

# RAP\* Time



## RURAL CENTER *for* AIDS/STD PREVENTION

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

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

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## Rural and small town LGBT students encounter hostile school environments

Violence and harassment experienced at school may affect learning success for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered students. Although urban schools are often considered more violent or dangerous, research has shown that rural and small town schools may pose the greatest threat to LGBT students.

Community traits, religious traditions, income and education may influence beliefs about LGBT in rural areas yet little is known about LGBT student experiences.

This study examined the experiences of LGBT students in rural and small town areas relative to several variables measuring their school environment.

### Methodology

Data were from the Gay, Lesbian & Straight Education Network (GLSEN) sixth nationally representative study conducted in 2010-2011, the National School Climate Survey.

Two methods were used: 1) outreach through organizations that provide or advocate for LGBT youth, and 2) targeted advertising on the social networking site Facebook. In examining rural vs. urban differences, the full sample

of 8,584 LGBT secondary school students was used.

### Outcomes of the Study

This report is based on 2,387 students, ages 13 - 20 years, from the survey who attended school in rural areas. 78% were white and 64% identified as gay or lesbian. Major findings include:

- Nearly all LGBT students (more than urban students) heard homophobic, racist, sexist, and negative gender-expression remarks.
- Rural LGBT reported that school staff rarely intervened when biased comments were heard.
- Most rural LGBT students (more than urban students) felt unsafe.
- A majority of rural LGBT students (more than urban students) had been verbally harassed but these incidents were not adequately addressed by school officials.
- LGBT students (rural more than urban) often sought to avoid a hostile learning environment by skipping class or days of school.
- Rural LGBT students felt less connected to their schools than urban students.
- Rural students felt uncomfortable talking with school staff about

LGBT issues.

- For all students, being out in school was related to higher levels of victimization, with rural students facing greater victimization than urban students.
- Rural students were half as likely to have a Gay-Straight Alliance or other groups that addressed LGBT issues.
- The vast majority of rural students knew of at least one teacher or staff person supportive of LGBT students.

### Implications for Prevention

This study found that LGBT students, particularly those from rural and small town schools, encounter hostile school environments.

School officials and key local leaders should develop community-based coalitions designed to foster support for LGBT-related school policies and practices.

### SOURCE:

Palmer, N. A., Kosciw, J. G., & Bartkiewicz, M. J. (2012). *Strengths and Silences: The Experiences of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgendered Students in Rural and Small Town Schools*. New York: GLSEN.

### Half of adult women have never been tested for HIV

As HIV testing is a key component to avoiding HIV further research on barriers to HIV testing is needed. This study assessed the attitudes, beliefs, characteristics and perceptions of HIV risk of women who have never been tested for HIV. Data were from 5424 women (ages 18 to 64) from the National Health Interview Study (NHIS).

More than one-half (52.3%) of the NHIS had never been tested for HIV. These women tended to be non-Hispanic white, have lower income, be married, and report having private insurance.

Women never married and never tested for HIV believed they had no risk of getting HIV. Women never tested for HIV that believed that they had no HIV risk were more likely to have less than a high school education.

Study findings highlight the need to develop interventions that increased HIV testing among women and effective HIV testing policies.

SOURCE: Piper, C. N., et al. (2012). Beliefs and perception of risks of HIV among women that have never been tested for HIV in the United States. *Journal of the National Health Association*, 104, 441-448

### Unprotected fellatio reported by female sex workers

Fellatio may be an important route of both transmission and acquisition of STIs. This study assessed predictors of inconsistent condom use among female sex workers (FSW) in Sydney, Australia. Data were collected at a sexual health center between May 2009 and January 2011.

1636 FWS were seen at the health center and 1540 (94%) reported fellatio in past three months. Overall, 1168 (75%) FSW reported always using condoms for fellatio at work, while 371 (25%) reported inconsistent use. Of the latter group, condoms were used at a median of 80% of the time and only 6% reported never using condoms for fellatio.

Women from Chinese language background were more likely to report inconsistent condom use for fellatio and Thai speakers were less likely than English-speaking FSW. Prevalence of pharyngeal gonorrhoea was 1.1%, 0.5% for genital gonorrhoea and 5.1% for chlamydia, rates similar to sexually active young women in general Australian population.

SOURCE: Reed, P. J., et. al. (2012). Unprotected fellatio between female sex workers and their clients in Sydney, Australia. *Sexually Transmitted Infections*, 88, 581-584.

### 8% of Danish men reported genital warts diagnosis

A nationally represented study of 23,000 Danish men, ages 18-45 years, found that 7.9% of men had ever been clinically diagnosed with genital warts (mean age of first occurrence=22 years). The likelihood of genital warts was correlated with the lifetime number of sex partners. Ever having smoked and other STIs were also correlated with having genital warts.

SOURCE: Munk, C., et al. (2012). Genital warts in men: a large population-based cross-sectional survey of Danish men. *Sexually Transmitted Infections*, 88, 640-644.

### Smoking deadly for HIV patients

Data from 3000 HIV+ Denmark patients found that 60% of patients' deaths was associated with smoking rather than HIV. The loss of years of life associated with smoking was double that associated with HIV.

SOURCE: Helleberg, M., et al. (2012). Morality attributable to smoking among HIV-1-infected individuals: A nationwide, population-based cohort study. *Clinical Infectious Diseases*. doi: 10.1093/cid/cis933.

**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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