Condom Price Hike in Ukraine Worries AIDS Advocates

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An increase in the price of imported condoms in Ukraine has led many advocates, particularly nonprofit organization Anti-AIDS, to worry that young people may abandon the costly prophylactics, which could fuel an upsurge in sexually transmitted infections (STIs) such as HIV, *Russia Today* reports.

“I don’t know for sure, but if there is an import duty for them, maybe we should lobby for its abolishment,” an unnamed young man wrote in a letter to Anti-AIDS. “They are essential goods! As for me, they take a hard toll on the budget.”

According to the article, local condom manufacturers are suffering from Ukraine’s faltering economy, with the country’s only distributor as well as its retailers finding it difficult to obtain credit to stay in business. In addition, imported condoms cost 40 to 60 percent more than last year because of the sinking value of the Ukrainian currency.

Ukraine has the highest rate of HIV prevalence of any European country, with nearly 19,000 people diagnosed with the virus last year.

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