

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. 12, December 6, 2002

Women with steady partners over age 40 more likely to have unprotected sex

AIDS is the third leading cause of death among United States women age 25 to 44. Heterosexually transmitted cases have shown the greatest increase in recent years among women. For women, unprotected sex is the primary mode of HIV transmission. More research on situational factors influencing unprotected sex is needed.

The purpose of the current study is to identify situational and partner characteristics associated with unprotected sex among adult women.

Methodology

The participants were 1,647 women recruited from community sites, STD clinics, homeless shelters, and food kitchens in six metropolitan areas.

Data collection began in February 1998. Information was collected using audio computer-assisted self interviews. Women answered questions regarding sociodemographic characteristics, alcohol and drug use, and sexual and injection-related risk behaviors over the previous six months. Also, women reported when and where they had vaginal or anal sex with a man with or without a condom,

and their partner's age, race, and ethnicity.

Outcomes of the Study

The mean age of participants was 36.2 years. Three-quarters were over 30 years of age. Two-thirds were African Americans. Most had earned less than \$12,000 the past year and nearly one-half had not completed high school. 56% were in a steady relationship.

Major findings include:

- Unprotected sex was 2.3 times more likely to occur with partners 31 to 40 years old and 4.5 times more likely to occur with partners over 40 years of age.
- Protected sexual encounters were more likely to occur in locations other than the women's home residence.
- Partner's use of alcohol and drugs within two hours of a sexual encounter was associated with unprotected sex.
- Most women reported both their protected and unprotected sexual encounters occurred with men who were within ten years of their own age.
- Women who exchanged sex for money or drugs were 68% more likely to have unprotected sex with their most recent partner.

- 79% had used crack in the past year.
- Two-thirds had exchanged sex for money or drugs.
- Over half had had five or more sex partners in the past year.
- About one-third reported sex with injection drug users.
- 13% had injected drugs at least three times a week during the past three months.

Implications for Prevention

Women may not use condoms with older men because their male partner's early sexual experiences occurred in the pre-HIV era, older men may have erection problems when using condoms, and women may be less able to negotiate condom use with older partners due to a power imbalance. Prevention interventions for women should consider these factors.

Also, interventions should address substance abuse of the sexual partner as well as the women's own substance use.

SOURCE: Seage, G. R., et al. (2002). Case-crossover study of partner and situational factors for unprotected sex. *Journal of Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndromes*, 31, 432-439.

Hispanic youth view sex as way to be accepted by peers

Factors related to sexual activity among Hispanic youth have not been adequately assessed. This study examined the relationship between self-esteem and the sexual behavior and intended sexual behavior of Hispanic middle school students (N=1,077) from a predominately Hispanic school district.

Those who had never participated in coitus scored higher on home and school self-esteem. Those who had not participated in coitus in the last month scored higher on school self-esteem. Students scoring higher on home and school self-esteem had lower levels of intent to have coitus. Students scoring higher on peer self-esteem had higher levels of intent to have coitus.

The results highlight the important positive role of the home and school in influencing sexual behavior of Hispanic adolescents. For many Hispanics in this study, sexual experience may be viewed as a means of being accepted by peers.

SOURCE: Young, M., et al. (2002). Age specific self-esteem and sexual behavior among Hispanic middle school students. *American Journal of Health Education*, 3, 344-349.

Sex between men accounts for most HIV transmission in prisons

AIDS infection is about five times higher in state and federal prisons than among the general U.S. population. Valid documentations of instances of intraprisoon HIV transmission are rare.

This study validly identifies 33 inmates in a large sample of state prison inmates who contracted HIV inside the prison and presents data on how they likely contracted HIV. This confirms that HIV is transmitted inside prisons. The mode of HIV transmission data indicates that male inmates seem to largely contract HIV via sex with another man, whereas inmates who contracted HIV after leaving prison seem to largely do so via injecting drug use. This counters conclusions of previous studies that indicated injecting drug use was the primary HIV exposure behavior in prisons.

This study confirms the need for intensified education strategies and provisions for prevention mechanisms in prisons. Further research is needed to persuade that preventing HIV transmission in prisons is a correctional health issue.

SOURCE: Krebs, C. P., & Simmons, M. (2002). Intraprisoon HIV transmission: An assessment of whether it occurs, how it occurs, and who is at risk. *AIDS Education and Prevention*, 14, 53-64.

Substantial risk of HIV transmission through breastfeeding found

1078 HIV-infected women from Dar es Salaam, Tanzania were studied. 37 infant HIV infections from breastfeeding occurred. Transmission rose from 3.8% at age 4 months to 17.9% by age 24 months. Only 22% of transmissions would have occurred if weaning had been at 4 months. Mothers with breast lesions were twice as likely to transmit HIV.

SOURCE: Fawzi, W., et. al. (2002). Transmission of HIV-1 through breastfeeding among women in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. *Journal of Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndromes*, 31, 331-338.

Stable housing leads to improved health

Interviews of 57 persons in subsidized housing solely for people with HIV/AIDS found that stable housing improved health, medication adherence, mental health and social support for the residents. Problems included drug and alcohol abuse.

SOURCE: Smith, L. A., & Pynoos, J. (2002). More than shelter: Benefits and concerns for people in HIV/AIDS housing. *Journal of HIV/AIDS & Social Services*, 1, 63-80.

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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