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Subject: Definition of sexual intercourse

Posted by [Avi Hakim](#) on Tue, 01 Apr 2014 14:22:46 GMT

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613 in the women's module asks about age at first "sexual intercourse". This term is generally understood to mean vaginal intercourse; however, in many places, people have anal intercourse to preserve virginity and prevent pregnancy. Anal intercourse is a risk factor for HIV. Some MSM may have never had vaginal intercourse but are still at risk for HIV because they engage in anal sex. It is important to know when someone first became sexually active. It is also important to know if individuals are engaging in vaginal sex, anal sex, or both, as each has a different risk of HIV transmission. Many countries also deny that their citizens engage in anal sex though research continues to show that anal sex is practiced more widely than believed. It is extremely important to collect data related to this behavior. Questions about sexual intercourse should thus specify if the question is referring to vaginal or anal sex or both.

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