

RAP* Time



RURAL CENTER *for* AIDS/STD PREVENTION

A JOINT PROJECT OF
INDIANA UNIVERSITY, PURDUE UNIVERSITY,
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*Rural AIDS/STD prevention. rap (rap) v. Slang To talk freely and openly. Vol. 6, No. 1, January 4, 2002

Few Latino migrant farm workers believe condoms protect against HIV

Latinos in the United States are disproportionately impacted by HIV/AIDS. While Latinos comprise only 9% of the U.S. population, they comprise 18% of all AIDS cases. HIV prevalence among Latinos is highly related to geographic region. Higher rates typically occur in the Northeast rather the South or West.

Migrant farm workers may have a low level of acculturation because they live and travel within ethnic communities. Traditional beliefs among the Latino culture contribute to high-risk sexual behavior. For example, sexual matters are often not discussed and a strong double standard exists.

This study investigated the HIV/AIDS knowledge, attitudes and related risk behaviors of Latino adolescent and adult migrants in Michigan.

Methodology

In-depth interviews were conducted with 109 migrant workers in Southeast Michigan during the summers of 1998 and 1999. The interviews included open-ended and close-ended questions on AIDS/STD knowledge, norms

for sexual behavior, perceived need for services, and sexual and drug use history. The interviews were conducted in English and Spanish.

Outcomes of the Study

Nearly 90% of the sample reported they were Mexican or Mexican-American. Slightly more the one-half were male. The mean age was 24.2. The average number of years of schooling was 7.0. Most resided in Texas, Florida and Mexico in the winter.

Major findings include:

- The sample was generally knowledgeable about sexual transmission of HIV. However, many believed one could become infected with HIV via casual contact (30%) or kissing (62%).
- About one-half believed there is a cure for AIDS.
- Almost all knew about condoms; however, only 10% believed that condoms could protect against AIDS. Only 3% of males under 21 believed condoms protect against AIDS, compared to 21% of females.
- More than one-third believed condoms cost too much money and condoms are embarrassing

to put on.

- About one-third of females and males reported using a condom with their most recent sexual partner.
- Almost two-thirds reported ever drinking alcohol beverages with more males reporting ever drinking.
- About three-quarters of males under 21 believed that premarital sex was acceptable compared to about one-third of females having the same belief.

Implications for Prevention

Lower level of acculturation and greater mobility pose challenges to development of effective HIV prevention programs for migrant farm workers. Brief interventions should be provided due to the short residential stay of migrant workers. Further, generational and gender differences should be considered for educational intervention.

SOURCE: Ford, K., et al. (2001). AIDS knowledge and risk behaviors among midwest migrant farm workers. *AIDS Education and Prevention*, 13, 551-560.

Gay men judge risk based on perceived HIV status of partner

Studies have shown less adherence to safer sex guidelines recently among gay and bisexual men. This study assessed the perceptions of gay and bisexual men concerning the risk of HIV transmission with a new sex partner. Study participants were 472 men attending a gay pride festival who reported they were HIV-negative.

Results found that sex with an HIV-positive partner not taking HAART was considered the greatest risk. Sex with an HIV-positive partner taking HAART who had an undetectable viral load was not consistently viewed as riskier than sex with an HIV-negative partner or a man with an unknown HIV status. Hence, some gay and bisexual men do not make a general assumption that all possible sex entail equal risk.

SOURCE: Suarez, T. P., et al. (2001). Influence of a partner's HIV serostatus, use of highly active antiretroviral therapy, and viral load on perceptions of sexual risk behavior in a community sample of men who have sex with men. *Journal of Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndromes*, 28, 471-477.

Several strategies used to get partner to use condoms

The inability to negotiate condom use, particularly among women, is a major impediment to practicing safer sex practices. Interviews with 90 young heterosexual couples were analyzed to identify strategies men and women at risk for HIV/STD use to influence their partners to use condoms for HIV/STD prevention.

Participants indicated that they would use verbal strategies: persuading/suggesting, commanding/asserting, and threatening to withhold sex. Many recent condom users said they would also use non-verbal strategies: putting a condom on, buying or getting condoms, or presenting a condom to a partner. Few major differences in female and male strategies were found. However, more women than men said they would withhold sex.

Many participants indicated they would use a different strategy for pregnancy prevention, believing it would be easier to convince a partner to use a condom for that purpose.

SOURCE: Bird, S. T., et al. (2001). Getting your partner to use condoms: Interviews with men and women at risk for HIV/STDs. *Journal of Sex Research*, 38, 233-240.

HIV may enhance sexual transmission of hepatitis C virus

In subjects who had sexual exposure only to parenterally transmitted infections, the prevalence of hepatitis C virus was higher than those with HIV coinfection than in those without it. HCV was more common among MSM who practiced unsafe sex, regardless of HIV status. Hence, HIV may increase risk of transmission of HCV.

SOURCE: Filippini, P., et al. (2001). Does HIV infection favor the sexual transmission of hepatitis C? *Sexually Transmitted Diseases*, 28, 725-729.

Formula feeding may be safe alternative

A study of breast-feeding and formula feeding by HIV positive women in Nairobi, Kenya was conducted. The authors concluded that formula feeding can be a safe alternative to breast-feeding by HIV-positive women in a resource-poor setting.

SOURCE: Mbori-Ngacha, D., et al. (2001). Morbidity and mortality in breastfed and formula-fed infants of HIV-I-infected women. *Journal of the American Medical Association*, 286, 2413-2417.

RAP Time is a monthly AIDS/STD prevention bulletin published by the Rural Center for AIDS/STD Prevention (RCAP) at Indiana University, Bloomington. RCAP is a joint project of Indiana University, Purdue University and Texas A&M University. The major focus of RCAP is the promotion of HIV/STD prevention in rural America, with the goal of reducing HIV/STD incidence.

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

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