

RAP* Time



RURAL CENTER *for* AIDS/STD PREVENTION

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Older, HIV-positive and at-risk HIV-negative men report sexual risk behaviors

Even though the number of newly-diagnosed HIV/AIDS cases among older adults has not changed in the past few years, HIV/AIDS cases among those over age 50 represent more 15% of such cases reported in the U.S. in 2004. Research indicates that both men in the general population and those HIV-positive have sexual desire and are sexually active into their more senior years. However, studies concerning the sexual risk behaviors of older men are limited.

This study examined the frequency of sexual activity and factors associated with risky sexual behavior among older men, aged 49-80, with or at risk for HIV infection.

Methodology

Study participants were 624 older men from the Cohort of HIV At-Risk Aging Men's Perspective Study, an ongoing longitudinal study of selected outcomes in older men with or at risk for HIV infection.

Men were eligible for the study if there were within one year of their 50th birthday and either HIV infected or at risk for HIV. Variables assessed were: physical health,

drug and alcohol use, psychological well-being, physical and sexual abuse, sexual history and importance of sex, sexual activity and functioning, and risky sexual behavior.

Outcomes of the Study

Mean age was 55 and 71% had at least a high school education. About 80% were Black or Hispanic. 356 men (of 624) were HIV-positive. The HIV-positive and HIV-negative men had similar health ratings.

Major findings include:

- 75% had engaged in any sexual activity (vaginal, anal, or oral) with a partner in past 6 months, with a significantly higher percentage of HIV-negative men than HIV-positive men participating.
- HIV-negative men had more frequent sexual activity than the HIV-positive men.
- Over one-half reported risky sexual behavior (multiple sex partners, using condoms less than "always", or trading sex for money or drugs) in past 6 months.
- Significantly more HIV-negative men than HIV-positive men reported risky sexual behavior.
- About one-quarter of both groups had multiple sexual partners during the past 6 months.

- 18% and 58% and HIV-negative and HIV-positive men, respectively, reported always using condoms during past 6 months.
- About 10% reported that they had paid drugs or money for sex, and 3.5% had received money or drugs for sex, with no difference by HIV status.
- More HIV-positive men than HIV-negative men reported difficulties with erections or taking sildenafil (Viagra) during the past 6 months.

Implications for Prevention

This study found that both HIV-positive and HIV-negative older men desire sex and are sexually active, and substantial percentages participate in HIV-related risk behavior. HIV-negative men were more sexually active and were more at risk for HIV infection than the HIV-positive men.

Study findings suggest that older men, particularly those HIV-negative, need safer sex education.

SOURCE:

Cooperman, N. A., et al. (2007). Current sexual activity and risky sexual behavior in older men with or at risk for HIV infection. *AIDS Education and Prevention*, 19, 321-333.

Women having sex with men and women report greater risk

Using data from a British probability survey of 6399 women, aged 16 to 44, sexual behavior and risk comparisons were made between women having sex with both men and women, and women having sex only with men.

4.9% of the women reported same-sex partners ever, with 2.8% in past 5 years. Women reporting sex with both men and women were more likely to report adverse sexual, reproductive and general health risk behaviors and outcomes than women having sex only with men. For all women who had sex with women, few female partners were reported on average, but most reported male partners.

Women reporting sex with both genders reported more male partners than women having sex only with men. They were also more likely to report more HIV risk behaviors and STI diagnosis.

For women, sex with women may be a marker of increased of adverse sex and health outcomes.

SOURCE: Mercer, C. H., et al. (2007). Women who report having sex with women: British national probability data on prevalence, sexual behaviors, and health outcomes. *American Journal of Public Health*, 97, 1126-1133.

Meth use during sex found related to increased risk taking

Methamphetamine use and sexual risk taking among MSM has been studied; but, less research has focused on heterosexual encounters. This study examined the association between meth use and heterosexual risk behaviors from 1213 heterosexual encounters from 703 injecting drug users in North Carolina.

Meth was used in 7% of the sexual encounters. Most encounters involved vaginal intercourse (89%) - alone (39%), combined with oral sex (42%), combined with oral and anal sex (6%), or combined with anal sex (2%). Condoms were not used in 54% and 52% of vaginal and anal sex encounters, respectively. Meth use by either or both partners during heterosexual behavior was significantly associated with increased likelihood of anal intercourse, vaginal and anal intercourse, and sex with a new partner. Meth use by both partners was significantly associated with unprotected intercourse with new partners and unprotected anal intercourse.

STD educators should provide interventions directed toward decreasing meth use during sex.

SOURCE: Zule, W. A., et al. (2007). Methamphetamine use and risky sexual behaviors during heterosexual encounters. *Sexually Transmitted Diseases* 34, 689-694.

BV was related to douching in women with imbalanced flora

One-quarter of U.S. women report douching regularly. From 1193 douching women, douching at least once a month was associated with bacterial vaginosis (BV) who had BV at the last visit but not among women with normal vaginal flora. Prospectively, douching increased the risk of BV among women with intermediate flora but not among women with normal flora.

SOURCE: Hutchinson, K. B., et al. (2007). Vaginal douching and development of bacterial vaginosis among women with normal and abnormal vaginal microflora. *Sexually Transmitted Diseases*, 34, 671-675.

Women more likely to get HIV test

Women (37.8%) were more likely than men (33.7%) to report ever being tested for HIV. Among men and women, non-Hispanic blacks (51.6% men, 53.5% women) were more likely to report HIV testing.

SOURCE: CDC. (2007). QuickStats: Percentage of adults aged ≥ years who reported ever being tested for human immunodeficiency virus (HIV),*by sex and race/ethnicity -- National Health Interview Survey, United States, 2006. *MMWR*, 56, 796.

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The opinions expressed here do not necessarily represent those of the cooperating universities.

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