Reviewer's report

Title: Which outcome expectancies are important in determining young adults' intentions to use condoms with casual sexual partners?: A cross-sectional study

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Reviewer: Rik Crutzen

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An interesting cross-sectional study that provides insight into how to measure and analyse beliefs underlying young adults’ attitudes towards condom use with casual sexual partners.

1. The abstract is hard to understand without having knowledge about the subject. For example; What is meant by outcome expectancies?; How does direct attitude (as mentioned in the methods) differ from outcome expectancies (as mentioned in the background)? Is important influences (as mentioned in the methods) the same as outcome expectancies? Is there a difference between ‘safer sex intentions’ and ‘intention to use condoms’? What exactly are beliefs and how are they related to attitude?

2. Page 5: Please add numbers about the explained variance or standardized regression coefficient resulting from the two previous meta-analyses examining the predictive power of the TpB.

3. Page 5/6: “This has important implications for the interpretation of results…”; Please elaborate on what these implications are.

4. Page 6: “One of the most promising approaches lies in eliciting from participants those outcome expectancies which they consider to be personally salient”; It might be unclear to the readers why this approach is promising. Please try to convince the reader about this.

5. Page 7: “…given what is known about the known limits of human information processing”; Please explain why this is a reason to assume that a small set of outcome expectancies is also more likely to reflect the actual decision making process.

6. Page 8: Please explain to the reader why it is important to identify “outcome expectancies that a greater proportion of undecided than willing consenters held as salient.”

7. Page 8: Please substantiate and elaborate on the idea that “there is potential for males and females to be differentially motivated by the outcomes of unprotected sex.”

8. Page 8: “…unambiguous definition of the behaviour under examination.”; Please try to convince the reader that the behaviour chosen can be unambiguously defined (e.g., how unambiguous is “on a more regular basis, but are not serious about”).
9. Methods section: A stronger case should be made on why the study is limited to intention and does not take actual behaviour into account.

10. Page 9: Please elaborate on why the number of school students is limited in comparison with university students. Why did you decide to include their data, given the small portion of participants? How are the results affected if their data is excluded from the analyses?

11. Page 9: Please add the mean and standard deviation regarding age.

12. Page 9: Please add whether there was selective dropout regarding those that were excluded from the analyses.

13. Page 9: Given that the questionnaire stated clearly that ‘sex’ referred to heterosexual sex, this raises the (ethical) issue how homosexuals participated in the study (or refused to participate).

14. Page 11: “These items were generated following a review of the literature”; Please add these items (e.g., in an appendix) and explain how they were derived from the literature.

15. Page 12: “…was included along with the other independent variables”; Please specify these variables.

16. Page 13: “…had a negative correlation with attitude / …with intention”; Please elaborate in the discussion section on what this implies.

17. Page 13: “…may be differentially salient for young men and women”; Please add table (e.g., in an appendix) including test values and raw scores for all items.

18. Page 16: “They propose that interventions should target beliefs for which a substantial proportion of the population have an unfavourable position…”; An alternative way worth discussing is to use computer-tailoring in which only those beliefs for which a specific person has an unfavourable position receive attention in the tailored messages that the participant receives.

19. Discussion section: A clearly identified limitations paragraph should be added to the manuscript, e.g., discussing the cross-sectional nature of the study and the possible selection bias given the self-selection of participants.

Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests