

## The “Versatile” Condom

**P Madhok**

Ever since awareness of AIDS and sexually transmitted diseases is being propagated the condom has become a household word. No longer it is hush hush or kept in wraps. The Government, the NGO's, and even the media have advocated its use for family planning and prevention of disease. Unable to control sexual promiscuity, in European countries the condom is available free of charge in public toilets and petrol pumps. Thousands of condoms are distributed during major musical and sports events. Even in conservative Muslim countries like Pakistan, the MLA's and MLC's were distributed condoms to set an example to the lay public to promote family planning. For newly married couples, a box of condoms would be the ideal marriage gift. It is useful and better than table lamps, electric irons or crockery which is commonly given and often duplicated.

Unfortunately in India the condom has not found its full use. Religious leaders and elderly people have spoken against it. In most communities children are considered an asset, so use of condom is taboo. Some young people do not prefer any barriers in sexual intercourse and are afraid it may affect their sexuality.

Ex. Hon. Paediatric Surgeon, Bai Jerabi Wadia Hospital for Children, Parel; Hon. Surgeon, Arogyanidhi Hospital, Juhu and BARC Hospital, Deonar, Mumbai.

Medical men have always advocated condoms and other methods of population control, so that remains the primary use of the condom.

Never-the-less it is the other uses of the condom that this article wishes to highlight. The urologists were the first to discover condom drainage. Cases with neurogenic bladders can be kept dry at night by tying a condom on the penis. Connected with a silastic tube to a urine collection bag, this keeps the patient dry. But it needs expertise. Too loose a grip on the penis will let the urine leak and too tight a grip will cause prepuccial oedema. The Paediatrician may use the condom for collecting a sample of urine from the male patient. Children being otherwise unpredictable in passing urine, a condom in place will assure a sample of urine. In extenuating circumstances a condom can replace a finger stall for rectal examination. We have used it in surgical camps. If a patient is not too shy he may use a condom to cover a finger dressing. Especially at the time of having a bath to prevent water soakage. Lastly, a physiotherapist friend of mine assures me that the condom can be used as a balloon for post operative chest exercises. Blowing a condom makes a physiotherapy interesting.

Whosoever invented a condom must be happily turning in his grave. What a versatile piece of rubber he has left for posterity.