

# RAP\* 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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## High risk sexual behavior among homeless boys and girls did not predict STI testing

Over 1 million youth are homeless in the United States. Homeless youth include those aged 12-20 who have spent at least one night on the street, a public space, or a shelter. Homeless youth are often a hidden population and difficult to reach for research studies.

Research of homeless youth found that many engaged in high-risk sexual behaviors, placing them at risk for sexually transmitted infections (STIs). No studies have included STI testing as a variable.

This study examined the association between sexual risk behaviors and STI testing among a sample of homeless youth.

### Methodology

Participants were 131 youth from the entire geographic region of Los Angeles County who were systematically interviewed. To be included in the study, the youth had to meet the following criteria: age ranging from 12 to 20; and spent at least two consecutive nights but less than 6 months away from home without their parents or guardians' permission, if less than 17 years, or been told to leave home.

Of the total homeless youth interviewed (261), the 131 who

indicated that they had been sexually active in the preceding three months were selected for inclusion in this study.

### Outcomes of the Study

Mean age was 16 years and 60% were female. 44% were Latino, 23% African American, 20% White, and 13% mixed race. Most self-labeled as heterosexual. 80% were currently living in shelters, 10% in a family group home, 4% in a friend's house, 2% in foster care, and 2% on street or abandoned building.

Major findings include:

- In the past three months, the STI testing rate was 46% for both boys and girls. However, girls were more likely to have positive testing results than boys (46% vs. 9%).
- High-risk sexual behaviors did not predict STI testing. The only predictor of STI testing was having either gotten someone or having become pregnant in the past three months.
- Boys were more likely than girls to engage in anal sex (46% vs. 15%), to have 3 or more sexual partners (46% vs. 17%) and to engage in anonymous sex (38% vs. 31%).
- Girls were less likely to use

condoms consistently and more likely to engage in sex with a partner suspected of having an STI (20% vs. 4%).

- Substance use among youth who had been sexually active in the past three months was high: alcohol (67%), marijuana (72%), amphetamines (19%).

### Implications for Prevention

The homeless youth assessed in this sample were at high risk for STIs. Half were sexually active in the past three months and many engaged in high-risk sexual behaviors and used substances. Nearly one-half had received an STI test in the past three months, but that behavior was not associated with high-risk sexual behaviors.

The study findings indicate that STI outreach programs for sexually active homeless youth, both boys and girls, should offer early STI testing and treatment as well as effective STI prevention education and counseling.

### SOURCE:

Solorio, M. R., et al. (2006). Predictors of sexually transmitted infection testing among sexually active homeless youth. *AIDS and Behavior*, 10, 179-184.

### HIV+ MSM have no regret others knowing their serostatus

Disclosure of an HIV status to family and friends can produce anxiety and worry. This study examined whether HIV-positive MSM (n=76) experienced regret as a consequence of disclosing their HIV serostatus.

Nearly two-thirds (63%) of the HIV-positive men did not regret family or friends knowing about their serostatus. Only 4.2% reported regret events.

Compared with friends, the chance of regret was greater in the immediate family, with coworkers, and casual sex partners, but not different in the extended family or committed sex partners. HIV disclosure appeared to elicit very little regret to a wide variety of social network members. There was no difference in occurrence of regret whether the HIV-positive person disclosed personally or if someone else disclosed for them.

Even though negative outcomes are often anticipated, HIV disclosure resulted in very little regret for this sample.

SOURCE: Serovich, J. M., et al. (2006). Gay men's report of regret of HIV disclosure to family, friends, and sex partners. *AIDS Education and Prevention*, 18, 132-138.

### Drug-using WSW engage in more risk than never WSW

This study examined risk behaviors of female drug users, comparing those who reported recently having had sex with women (recent WSW), those who reported previously having had sex with women (former WSW), and those never reporting never having had sex with women (never WSW).

Data were from the Risk Evaluation and Assessment Health III Study: 75% were never WSW, 12% were former WSW, and 13% were recent WSW.

Analyses indicated that drug-using WSW, particularly recent WSW, engaged in both drug and sexual risk behaviors at higher rates than never WSW. Recent and former WSW more often used drugs and shared needles than did never WSW.

Recent WSW were less likely to than the other two groups to have long-term, stable relationships with men. They also were more likely to report often engaging in sex with men, including anal sex.

The recency with which they had sex with women is one of the facets influencing the sexual and drug risk profile of WSW.

SOURCE: Bell, A. V., et al. (2006). Sexual and drug risk behaviors among women who have sex with women. *American Journal of Public Health*, 96, 1066-1072.

### Prevalence rate of HIV is 1 per 1000 among U.S. young adults

Data from wave III of the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health suggest that the prevalence rate of HIV among young adults in the U. S. is about 1 per 1000. Infection rates were slightly higher for men than women. Rates were markedly different between non-Hispanic Blacks (4.9/1000) and other racial/ethnic groups (0.22/1000). The data suggest that 15% to 30% of all cases of HIV occur among persons younger than 25 years.

SOURCE: Morris, M., et al. (2006). Prevalence of HIV infection among young adults in the United States: Results from the Add Health Study. *American Journal of Public Health*, 96, 1091-1097.

### Chlamydia associated with asymptomatic GC

Data from a gonococcal surveillance program in England found that coinfection with chlamydia was associated with asymptomatic gonorrhea in heterosexual men but not in women and homosexual men.

SOURCE: Bozicevic, I., et al. (2006). Epidemiological correlates of asymptomatic gonorrhea. *Sexually Transmitted Diseases* 33, 289-295.

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

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