

# RAP\* Time



## RURAL CENTER *for* AIDS/STD PREVENTION

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

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

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## Concurrent partnerships frequently reported by women at risk for HIV infection

Among women in the U.S. heterosexual contact is the most common mode of HIV transmission. Sexual partnerships within sexual networks amplify transmission of HIV and other STIs.

Several types of partner sexual interactions are related to HIV/STI risk. Concurrent sexual partnerships (i.e., partnerships that overlap in time) can accelerate the spread of HIV infection. The sequencing, the interval between and duration of partnerships, and the frequency of sexual interactions influence HIV risk and population transmission.

This study examined parameters of sexual partnerships, including respondents' participation in concurrency, belief that their partner had concurrent partnerships (partners' concurrency), and partnership intervals among women at risk for HIV.

### Methodology

Eligible women were surveyed via ACASI between May 2009 and July 2010 from 10 urban and periurban communities with high prevalences of poverty and reported HIV infection rates in 6 sites in the Northeastern and Southeastern United States. The

women were HIV-tested and took ACASI at entry and at 6-month intervals for up to 6 months.

### Outcomes of the Study

Participants were self-identified women, aged 18-44 years. Major findings include:

- Prevalence of participants' and partner's concurrency was 40% and 36%, respectively.
- Among women with >1 partner and no concurrent partnerships themselves, the median gap between partners was 1 month.
- Multiple episodes of unprotected vaginal intercourse with  $\geq 2$  of their most recent partners was reported by 60% of the women who had both concurrent partnerships and nonmonogamous partners, 50% with only concurrent partners and no partners concurrently, and 33% with only partners' concurrency versus 14% of women neither type of concurrency.
- Women who had any involvement with concurrency were also more likely than women with no concurrency involvement to report lack of awareness of whether recent partners had undergone HIV testing.
- Marital status (married had less

concurrency), substance abuse, and history of STI were associated with participants' and partners' concurrency.

- Among the 47% of women who had neither concurrent nor nonmonogamous partners, the median gap between partnerships was 1 month, which is short enough for transmission of several STI pathogens.

### Implications for Prevention

This study found that in this cohort of women at risk for HIV infection who were recruited from 10 communities in the U.S., both participants' and partners' concurrency was frequently reported. Sexual concurrency and short gaps between partners, for example, may create substantial opportunities for HIV transmission in this sample.

The findings can inform effective behavioral and medical interventions for HIV prevention.

### SOURCE:

Adimora, A., A. et al. (2014). Characteristics of multiple and concurrent partnerships among women at high risk for HIV infection. *Journal of Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndromes*, 65, 99-106.

## Teens use of technology linked to condom use

This study examined adolescents' technology-based sexual communication with dating partners, and evaluated associations between technology-based communication and condom use.

Participants were 176 high school students who indicated their use of private technology (e.g., texting, Snapchat, or private Facebook messaging) to communicate with partners about condoms, birth control, STIs, pregnancy and sexual limits. Sexually active youth reported frequency of condom use.

Nearly one-half (49%) used technology. Girls were more likely than boys to discuss HIV, pregnancy, and sexual limits. Ethnic minorities were more likely than whites to discuss condom use, STIs, HIV, pregnancy, and birth control.

Rates of consistent condom use were three times higher among youth using technology to discuss condoms and birth control.

SOURCE: Widman, L., et al. (2013). Safe sext: Adolescents' use of technology to communicate about sexual health with dating partners. *Journal of Adolescent Health*. doi.org/10.1016/j.jadohealth.2013.12.009.

## Sexual behaviors and gambling often co-occur among teens

Many late-adolescent youth become involved in multiple forms of high-risk behaviors with adverse outcomes. This study assessed the degree to which two such behaviors, adolescent sexual behaviors and gambling, were associated in a community-based sample (N=427) with a large African-American presence.

Almost half of the sample (49%) had gambled at least once before age 18. More gamblers than non-gamblers had initiated sexual intercourse by age 18. Among those who had initiated sexual activity by age 18, more male gamblers had impregnated someone by age 18 as compared to female gamblers becoming pregnant. Among those who had initiated sexual activity, more gamblers than non-gamblers with high impulsivity levels at age 13 had become pregnant or had impregnated someone.

Gambling and sexual behaviors often co-occur among adolescents. The findings prompt the need for inclusion of gambling in behavioral intervention programs focusing on sexual risk.

SOURCE: Martins, S. S, et al. (2014). Gambling and sexual behaviors in African-American adolescents. *Addictive Behaviors*, 39: 854-860.

## Hepatitis C transmitted during sexual contact

Hepatitis C virus coinfection was assessed in the Swiss HIV Cohort Study. Data showed that HCV is transmitted by sexual contact as well as in blood. HIV-positive persons with an HIV/HCV-coinfected partner had two to three times the risk of becoming infected with HCV. This increased risk was found among injection drug users as well as homosexual and heterosexual HIV-positive persons.

SOURCE: Kouyos, R. D., et al. (2014). Clustering of HCV coinfections on HIV phylogeny indicates domestic and sexual transmission of HCV. *International Journal of Epidemiology*. doi: 10.1093/ije/dy1276.

## 16% of persons with HIV unaware

CDC estimates that 1,144,500 persons 13 or older are living with HIV infection, including 180,900 (15.8%) who are unaware of their infection. Over past decade, the number of people living with HIV has increased, while new annual infections has remained stable.

SOURCE: CDC. (2014). Fact Sheet: HIV in the United States: At a Glance. Atlanta, GA.

**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 Arizona, 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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