they had ever heard of any STI other than HIV/AIDS, without specifying the various infections. The results of the Nicaragua survey show that 49.9 percent of women aged 15–49 have heard of at least one

STI and that knowledge is higher in urban areas (60.8 percent) than in rural areas (31.1 percent) (data not shown).

Table 6.1 and Graph 6.1 show the percentage of women and men living in El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras who have heard of gonorrhea and syphilis. These two classic STIs are the most recognized STIs in each of the countries, indicating that knowledge of the other STIs that were investigated is relatively low. Knowledge of gonorrhea among women

Country/Area	Year of Survey	Women		Men	
		Gonorrhea	Syphilis	Gonorrhea	Syphilis
El Salvador*	2002/03				
Total		61.4	55.5	79.9	77.9
Urban		72.9	66.7	88.5	87.6
Rural		46.4	40.8	71.9	69.0
Guatemala*	2002				
Total		46.1	33.0	76.1	46.0
Urban		61.2	47.1	85.9	61.2
Rural		35.0	22.7	68.9	34.9
Honduras†	2001				
Total		61.0	43.3	72.9	45.4
Urban		74.0	57.3	84.8	60.4
Rural		47.6	28.9	62.9	32.9

* Women aged 15–49.
† Women aged 15–44.



ranged from 46.1 percent in Guatemala to approximately 61 percent in El Salvador and Honduras. Similarly, knowledge of syphilis ranged from a low of 33.0 percent in Guatemala to a high of 55.5 percent in El Salvador. In all three of the countries, knowledge of both infections was lowest among women living in the rural area.

As shown in the table and graph, a higher percentage of men have heard of gonorrhea and syphilis compared to the women. Knowledge of both infections is highest and similar in El Salvador, while knowledge of syphilis is substantially lower than gonorrhea in Honduras and Guatemala. As was the case with the women, knowledge of both infections is lowest in the rural area.

Knowledge of HIV/AIDS

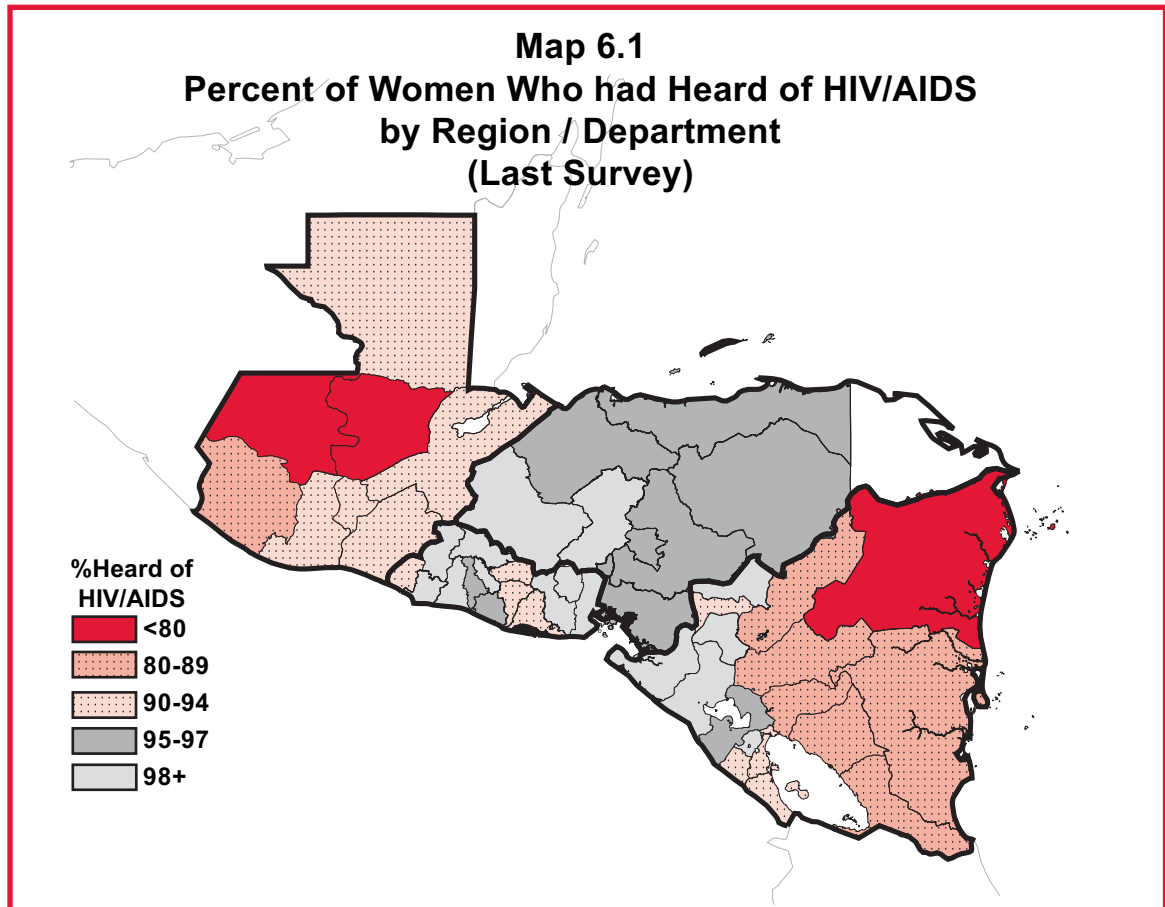
In Honduras, almost all women have heard of HIV/AIDS (Table 6.2 and Map 6.1). Knowledge of HIV/AIDS is lower in El Salvador (96.1 percent), Nicaragua (92.8 percent), and in Guatemala (85.6 percent). While knowledge is consistently high in all regions of Honduras the other countries indicate divergent regional

patterns. Nicaragua is the most pronounced with the northwest Pacific coast region showing high levels of knowledge while the Northern Atlantic Autonomous Region (RAAN) showed the lowest. In all four countries, knowledge of this infection is greater in urban areas, which suggests a need to promote awareness in rural areas, especially in Guatemala and Nicaragua.

Table 6.2
Knowledge of HIV/AIDS and Percent Who Know That HIV Infections Can be Asymptomatic, and that no Cure Exists for AIDS, According to Area of Residence: Women of Fertile Age and Men Aged 15–59 (Most Recent Survey)

Country/ Area	Year of Survey	Women			Men		
		Have Heard of HIV/AIDS	Know HIV Can be Asymptomatic	Know that No Cure Exists for AIDS	Have Heard of HIV/AIDS	Know HIV Can be Asymptomatic	Know that No Cure Exists for AIDS
El Salvador*	2002/03						
Total		96.1	74.4	87.1	98.0	83.7	86.7
Urban		98.1	80.8	88.4	99.7	89.5	89.3
Rural		93.5	66.1	85.4	96.4	78.4	84.3
Guatemala*	2002						
Total		85.6	68.8	84.0	94.8	75.3	82.4
Urban		93.7	75.8	86.5	97.6	80.2	83.4
Rural		79.7	62.7	81.8	92.8	71.6	81.6
Honduras†	2001						
Total		99.2	82.5	86.7	99.6	91.8	87.1
Urban		99.8	87.6	88.8	99.5	95.3	90.0
Rural		98.6	77.3	84.5	99.6	88.8	84.8
Nicaragua*	2001						
Total		92.8	75.0	na	na	na	na
Urban		97.4	84.5	na	na	na	na
Rural		84.7	58.8	na	na	na	na

* Women aged 15–49.
† Women aged 15–44.
na: Not available.



Women who had heard of HIV/AIDS were asked whether they believed that a person could be infected with HIV and be asymptomatic (not show any clinical symptoms of the disease). The knowledge that HIV/AIDS can be asymptomatic is an indication of women's knowledge of HIV/AIDS rather than simple awareness of the

disease. As shown in the third column of Table 6.2, almost 83 percent of women in Honduras know that a person can be asymptomatic and have HIV. In the other countries, between 68.8 percent (Guatemala) and 75.0 percent (Nicaragua) knew this. In all of the countries, there is a wide gap between urban and rural

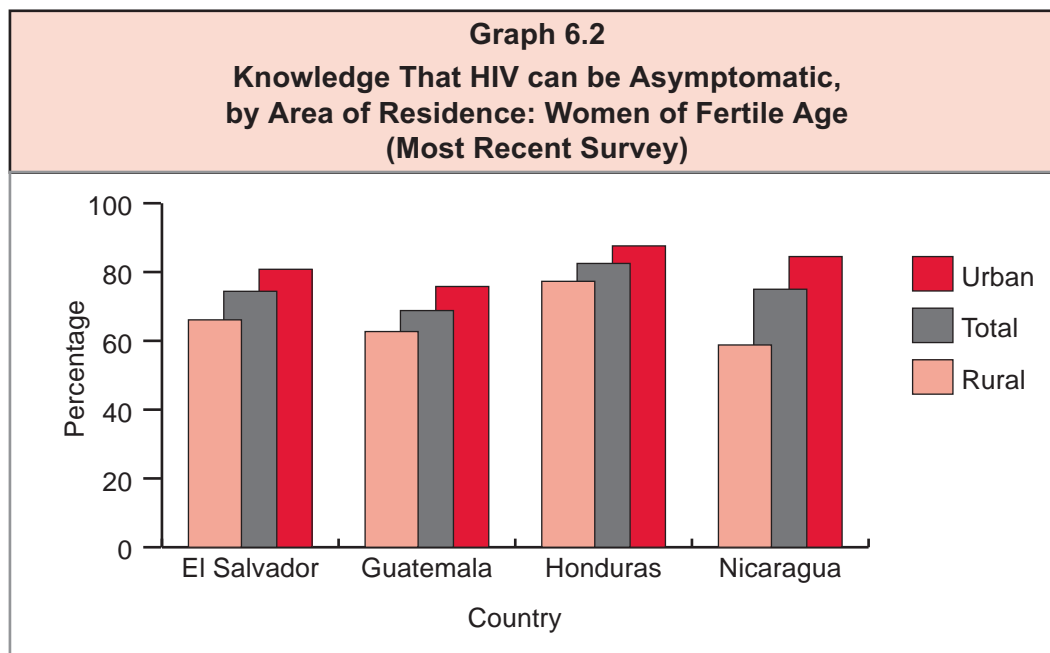
women in the knowledge that HIV can be asymptomatic, particularly in Nicaragua (Graph 6.2 and Map 6.2).

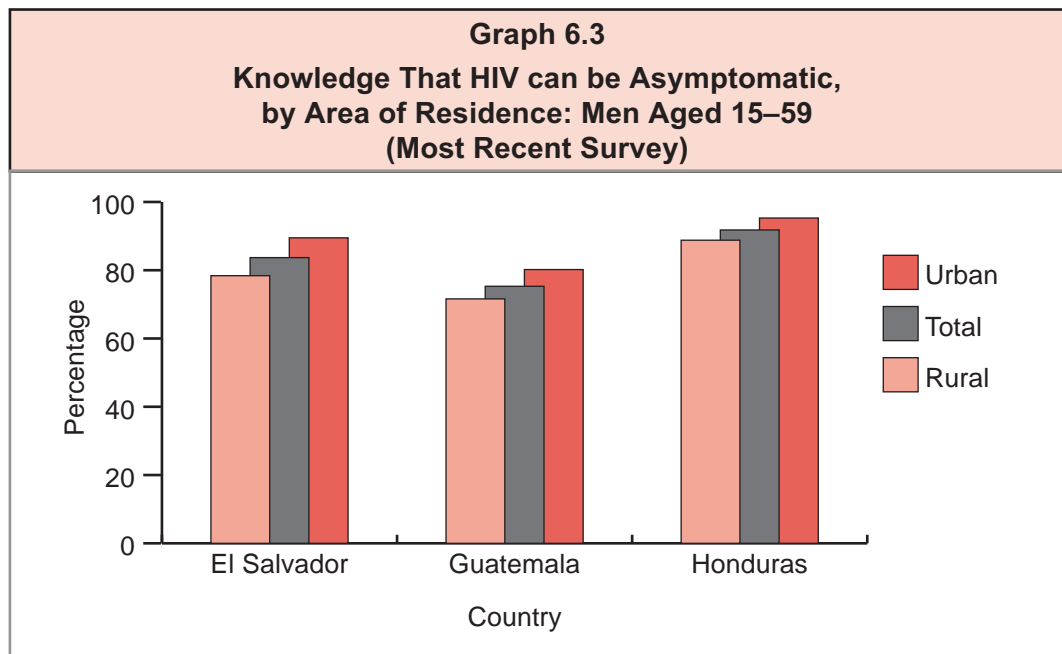
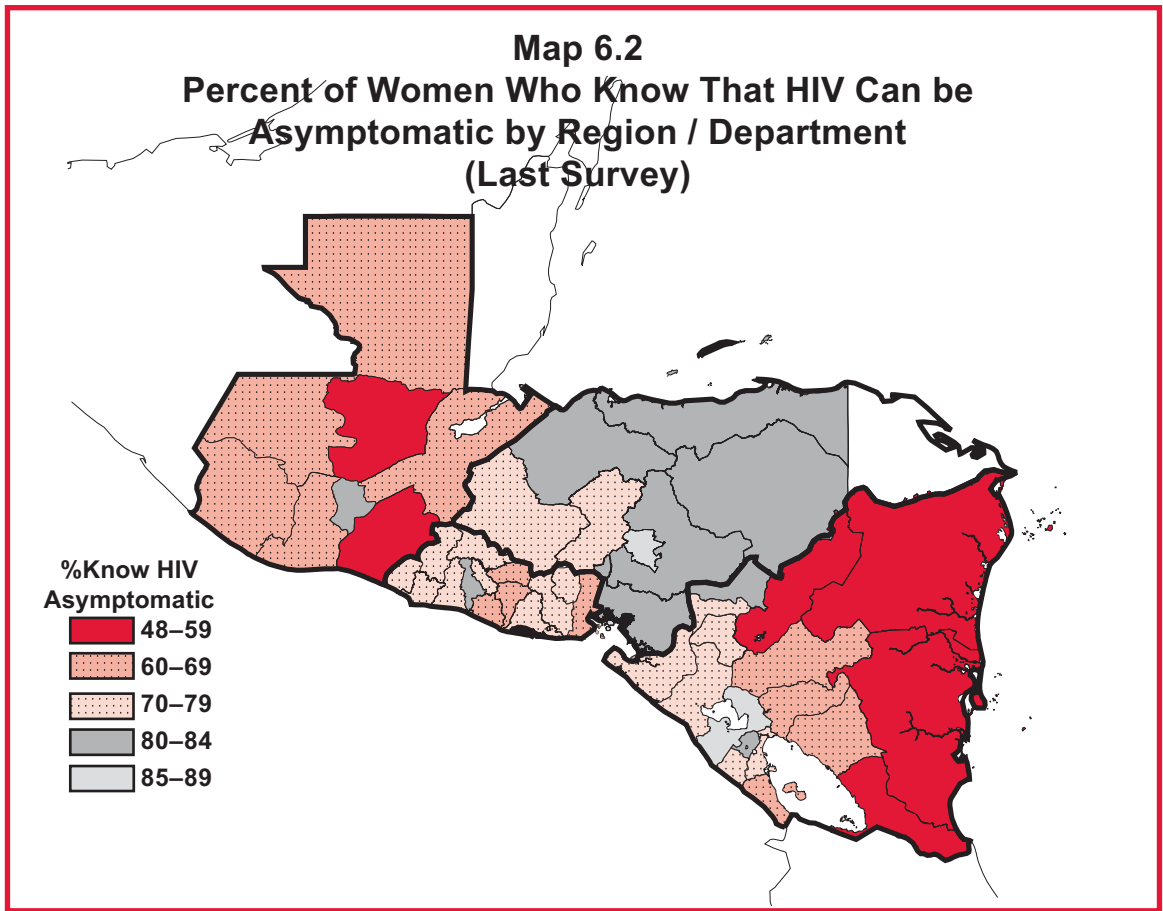
In El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras, at least 84.0 percent of the women know that no cure exists for AIDS (fourth column of Table 6.2). Knowledge of this fact is slightly higher among urban women.

Men also demonstrate high knowledge of HIV/AIDS, with knowledge of HIV/AIDS being almost universal among Honduran men (Table 6.2). Comparing men and women, a greater proportion of Guatemalan men are aware of HIV/AIDS than Guatemalan women, with a differential of about 10 percentage points. As shown in the sixth column of Table 6.2, almost 92 percent of men in Honduras know that a person can be asymptomatic and have HIV (Graph 6.3). In the other countries, between 75.3 percent (Guatemala) and 83.7 percent (El Salvador) knew this. By comparing the fourth column with the seventh column in Table 6.2, it can be seen that almost an equal percentage of women and men in each country know that no cure exists for AIDS.

Means of Preventing the Transmission of HIV/AIDS

The surveys in El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras used a question to ascertain women's and men's knowledge of HIV/AIDS prevention. Essentially, the respondents were asked to mention spontaneously the methods of prevention that they knew. In El Salvador the questionnaire design was adapted to conform with UNAIDS indicator needs and included specific probing on abstinence, monogamy, and condom use in all sexual relations. As a result in El Salvador, the indicators on "spontaneity" of responses may be low because interviewers may have not given respondents enough time to respond. For the purpose of the following comparison the focus is on the percentage of women and men who could mention two or more ways to prevent the transmission of HIV/AIDS spontaneously with some additional mention of probed response rates for El Salvador.





As shown in Table 6.3, 44.8 and 41.2 percent of women in Guatemala and Honduras, respectively, could mention two or more ways to prevent the transmission of HIV/AIDS, compared to only 23.1 percent in El Salvador. With probing on specific means of prevention the percent in El Salvador rises to 87.5 percent. The urban/rural differential in El Salvador and Guatemala was 9 and 11 percentage points, respectively, in favor of the urban area, while it was 19 percentage points in Honduras. It should be noted that substantial proportions of women were unable to spontaneously mention any way to prevent the transmission of HIV/AIDS. The lowest percent reported is for Guatemala (11.1 percent) followed by Honduras with 18.1 percent. Forty percent of women in El Salvador did not spontaneously mention any means of prevention, but this drops to 5.8 percent unfamiliar with any means of prevention when probing on specific methods.

A higher percentage of men than women in each country mentioned two or more ways of preventing the transmission of HIV/AIDS. The largest male/female differential was found to be in Honduras—20 percentage points. The percentage of men who mentioned two or more ways to prevent HIV/AIDS was lowest in El Salvador (29.6 percent), followed by Guatemala (47.2 percent), and highest in Honduras (61.2 percent). With probing the percent in El Salvador rises to near 90 percent. As expected, urban men were more likely to mention two or more ways of prevention than rural men. The percent of the men unable to mention any means to prevent the transmission of HIV/AIDS is fairly low, 6.1 and 4.0 percent in Guatemala and Honduras, respectively, but high (23.6 percent) in El Salvador. Again, with probing this percentage drops to 3.2 percent in El Salvador.

Table 6.3
Number of Means Mentioned Spontaneously to Prevent the Transmission of HIV/AIDS, According to Area of Residence: Women of Fertile Age and Men Aged 15–59 (Most Recent Survey)

Country/ Area	Year of Survey	Women Number of Means			Men Number of Means		
		0	1	2+	0	1	2+
El Salvador*	2002/03						
Total		40.3	36.6	23.1	23.6	46.8	29.6
Urban		33.4	39.4	27.1	16.7	49.2	34.2
Rural		49.2	32.9	17.9	30.0	44.5	25.5
Guatemala*	2002						
Total		11.1	44.1	44.8	6.1	46.6	47.2
Urban		7.3	42.0	50.7	3.5	45.5	51.0
Rural		14.4	46.0	39.7	8.8	47.5	44.3
Honduras†	2001						
Total		18.1	40.7	41.2	4.0	34.8	61.2
Urban		9.0	40.4	50.6	2.1	30.4	67.5
Rural		27.5	40.9	31.6	5.5	38.6	55.9

* Women aged 15–49.
 † Women aged 15–44.
 na: Not available.

Table 6.4 presents the percentage of women and men who mentioned the primary means of preventing the sexual transmission of HIV/AIDS—abstinence, monogamy, and the consistent and correct use of condoms. As shown in the table, the percentage of women who mentioned abstinence is relatively low in each of the countries, ranging from 13.0 percent in El Salvador to 25.0 percent in Guatemala. Approximately twice as many women mentioned monogamy in each country, while from 27.8 percent (El Salvador) to 54.3 percent (Guatemala) mentioned the use of condoms. With the exception of the use of condoms, the urban/rural differential for the other means of prevention is relatively small in Honduras and Guatemala. In El Salvador the urban/rural differential is large for both monogamy and use of condoms, favoring greater knowledge in urban areas.

A very small percentage of men in each country

spontaneously mentioned abstinence as a way to prevent the transmission of HIV/AIDS. A higher percentage of men in Honduras mentioned monogamy (64.3 percent) than men in Guatemala (40.0 percent) and El Salvador (24.0 percent). More men than women mentioned the consistent and correct use of condoms in Honduras and Guatemala, but the percentage of men who mentioned this means of prevention is surprisingly low in all three countries, ranging from 8.4 in El Salvador to 59.3 in Honduras. It is interesting to note that women, compared to men, are much more likely to mention condom use in El Salvador. Again, when probed, 70.2 percent of women and 62.0 percent of men in El Salvador acknowledged that use of condoms was a means for preventing sexual transmission of HIV/AIDS (data not shown). As was the case with the women, the urban/rural differential for abstinence and monogamy is relatively small in all three countries.

Country/ Area	Year of Survey	Women			Men		
		Abstinence	Monogamy	Use Condoms	Abstinence	Monogamy	Use Condoms
El Salvador*	2002/03						
Total		13.0	25.4	27.8	9.4	24.0	8.4
Urban		14.1	29.6	33.7	12.6	29.8	11.1
Rural		11.4	19.9	19.9	6.5	18.6	5.9
Guatemala*	2002						
Total		25.0	42.2	34.7	5.0	40.0	42.2
Urban		23.4	43.7	41.0	7.9	39.7	50.7
Rural		26.8	41.0	29.3	2.9	40.3	35.7
Honduras†	2001						
Total		22.6	43.6	54.3	6.3	64.3	59.3
Urban		23.4	44.8	60.1	8.0	66.3	63.5
Rural		21.7	42.3	47.5	4.8	62.5	55.5

* Women aged 15–49.
† Women aged 15–44.

Knowledge and Use of the Test to Detect HIV

A significant proportion of women and men have heard of the test to detect HIV (Table 6.5 and Graph 6.4). Among the women, knowledge of the test is highest in El Salvador (72.1 percent) and lowest in Guatemala (56.7 percent), while among the men, knowledge is highest in Honduras (75.7 percent) and lowest in Guatemala (61.3 percent). Important differences between urban and rural respondents should be noted for both the women and the men.

Table 6.6 shows the percentage of women and men who are aware of the HIV test, according to the educational level of the respondents. For both sexes in each country, knowledge of the test increases as the educational level of the respondents increases. Using Guatemala as an example, while only 30.1 percent of women with no formal education are aware of the test, 95.1 percent of women who have attended a university have knowledge of this test. A similar pattern of knowledge was found for Guatemalan men.

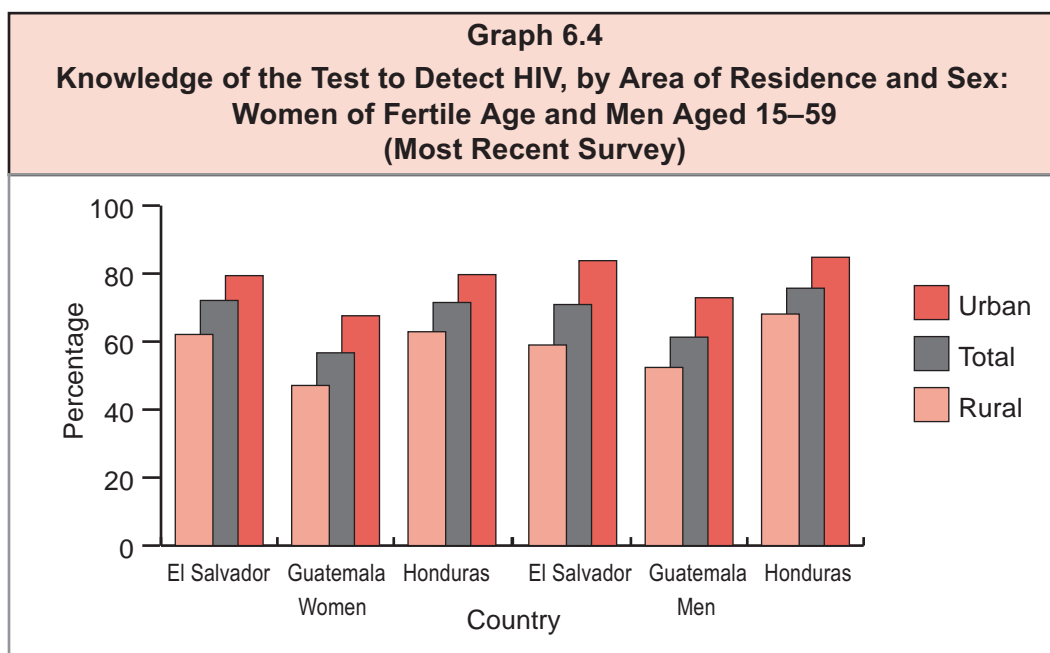
Table 6.5
Knowledge of the Test to Detect HIV, According to Area of Residence: Women of Fertile Age and Men Aged 15–59 (Most Recent Survey)

Country/Area	Year of Survey	Women	Men
El Salvador*	2002/03		
Total		72.1	70.9
Urban		79.4	83.8
Rural		62.1	59.0
Guatemala*	2002		
Total		56.7	61.3
Urban		67.6	72.9
Rural		47.1	52.4
Honduras†	2001		
Total		71.5	75.7
Urban		79.7	84.8
Rural		62.9	68.1

* Women aged 15–49.

† Women aged 15–44.

na: Not available.



In general, the percentage of all women and all men who have ever been tested for HIV is relatively small in the countries for which there is data (Table 6.6, Columns 3 and 4). The probability of having ever been tested is similar among women in El Salvador and Honduras at 11.9 percent, while 13.1 percent of men in El Salvador and 17.0 percent in Honduras have been tested. The level of testing among women

in Nicaragua is lower, with an overall percent of 6.6. In all of countries the percentage of women and men who have ever been tested increases as the educational level of the women and men increases. This finding suggests that the self-perceived risk of contracting HIV/AIDS may be higher among more educated women and men than among less educated women and men.

Table 6.6
Knowledge of the Test to Detect HIV, and Ever Been Tested
For HIV/AIDS, According to Education: Women of Fertile
Age and Men Aged 15–59 (Most Recent Survey)

Country/ Education	Year of Survey	Knowledge of Test		Ever Been Tested	
		Women	Men	Women	Men
El Salvador*	2002/03				
Total		69.4	70.9	11.9	13.1
None		50.4	49.0	6.1	4.5
0–3		55.8	56.8	6.5	4.1
4–6		62.6	71.6	7.7	8.9
7–9		73.4	73.9	11.0	12.4
10+		86.2	92.1	20.8	27.3
Guatemala*	2002				
Total		56.7	61.3	na	na
None		30.1	32.0	na	na
Primary		48.9	51.0	na	na
Secondary		79.3	82.0	na	na
Superior		95.1	90.2	na	na
Honduras†	2001				
Total		71.5	75.7	11.9	17.0
None		51.2	57.9	3.1	5.5
1 a 3		61.7	70.3	6.2	9.6
4 a 6		69.6	75.5	8.8	16.0
7+		85.1	89.5	21.6	30.6
Nicaragua	2001				
Total		na	na	6.6	na
None		na	na	1.8	na
1 a 3		na	na	1.9	na
4 a 6		na	na	4.7	na
Secondary		na	na	8.7	na
Superior		na	na	17.6	na
* Women aged 15–49.					
† Women aged 15–44.					
na: Not available.					

Stigma and Discrimination

With the spread of HIV infections throughout the world, there was also a rising wave of stigma associated with the spread. In the early days of the epidemic, there was much misinformation about HIV/AIDS, thus, the stigma linked to it. The social stigma surrounding AIDS was also due in part to its possible etiology of bisexuality or homosexuality, extramarital affairs, and drug use. However, in recent years, efforts have been made in many countries to decrease the stigma and discrimination against people living with the virus.

In the most recent survey conducted in the four countries analyzed in this report, there were a series of questions designed to measure the level of stigma and discrimination confronting people living with HIV/AIDS. In this report, it is not possible to present all of the findings for each survey, so only a sampling of some of the results are presented in Table 6.7. Readers interested in more information are referred to the individual country reports.

There was one question common to all four surveys: “Would you care for a family member living with HIV/AIDS in your own house?” As shown in Table 6.7, at least 70 percent of women living in El Salvador, Honduras, and Nicaragua would care for a family member in their house, while only 62.0 percent of Guatemalan women said that they would do this. In all of the countries, fewer rural women

than urban women would care for a family member living with HIV/AIDS, with the largest urban/rural differentials found in Nicaragua and Guatemala.

Among El Salvadoran women, only 39.8 percent of the women would buy vegetables from a vendor who had AIDS, and in Guatemala and Honduras, less than 50 percent of the women would allow a person with HIV/AIDS to continue working. In El Salvador and Nicaragua from 42.7 to 47.1 percent of the women would maintain as a secret that a family member has HIV/AIDS. Important urban/rural differences should be noted for these situations.

Turning to the men, about the same percentage of men as women in El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras would care for a family member living with AIDS. Fewer men than women in El Salvador would buy vegetables from a vendor living with AIDS, and fewer men than women in Honduras would allow a person with HIV/AIDS to continue working. However, fewer men than women in El Salvador would keep secret that a family member has HIV/AIDS.

Based on the above analysis, rural women and men are more likely to be discriminatory against persons living with HIV/AIDS than urban women and men. Although there is not always a clear pattern with regard to gender, it appears that women are less likely to be discriminatory than men.

Knowledge and Use of Condoms

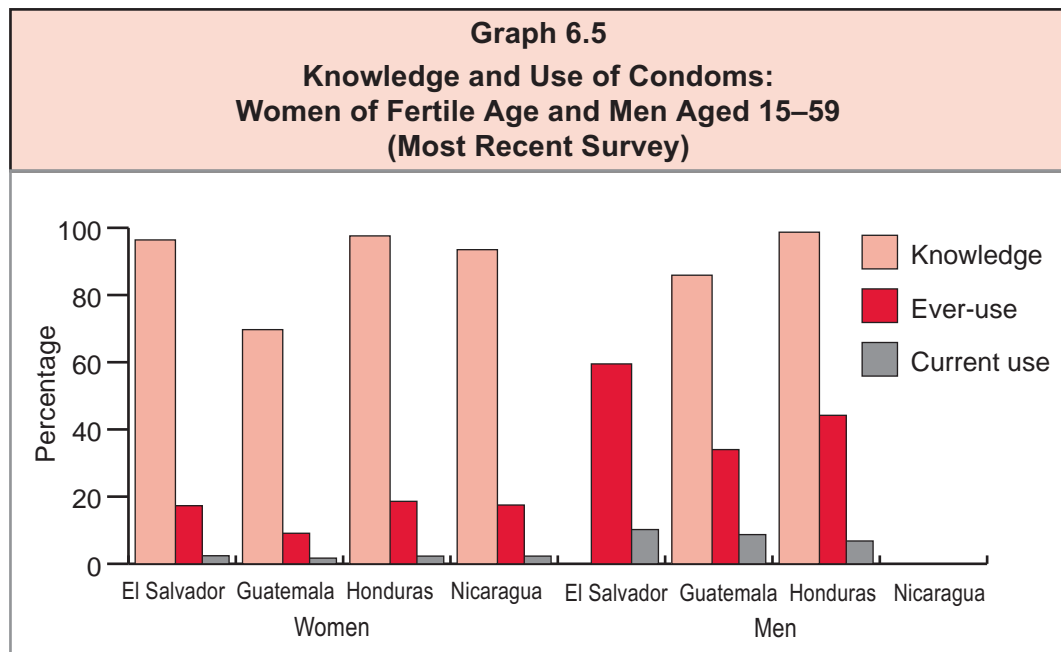
Between 93.5 percent and 97.6 percent of women aged 15–49 in El Salvador, Honduras, and Nicaragua were aware of condoms at the time of the last survey (Table 6.8 and Graph 6.5). This compares with condom awareness in

Guatemala of only 69.7 percent, which ranges from 59.6 percent among rural women to 83.4 percent among urban women. Compared to knowledge of condoms, ever-use of condoms is low in every country, and current use is extremely low, ranging from a low of 1.7 percent in Guatemala to a high of 2.3 to 2.4 percent in the other countries.

Table 6.8
Knowledge and Use of Condoms,
According to Area of Residence: Women Aged 15–49
and Men Aged 15–59 (Most Recent Survey)

Country/Area	Year of Survey	Women			Men		
		Knowledge	Ever-Use	Current Use*	Knowledge	Ever-Use	Current Use*
El Salvador	2002/03						
Total		96.4	17.3	2.4	na	59.5	10.2
Urban		98.6	21.2	2.9	na	68.5	11.7
Rural		93.5	12.3	1.7	na	51.2	8.8
Guatemala	2002						
Total		69.7	9.1	1.7	85.9	34.0	8.7
Urban		83.4	13.3	2.5	93.6	47.2	13.6
Rural		59.6	5.9	1.1	80.4	24.3	5.1
Honduras	2001						
Total		97.6	18.6	2.3	98.7	44.2	6.8
Urban		99.4	23.0	2.8	99.6	56.1	7.7
Rural		95.7	14.0	1.7	98.0	34.3	6.1
Nicaragua	2001						
Total		93.5	17.5	2.3	na	na	na
Urban		97.5	21.2	2.7	na	na	na
Rural		86.6	11.1	1.5	na	na	na

na: Not available.
* During the 30 days prior to interview.



As expected, knowledge and use of condoms is higher among men compared to women (Graph 6.5). Ever-use of condoms is also much more common among men with over a third of men in Guatemala to near 60 percent in El Salvador, having ever-used condoms. Current use of

condoms, however, is relatively low in all three countries with male data. Only 6.8 percent of men in Guatemala, 8.7 percent in Honduras, and 10.2 percent in El Salvador reported condom use during the 30 days prior to interview.

Number of Sexual Partners in the Past 12 Months and the Use of Condoms

Men in El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras who were sexually active during the 12 months prior to interview were asked how many sexual partners they had during the period. As shown in Table 6.9, the majority of the men in each country had only one sexual partner. Married men were more likely than unmarried men to report one sexual partner, which ranged from about 86 percent in El Salvador and Honduras to 96.2 percent in Guatemala. In each country, a higher percentage of unmarried men than married men had multiple sexual partners during the year (Graph 6.6). This is not to suggest that married men were always faithful to their wives, as approximately 13 percent of married men in El Salvador and Honduras had two or more sexual partners during the 12 month period. Of

the men with multiple partners, the majority had two partners, although from 7.6 to 13.0 percent of unmarried men had four or more partners.

The men were also asked if they used condoms in the last sexual relation with their various sexual partners. In Table 6.10, the results of this analysis are presented. Using Honduras as an example, of the men who had only one sexual partner during the previous 12 months, 88.9 percent did not use condoms with that partner, while 11.1 percent did. Of the men who had two sexual partners, 47.9 percent of the men did not use condoms with either partner, while 31.5 percent used condoms with one of the partners, and 20.6 percent with both. And so on. The overall patterns of use according to numbers of partners are generally similar in El Salvador and Guatemala. Although the probability of using a condom increases as the number of sexual partners increases, a critical message of Table 6.10 is that use is neither universal nor consistent.

Table 6.9
**Number of Sexual Partners in the 12 Months Prior to Interview,
According to Marital Status: Men Aged 15–59 With Sexual Experience
in the Previous 12 Months (Most Recent Survey)**

Country/Marital Status	Year of Survey	Number of Sexual Partners			
		1	2	3	4+
El Salvador	2002/03				
Total		77.2	13.3	5.6	3.9
Married		86.5	8.0	3.3	2.2
Not married		55.9	25.6	10.9	7.6
Guatemala	2002				
Total		87.6	6.5	2.9	3.0
Married		96.2	1.9	1.2	0.7
Not married		60.5	21.1	8.3	10.1
Honduras	2001				
Total		73.7	13.5	7.1	5.3
Married		86.8	7.0	3.8	2.0
Not married		44.1	28.1	14.5	13.0
na: Not available.					

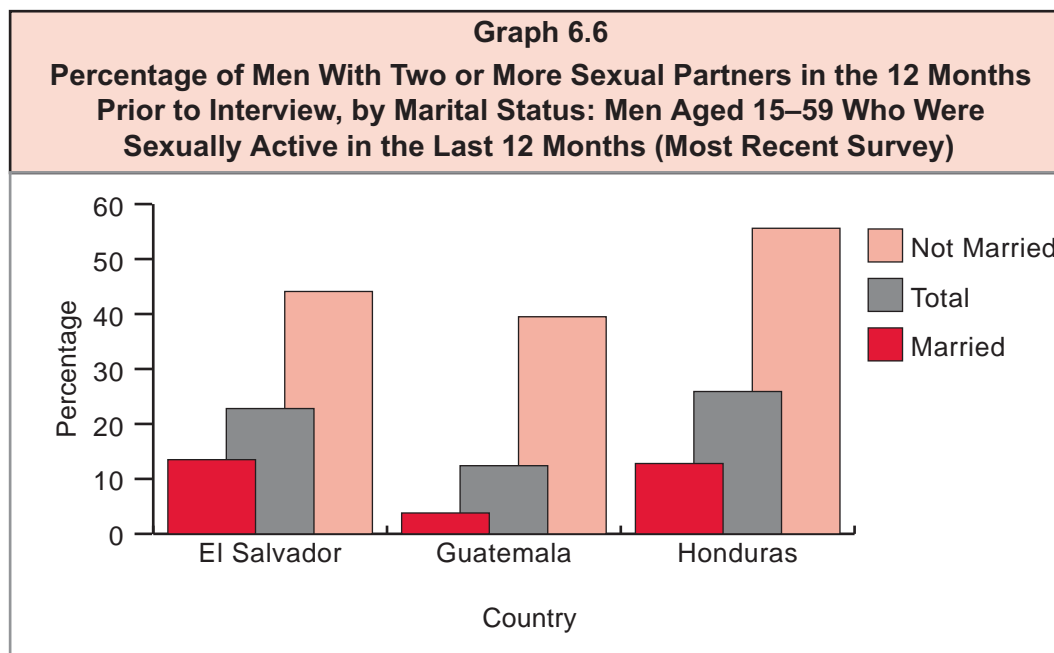


Table 6.10
Number of Sexual Partners in the 12 Months Prior to Interview With Whom Condoms Were Used in the Last Sexual Relation, According to Number of Sexual Partners: Men With Sexual Experience During the Previous 12 Months (Most Recent Survey)

Country/No. of Partners	Year of Survey	Number with Whom Used Condoms				Total
		None	1	2	3	
El Salvador	2002/03					
No. of Partners						
1		85.3	14.7	-	-	100.0
2		40.6	29.8	29.6	-	100.0
3+		18.9	15.6	29.1	36.4	100.0
Guatemala	2002					
No. of Partners						
1		88.2	11.8	-	-	100.0
2		34.3	15.3	50.4	-	100.0
3+		29.1	8.0	24.5	38.5	100.0
Honduras	2001					
No. of Partners						
1		88.9	11.1	-	-	100.0
2		47.9	31.5	20.6	-	100.0
3		39.6	12.2	19.3	28.9	100.0
4+		27.5	18.7	27.0	26.7	100.0

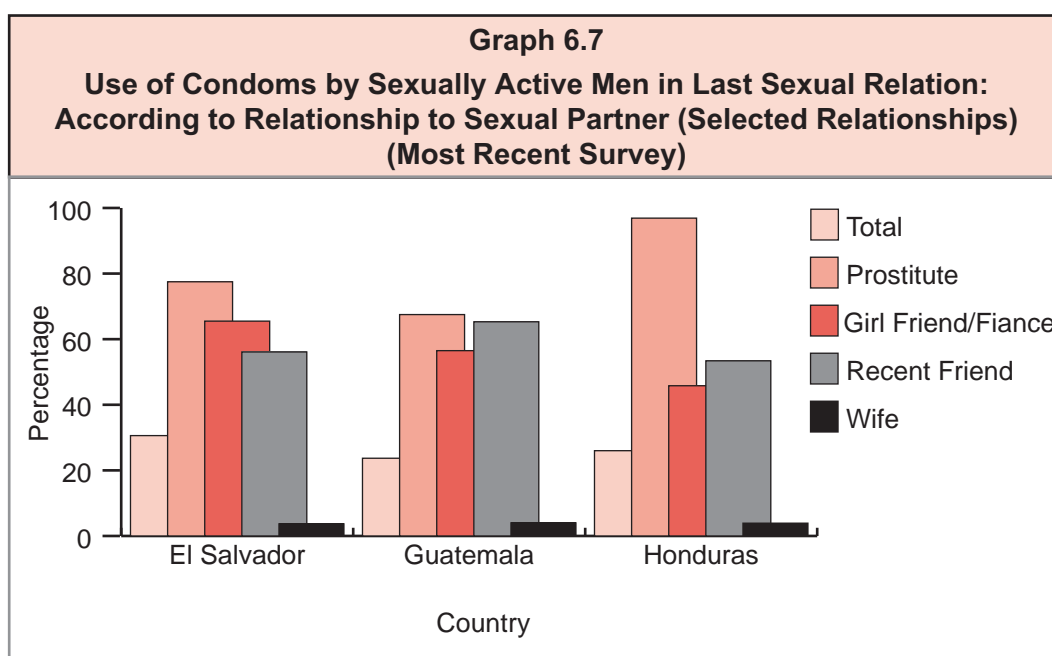
Again using Honduras as an example, among the men with three sexual partners, nearly 40 percent of the men did not use condoms with any of their partners, while only 28.9 percent used condoms with all three. The probability of using condoms when multiple sexual partners are involved appears to be highest in Guatemala and lowest in Honduras.

Use of condoms during the last sexual relation was also classified according to who was the sexual partner. Table 6.11 and Graph 6.7 illustrate the differential use of condoms by type of relationship to sexual partner. In all three countries with data, use is highest when the sexual partner was a prostitute, although from 22.5 to 32.5 percent of men in El Salvador

Table 6.11
Use of Condoms in Last Sexual Relation, According to Relation to Sexual Partner: Men Aged 15–59 (Most Recent Survey)

Sexual Partner	El Salvador 2002/03	Guatemala 2002	Honduras 2001
Total	30.6	23.7	26.0
Wife	3.7	4.0	3.9
Ex-Wife	na	na	18.6
Girl Friend/Fiance	65.5	56.5	45.8
Friend	55.5	59.1	48.8
Lover	50.9	na	43.3
Recent Friend	56.1	65.3	53.4
Prostitute	77.5	67.5	96.9
Other	*	37.4	*

na: Not available.
* Less than 25 cases.



and Guatemala did not use condoms during their last sexual encounter with a prostitute. Use of condoms is also relatively high when the partner is a recent acquaintance. In all three countries use of condoms is lowest when the sexual partner is the wife (below 5 percent).

The relative low use of condoms may be related to the perception that men have of condoms in preventing the transmission of STIs and HIV. As shown in Table 6.12, from 53.9 percent (Honduras) to 65.4 percent (Guatemala) of the men believe that condoms are effective in preventing the transmission of HIV. Only in Guatemala does this belief systematically increase as the educational level of the respondents also increases. It is surprising and alarming that a relatively small percentage of the more educated men believe that condoms are efficacious, in that it is this group of men who provide leadership to those who have had fewer educational opportunities.

Table 6.12
Percentage of Men Who Believe That
Condoms are Effective in Preventing
the Transmission of HIV, According to
Education: Men Aged 15–59
(Most Recent Survey)

Country/Education	Year of Survey	Percentage
El Salvador	2002/03	
Total		58.3
0–3		59.7
4–6		63.6
7–9		57.1
10+		53.5
Guatemala*	2002	
Total		65.4
None		52.6
Primary		65.0
Secondary		68.3
Superior		73.7
Honduras*	2001	
Total		53.9
None		45.2
1–3		55.1
4–6		55.3
7+		54.8

* Includes very effective and effective.

Summary of Findings

- Knowledge of STIs other than HIV/AIDS is low among women and men in all of the countries surveyed.
- In El Salvador, Honduras, and Nicaragua, at least 92 percent of women are aware of HIV/AIDS, while only 85.6 percent of women in Guatemala are aware of this infection. Almost all men in El Salvador and Honduras say that they have heard of HIV/AIDS, compared to 94.8 percent of Guatemalan men.
- Only 58.8 to 66.1 percent of rural women in Nicaragua, Guatemala, and El Salvador know that HIV/AIDS can be asymptomatic. Knowledge that a person can be infected with HIV and be asymptomatic is greater among men, especially in Honduras. Almost an equal percentage (over 80 percent) of women and men in each country know that no cure exists for AIDS.
- Less than 50 percent of the women in each country could spontaneously mention two or more ways to prevent the transmission of HIV. Among men, the percentage that could do this ranged from 29.6 percent in El Salvador to 61.2 percent in Honduras. Similarly, the percentage of women and men who spontaneously mentioned the three primary means of preventing the sexual transmission of HIV/AIDS is relatively low in each country with data.
- Among women, knowledge of the test to detect HIV is highest in El Salvador (72.1 percent) and lowest in Guatemala (56.7 percent), while among men, knowledge is highest in Honduras (75.7 percent) and lowest in Guatemala (61.3 percent). Important urban/rural differences exist for both women and men. In general, the percentage of women and men who have ever been tested for HIV is relatively small (less than 12 percent among women and 17 percent among men).
- A high degree of stigma and discrimination against people living with HIV/AIDS still exists in the four countries. Rural women and men are more likely to be discriminatory than their urban counterparts. Conversely, women are less likely to be discriminatory than men.
- While knowledge of condoms is relatively high, current use of condoms (during the 30 days prior to interview) by both men and women is very low in each country. Among men, the probability of using a condom increases as the number of sexual partners in the past year increases, but use of condoms is neither universal nor consistent.
- The relative low use of condoms may be related to the perception that men have of condoms in preventing the transmission of HIV. Less than two-thirds of the men in El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras believe that condoms are effective in preventing the transmission of HIV.