

# R A P\* Time



## RURAL CENTER *for* AIDS/STD PREVENTION

A JOINT PROJECT OF  
INDIANA UNIVERSITY, UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO,  
AND UNIVERSITY OF KENTUCKY

\*Rural AIDS/STD prevention. rap (rap) v. *Slang*. To talk freely and openly.

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## Persons using sexual enrichment aids and drugs report greater STI risk behavior

Studies have examined the use of drugs and alcohol as related to STI risk behavior. Whether the drug or alcohol use was intended to enhance the sexual experience has not been examined. Individuals may use the drugs or alcohol to reduce inhibition or anxiety. A person using the drug or alcohol may be different than the habitual user or other drug users.

The study assessed the prevalence of ever and current use of sexual enrichment aids and drugs to enhance the sexual experience, and correlates of that usage.

### Methodology

Participants were identified in a random-digit dial survey conducted in the Seattle area between 2003 and 2004 among residents age 18 to 39 years of age with fluency in the English language.

The survey instrument included questions on lifetime sexual history, partner characteristics and STD history. Sexual activity was defined as oral, vagina, or anal intercourse.

To determine use of enrichment aids, respondents were asked "Have you ever used sexual enhancement aids, such as vibrators, beads and balls, dildos, pumps, extenders, or rings?" To

determine use of drugs to enhance sexual experience, respondents were asked "Have you ever used a drug to enhance your sexual experience, such as alcohol, Viagra, ecstasy, ginseng, or pheromones?" Follow-up questions asked about use during typical 4-week period.

### Outcomes of the Study

The sample was 1114 participants. Major findings include:

- 45% and 27%, respectively, reported ever using and use during typical 4-week period a sexual enhancement aid (e.g. vibrator, dildos).
- 28% and 13%, respectively, reported ever using and use during 4-week period a drug to enhance the sexual experience.
- Among those reporting using a drug, the most commonly used drugs were alcohol (84%), marijuana (38%), ecstasy or "sextasy" (ecstasy combined with Viagra) (8%), and Viagra (8%).
- Females (33%) were more likely than males (20%) to report use of a sexual enhancement aid during a typical 4-week period, and blacks and Asian populations less frequently.
- Use of drugs during typical 4-week period was reported more

frequently by males (15%) than by females (12%), and there was no association with racial groups.

- Persons reporting use of sexual enhancement aids and drugs were more likely to engage in STI acquisition and transmission behaviors, such as having non-exclusive partnerships and multiple partners.
- Single, never-married persons were most likely to report use of drugs to enhance sexual experience in 4-week period.

### Implications for Prevention

Use of sexual enhancement aids and drugs occurred frequently in this sample across all age, gender, ethnic, sexual and income groups. This use was associated with greater STI risk behavior.

Clinicians might query patients regarding these behaviors measured here as a screen for whether in-depth risk assessment and STI testing might be warranted.

### SOURCE:

Foxman, B., et al. (2006). Common use in the general population of sexual enrichment aids and drugs to enhance sexual experience *Sexually Transmitted Diseases*, 33, 156-162.

### HIV conspiracy beliefs exist in four racial/ethnic groups

This study examined beliefs about the origin of HIV as a genocidal conspiracy in men and women of four racial/ethnic groups in a street intercept sample in Houston, Texas. Groups sampled were African American, Latino, non-Hispanic white, and Asian.

The study question was "AIDS is an agent of genocide created by the United States government to kill off minority populations (true, false, don't know)."

Highest levels of conspiracy theories were found in women, African American and Latino populations (over a quarter of African Americans and over a fifth of Latinos) with lower rates in whites (a fifth) and Asians (less than one in ten). Reductions in condom use was associated with such beliefs was found only among African American men.

Findings suggest that genocidal conspiracy beliefs are relatively widespread in several racial/ethnic groups. Further research should determine the impact of these beliefs on HIV risk.

SOURCE: Ross, M. W., et al. (2006). Conspiracy beliefs about the origin of HIV/AIDS in four racial/ethnic groups. *Journal of Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndromes*, 41, 342-344.

### Crystal meth use is related to STI risk in heterosexual men

Methamphetamine (crystal meth) use has spread to most regions of the United States, including rural areas.

This study assessed meth use and high-risk sexual behavior among 1011 heterosexual men in low-income areas in Northern California.

Meth use was reported among 16% of the participants, including 10% and 6% reporting historical and recent use, respectively. Recent meth use was greater among non-Hispanic whites (12%) and those born in the United States (9%), single/never married (7%), and employed part-time (7%).

Recent meth users were more likely than never users to be sexually active with a female partner, have multiple partners, have a casual or anonymous female partner, have anal sex with a casual or anonymous female partner, have a female partner who injected drugs, or have ever received money for drugs for sex from a male or female partner.

Findings suggest that a broader approach is needed to address meth use and STI risk behavior.

SOURCE: CDC. (2006). Methamphetamine use and HIV risk behaviors among heterosexual men -- preliminary results from five Northern California counties, December 2001 -- November 2003 *MMWR*, 55(10), 273-277.

### Children with AIDS had lower cognitive development scores

This study examined the effect of HIV on the development of cognitive abilities of children perinatally exposed to HIV. 117 HIV+ children were compared to 422 HIV- children exposed to HIV but did not contract the virus.

Cognitive development was assessed at ages 3 and 7. Children with HIV infection scored significantly lower in all domains of cognitive development than the HIV- children and those who had not progressed to AIDS.

SOURCE: Smith, R., et al. (2006). Effects of perinatal HIV infection and associated risk factors on cognitive development among young children. *Pediatrics*, 117, 851-862.

### Consistent condom use lowers HSV-2 risk

Of 1843 at risk men and women (having four or partners or STD in past year), 118 became infected with HSV-2. Those reporting more frequent condom use were at lower risk for acquiring HSV-2 than those using condoms less frequently.

SOURCE: Wald, A., et al. (2006). The relationship between condom use and herpes simplex virus acquisition. *Annals of Internal Medicine*, 143, 707-713.

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

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