

Tuesday April 14th 2009

[Home](#)[This week's print edition](#)[Daily news analysis](#)[Opinion](#)[All opinion](#)[Leaders](#)[Letters to the Editor](#)[Blogs](#)[Columns](#)[KAL's cartoons](#)[Correspondent's diary](#)[Economist debates](#)[World politics](#)[Special reports](#)[Business](#)[Finance and economics](#)[Markets and data](#)[Science and technology](#)[Books and arts](#)[People](#)[Diversions](#)[Audio and video](#)[The World In](#)[Research tools](#)

Letters

On the pope, illegal immigrants, advertising, China and the IMF, Iran, accounting standards, the Disability Rights Commission, aircraft, Barack Obama

Apr 8th 2009

From *The Economist* print edition

The challenge of AIDS

SIR – I do not think you were entirely fair when criticising the pope for saying that condoms are not useful for preventing AIDS in Africa (“*Sex and sensibility*”, March 21st). Some of your reasoning was based on mistaken and biased information about AIDS and other sexually transmitted infections (STI). You cited Thailand, for example, but did not mention the increase in STI among its youth despite the extensive promotion of condoms there. In Spain STI are also on the rise, even though the use of condoms among its young people is the highest in Europe.

Recent studies in leading science journals show that condoms have not been effective as a primary prevention strategy to tackle the AIDS epidemic in Africa. Sadly, there is no magic bullet.

Dr Miguel A. Martínez-González
Professor and chair
Department of preventive
medicine
University of Navarra
Pamplona, Spain