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## Introduction

- Rectal products such as douches used before or after anal intercourse (AI) may facilitate transmission of STIs/HIV
- There is limited international data on rectal douching in populations practicing AI
- We examined the content, types of products, rectal douching practices and risk behaviors among those reporting AI

## Materials and methods

- From August 2011-May 2012, 2,396 people reporting AI in the past 3 months completed an anonymous internet-based survey on rectal hygiene and practices
- Respondents were recruited through the International Rectal Microbicide Advocates (IRMA) website as well as national and international listservs and websites dedicated to sexual health
- The survey was available in English, Spanish, French, Portuguese, Chinese, Russian, Thai, and German and included questions on sexual behaviors associated with AI including rectal douching

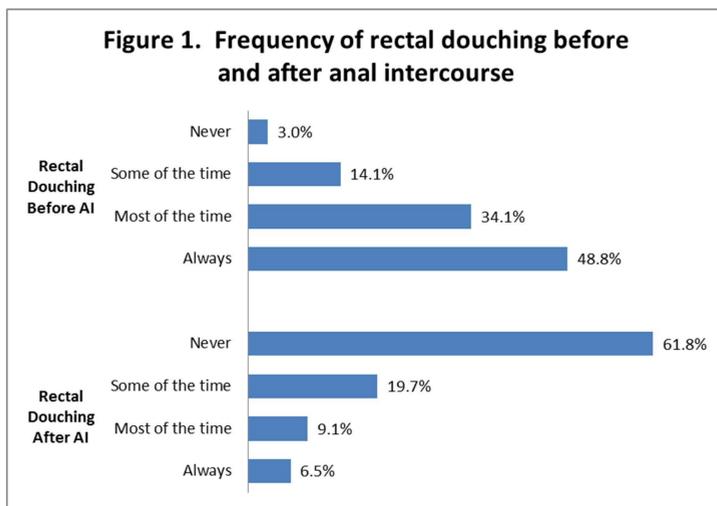
## Results

### Demographics

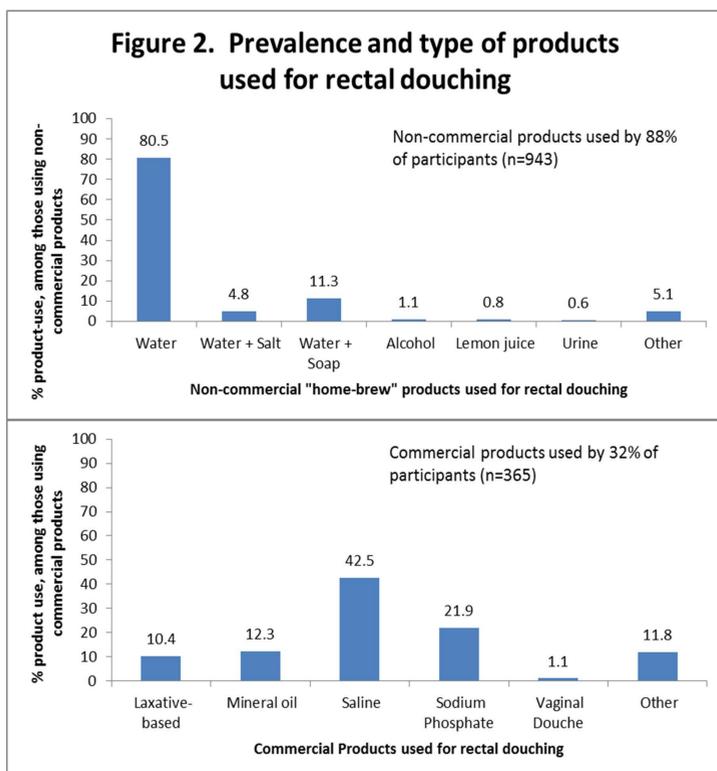
- Respondents represented 112 countries with half from North America (51%), nearly a quarter from Europe (23%), as well as Latin America (14%), Asia (6%), and Africa (3.4%)
- The majority of respondents were male (90%) and less than 40 years of age (mean age: 36.5; range: 18-87)

### Frequency and Type of Rectal Douches Used

- Among the 2,396 respondents, 61% (n=1,457) reported rectal douching/enema use before or after AI, with the majority of reporting douching before AI (83% douching always or most of the time) and fewer reporting douching after AI (16% douching always or most of the time) (Figure 1)



- The majority of rectal douchers reported using non-commercial/homemade products (88%), with water being the most common product used (Figure 2)
- Commercial products were used by 32%, with saline-based products being the most common product used (Figure 2)



### Rectal Douching and Sexual Risk Behaviors

- The prevalence of rectal douching varied by demographic characteristics and sexual risk behaviors (Table 1)

## Results cont'd

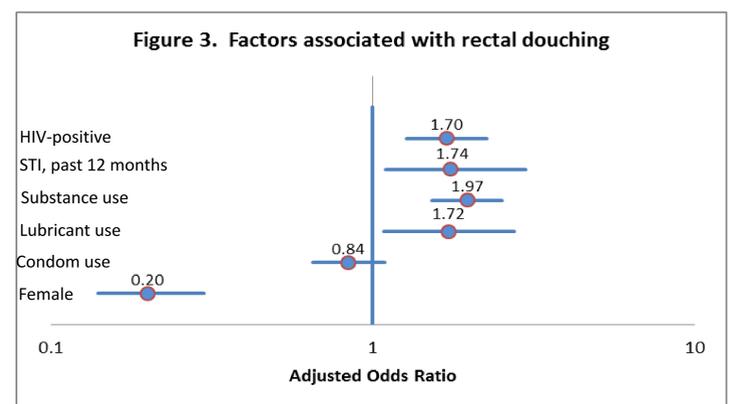
- Specifically, the prevalence of rectal douching was higher among men and varied by region. The prevalence of rectal douching was also higher among those who reported lubricant use for receptive AI, reported substance use with sexual activity, and those reporting a history of sexually transmitted infections (STIs) in the past year or being HIV-positive (Table 1)

**Table 1. Prevalence of rectal douching by demographic characteristics and sexual behaviors**

	Rectal Douche/enema use		
	n	%	p value
<b>Age, years*</b>			<.01
Douchers	38.1	(11.7)	
Non-Douchers	34.0	(10.8)	
<b>Gender</b>			<.01
Male	1,375	64.1	
Female	82	32.5	
<b>Region</b>			<.01
African	42	51.9	
Asia	63	44.4	
Europe	358	65.3	
Latin America/Caribbean	128	38.6	
North America	825	67.0	
Other	41	66.1	
<b>Always use condoms for RAI, past 3 months</b>			0.08
Yes	414	63.8	
No	817	67.9	
<b>Lubricant use for RAI, past 3 months</b>			<.01
Yes	1,159	67.8	
No	71	50.0	
<b>Substance use, with sexual activity</b>			<.01
Yes	524	69.8	
No	418	44.9	
<b>STI, past 12 months</b>			<.01
Yes	182	67.7	
No	751	54.0	
<b>HIV-positive</b>			<.01
Yes	378	70.5	
No	549	49.4	

\*data represent mean and standard deviation

- In multivariable analyses, after adjusting for age, gender, region, and condom use, factors associated with rectal douching included (Figure 3):
  - Lubricant use – 72% increased odds of lubricant use among rectal douchers
  - Substance use – 97% increased odds of lubricant use among rectal douchers
  - HIV-status – 70% increased odds of lubricant use among rectal douchers
  - Self-reported history of STI in the past 12 months – 74% increased odds of STIs in among rectal douchers



## Conclusions

- A substantial proportion of respondents reported rectal douching before receptive AI with a non-trivial proportion reporting rectal douching after receptive anal intercourse
- Rectal douching was associated with sexual risk behaviors as well as the use of other rectal products such as lubricants, which may cause rectal epithelial damage<sup>1,2,3</sup>
- These findings support other data which suggest that the contribution of this practice to the transmission and acquisition of STIs, including HIV, may be important<sup>4,5,6</sup>

### References

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