

RAP* Time



RURAL CENTER *for* AIDS/STD PREVENTION

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Men who have sex with men exclusively but identify as straight report less condom use

Men who have sex with men account for nearly one-half of new cases of HIV infection annually in the United States. Data indicate recent increases in high-risk sexual behaviors, STDs, and HIV among MSM. Persons reporting a sexual orientation identity that is not concordant with their sexual behavior may engage in riskier sexual behaviors than those with concordant self-identify and behavior.

This study used concurrent measures of sexual identity and behavior to characterize the demographic characteristics and sexual behavior profiles of specific-identity groups of men.

Methodology

Data for this study was collected during 2003 via the Community Health Survey (CHS). The CHS was administered as a cross-sectional, digit-dialed telephone survey among New York City residents, ages 18 years or older.

The CHS includes about 130 questions on numerous health topics including sexual health risk behaviors, including self-identified sexual orientation. Analysis focused on three groups: straight-identified men who have sex with women,

straight-identified men who had sex with men, and gay-identified men who have sex with men.

Outcomes of the Study

4193 men participated. 91.3%, 3.7%, and 1.2% reported straight or heterosexual identity, gay identity, and bisexual identity, respectively. Of these, 12% reported sex with other men.

Major findings include:

- Risky sexual behavior (2 or more partners in last year and no condom use during last sex) was low (7%) for the three groups
- Men who had sex with men exclusively but self-identified as heterosexual were less likely than their gay-identified counterparts to use condoms during their last sexual encounter.
- Men who had sex with men exclusively but self-identified as heterosexual were less likely to have been tested for HIV infection in past year.
- Men who had sex with men exclusively but self-identified as heterosexual were more likely than gay-identified men who had sex with men to report having only one sex partner in past year.
- STD prevalence was 4% for straight-identified men who had

sex with women, 7% for straight-identified men who had sex with men, and 20% for gay-identified men who have sex with men.

- Men who had sex with men exclusively but self-identified as heterosexual were more likely than their counterparts to belong to minority racial or ethnic groups, to be foreign-born, have lower education and income levels, and be married

Implications for Prevention

This study found that many New York City men who have sex with men do not identify as gay. Those who had sex with men exclusively but self-identified as heterosexual were less likely to use condom for last sex and less likely to have been tested for HIV during the past year.

Health care providers cannot rely on patients' self-reported sexual orientation to judge HIV/STD risk, but must assess behavior.

SOURCE:

Pathela, P., et. al. (2006). Discordance between sexual behavior and self-reported sexual identity: A population-based survey of New York City men. *Annals of Internal Medicine*, 145, 416-425.

Women who apply condoms have more frequent sex

Women's taking the initiative in male condom use has received more attention. This study identified correlates of women who applied condoms to their male sexual partners.

Data was collected via a questionnaire from 533 sexually active college students. Sex was defined as "when a male partner puts his penis in your mouth, vagina, or rectum (anus, butt)."

Of the condom users (n=322), 32% reported applying condoms at least once in the past three months, an average 60% of the occasions. Compared to nonapppliers, appliers had more positive affect toward sexuality and higher frequency of sex.

Condom users, compared to nonusers, were significantly younger, were less likely to be in sexually exclusive relationships or married, and reported more partners in past three months.

Condom-applying women may have more positive sexual attitudes and engage in a higher frequency of sex.

SOURCE: Sanders, S. A., et al. (2006). Women who put condoms on male partners: Correlates of condom application *American Journal of Health Behavior*, 30, 460-466.

Many misperceive their partner's monogamy intentions

This study examined the association between individual and partner characteristics with condom use, sexual concurrency, and discordance in monogamy perceptions. Data were collected from 94 predominantly black heavy alcohol and/or drug users (AOD) in their steady partners through street outreach in two North Carolina cities.

One-third were wrong about whether their partners considered the relationship monogamous, although this misperception may be reflective of greater HIV/STI protection. Greater lifetime number of substances, longer relationship duration, and relationship conflict were associated with inconsistent condom use, and discordant monogamy beliefs were associated with consistent condom use.

Couple interventions are needed that focus on risk-reduction strategies best for long-term relationships, such as increasing awareness of partner risk, negotiating safety, and conflict resolution.

SOURCE: Reiman, K. S., et al. (2006). Discordance in monogamy beliefs, sexual concurrency, and condom use among young adult substance-involved couples: Implications for risk of sexually transmitted infections. *Sexually Transmitted Diseases*, 33, 677-682.

Pharyngeal gonorrhea was common among MSM sample

Of 603 San Francisco men who have sex with men, the prevalence of pharyngeal gonorrhea was 5.5%. Gonorrhea of the pharynx was asymptomatic in 92% of cases. Diagnosis was associated with younger age and number of assertive oral sex partners. Ejaculation did not increase risk of pharyngeal gonorrhea.

SOURCE: Morris, S. R., et al. (2006). Prevalence and incidence of pharyngeal gonorrhea in a longitudinal sample of men who had sex with men: The EXPLORE study. *Clinical Infectious Diseases*, 43, 1284-1289.

Teen use of condoms common in 2005

The 2005 Youth Risk Behavior Survey of high school students found that 47% had ever had sexual intercourse. Among the 34% of currently sexually active students, 63% reported use of condom during last sexual intercourse; 23% had drunk alcohol or used drugs before last sexual intercourse.

SOURCE: Eaton, D. K., et al. (2006). Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance -- United States, 2005. *Journal of School Health*, 76, 353-372.

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

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