

# 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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## Many HIV-infected, sexually active adults, 50 years and older, reported high risk behavior

According to CDC, about one in eight people diagnosed with AIDS in 2005 were 50 years of age or older at time of diagnosis. Epidemiological data suggests that the number of AIDS diagnoses in late middle-age and older adults will increase in the future.

Older persons infected with HIV experience poorer life quality, are more likely to be in a more advanced stage of HIV infection when diagnosed, progress to AIDS more quickly, and have a shorter life span than their counterpart younger adults. Most research on sexual risk factors in older adults has had HIV-negative persons as the study participants.

This study examined rates of sexual activity and identified psychosocial/behavioral correlates of sexual activity and condom use among a sample of HIV-infected adults 50-plus years of age.

### Methodology

Participants were 290 HIV-infected persons 50 years or older from AIDS service organizations in New York City, Columbus, OH, and Cincinnati, OH. Recruitment procedures included brochures, email, face-to-face interactions at health clinics, and presentations to

health professional organizations and medical clinics.

Participants completed a questionnaire using audio-computer-assisted self interview (A-CASI) assessment technology.

### Outcomes of the Study

136 self-identified as a gay/bisexual man, 57 as a heterosexual man, and 97 as a heterosexual woman.

Major findings include:

- 38% were sexually active in the past three months with sexual activity being most common among heterosexual men as about three-fourths reported intercourse during that time.
- 36% and 21% of gay/bisexual men and heterosexual women, respectively, reported sexual activity in past three months.
- Among the sexually active participants, only one-fourth of the heterosexual men used condoms irregularly compared to 37% of gay/bisexual men and 35% of heterosexual women.
- Among the sexually active, irregular condom use was related to having less knowledge about living with HIV/AIDS, particularly in gay/bisexual men and women.
- 33% of sexually active persons

did not use condoms with one or more sex partners.

- About 45% consumed alcohol and 34% used illicit drugs at least once in the past 60 days.
- Use of erectile dysfunction prescription medications (e.g. Viagra) was associated with male sexual activity, with 26% and 15% of the heterosexual men and gay/bisexual men, respectively, reporting current use.

### Implications for Prevention

This study found that many of the HIV-infected sexually active older adults reported sexual risk behavior. Over one-third were sexually active in the past three months with one-third of them having at least one occasion of anal or vaginal intercourse without a condom.

As the number of older adults living with HIV/AIDS increase, age-appropriate interventions are needed, tailored to gender and sexual orientation.

### SOURCE:

Lovejoy, T. I., et al. (2008). Patterns and correlates of sexual activity and condom use behavior in persons 50-plus years of age living with HIV/AIDS. *AIDS and Behavior*, 12, 943-956.

## Rectal douching common among men engaging in URAI

Some men who have sex with men continue to use rectal douches although some douches result in surface epithelium loss and possible increased HIV risk. This study assessed rectal douching among 105 MSM engaging in unprotected receptive anal intercourse (URAI).

53% of HIV-negative and 96% of HIV-positive men douched in preparation for sex, most of them frequently or always, mainly for hygienic reasons. 27% of HIV-negative and 44% of HIV-positive douched after sex, partly believing douching protected from infections. Douching started around age 25.

The study found that rectal douching was a common behavior among men who engage in URAI, being reported by more than two-thirds across different ethnic groups. This group could benefit from an alternative to condoms, such as a harmless rectal microbicides.

SOURCE: Carballo-Dieguez, A., et al. (2008). The use of rectal douches among HIV-uninfected and infected men who have unprotected receptive anal intercourse: Implications for rectal microbicides. *AIDS and Behavior*, 12, 860-866.

## One-quarter continued having sex after noticing HSV symptoms

Symptoms of first episode herpes simplex virus (HSV) may influence healthcare seeking and sexual behavior. This study examined these variables among 236 patients (94 men and 142 women) with newly acquired genital herpes.

Women reported pain and men reported lesions as the most frequent and bothersome symptom or sign causing each to seek healthcare. 43% of the patients missed some work or school because of their symptoms. Women missed more school or work, sought care sooner, and saw more providers than men.

Prior diagnosis, 67% suspected genital herpes as the etiology of their symptoms. 27% reported having sex after noticing their symptoms.

Findings revealed that men and women differed in their experiences with first episode HSV, with morbidity being substantial particularly for women. Since some of both men and women continued to have sex after diagnosis, interventions should emphasize the avoidance of exposing sexual partners.

SOURCE: Richards, J., et al. (2008). Healthcare seeking and sexual behavior among patients with symptomatic newly acquired genital herpes. *Sexually Transmitted Diseases*, 35, 1015-1021.

## Text messaging chlamydia results did not decrease time

This study assessed the impact of text messaging as the preferred way to communicate positive chlamydia test results. No difference was found in median time to treatment. There was no difference in between landline or mobile phone. The lack of difference in time showed that the use of this technology (text messaging) is as effective, but not more, as traditional communication methods.

SOURCE: Lim, E. J., et al. (2008). Can text messaging results reduce time to treatment of *Chlamydia trachomatis*? *Sexually Transmitted Infections*, 84, 563-566.

## 7% of AIDS cases found in rural areas

In 2006, 2,696 AIDS cases were reported among adults and adolescents were reported in rural areas, with 26,154 living with AIDS. In 2006, 67% of all rural AIDS cases among adults and adolescents were reported in the South. There is a growing number of people living with HIV in rural areas.

SOURCE: CDC. (2008). Cases of HIV infection and AIDS in urban and rural areas of the United States, 2006. *HIV/AIDS Surveillance Supplement Report*, 13(2).

**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, University of Colorado, and University of Kentucky. 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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