

Title: Possible morbidity in women from talc on condoms [letter]

Author(s):

Kasper CS
Chandler PJ Jr

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Abstract:

Two physicians warn their colleagues about the fact that female partners of condom users face a health risk other than pregnancy, AIDS, or sexually transmitted diseases. Talc, the dry lubricant on condom surfaces, constitutes the risk. It is a sclerosing agent which may cause fallopian tube fibrosis and subsequent fertility if it enters the female reproductive tract. It has also been associated with ovarian cancer. The physicians had examined condoms and dental dams and found that they were covered with different amounts of talc (few particles to a maximum density of particles observed). In the 1930s, researchers had found a causal link between postoperative granulomatous peritonitis and fibrous adhesions and surgical glove-donning powders. In the early 1960s, some physicians observed foreign-body granulomatous peritonitis in a woman who had not had a previous history of abdominal surgery. The particulate matter they found within the peritoneal granulomas matched the material found on the surface of her husbands' condoms. The physicians determined that the material in the condom lubricant migrated through the fallopian tubes and implanted within the peritoneal cavity. They had predicted then that condom lubricants could promote tubal occlusion and infertility. Talc has been found in several ovarian and uterine tumors and in normal ovarian tissue. Women who had used deodorizing powders on sanitary napkins but who had blocked tubes and/or hysterectomies were less likely to develop ovarian cancer than similar women with patent tubes. The US Food and Drug Administration has required manufacturers to remove all talcs used in processing surgical gloves, but it has not required US condom manufacturers to do the same. Condom use has increased greatly in the last 10 years. If talc actually does cause ovarian cancer and/or fallopian tube sclerosis, the incidence of these two conditions is likely to also increase. Thus, condom manufacturers should eliminate all talcs involved in processing.