

RAP* Time



RURAL CENTER *for* AIDS/STD PREVENTION

A JOINT PROJECT OF
INDIANA UNIVERSITY, UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO,
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*Rural AIDS/STD prevention. rap (rap) v. *Slang*. To talk freely and openly

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Same-sex behavior among self-identified heterosexual women related to sexual risk

Women who participate in same-sex activity but not espousing a sexual minority status (e.g. lesbian or bisexual) have been understudied. Research on sexual orientation discordance has largely focused on HIV risk in heterosexual or nongay-identified MSM.

Studies concerning sexual orientation discordance among women has been few because research on STIs has been a low priority among this group despite recent evidence of risk. Understanding the relationship between same-sex behavior among heterosexual women and sexual risk and substance abuse can be valuable to HIV/STI prevention efforts and better health services.

This study compared heterosexual women who reported past female sex partners to exclusively heterosexual women and bisexual- and homosexual-identified women.

Methodology

Data from the 2002 US National Survey of Family Growth (NSFG) were used for the comparison of the three groups of women on sexual risk behaviors and substance use. Heterosexual women, ages 20-44 years, who indicated one or more female partners in the past

year were compared to those with less recent female partners, and to bisexual, homosexual, and exclusively heterosexual women.

Outcomes of the Study

An estimated 7.9% of US women aged 20 to 44 self-identified as heterosexual and a history of at least one female sex partner. Hence, an estimated 3,811,501 self-identified US women age 20-44 years have ever had a female partner, 755,622 within past year. 1.0% identified as homosexual and 2.6% bisexual. Major findings include:

- Heterosexual women with a past-year female sex partner, when compared to exclusively heterosexual women, were more likely to smoke tobacco (46% vs. 19%), binge drink (34% vs. 11%), use marijuana (58% vs. 11%), and use cocaine (19% vs. 2%).
- Most heterosexual women with a past-year female partner had only one partner in their lifetime. They had 10 median lifetime male partners versus 1 to 7 for other groups.
- Heterosexual women with a past-year female partner were more likely than any other group to have had a nonmonogamous male partner (40%) or to have

engaged in sex while high (69%).

- Substance abuse was high among heterosexual women with a past-year female sex partner, but did not differ from bisexuals on tobacco use or from heterosexual or bisexual women on regular alcohol beverage use.

Implications for Prevention

Results of this population-based study revealed that same-sex behavior among heterosexual-identified women is a marker for sexual risk and substance use distinct from that of bisexual, lesbian, or exclusively heterosexual women.

The researchers noted that the study results can help inform HIV/STI prevention programming and add to knowledge of the relationship of sexual orientation discordance and HIV/STI risk behavior.

SOURCE:

Bauer, G. R., et al. (2010). Sexual health, risk behaviors, and substance use in heterosexual-identified women with female sex partners: 2002 US National Survey of Family Growth. *Sexually Transmitted Diseases*, 37, 531-537.

Vaginal cleansing nearly universal among Kenyan FSW

This study assessed vaginal cleansing and lubricant use among female sex workers (FSW) in Kenya participating in a 6-month study on diaphragm use.

Participants were 140 FSW in Nairobi who completed 140 baseline visits and 390 bi-monthly follow-up visits.

98.9% of women at baseline reported recent vaginal cleansing. All women indicated reasons as general hygiene or to remove evidence of past coitus. Other reasons were to tighten vagina (41%) and to prevent infection (40%). Cleansing was performed with water and soap (88%), salty water (22%), water only (17%), and water with disinfectant (12%). Use of other substances was uncommon. Women reported inserting fingers (84%) and/or cloth (56%) for recent cleansing. Most believed that cleaning was ineffective in preventing HIV/STI and pregnancy.

While vaginal cleansing is a modifiable behavior, complete eradication among this population would probably be difficult.

SOURCE: Gallo, M. F., et al. (2010). Intravaginal practices among female sex workers in Kibera, Kenya. *Sexually Transmitted Infections*, 86, 318-322.

Middle school students reported coitus and oral sex

Sexual behavior among middle school students has been understudied, yet early sexual initiation is associated with sexual risk and elevated teenage pregnancy. Data from a 2005 survey of 4,557 6th-8th graders at 14 urban public schools in Southern California were analyzed focusing on sexual intercourse and oral sex. These students were largely minority youth living in areas of high rates of STDs and teenage births

9% of the youth ever had sexual intercourse and 8% had engaged in oral sex. 3% reported oral sex only, 4% coitus only and 5% both. Intercourse and oral sex were highly correlated. 7% of sixth graders, 8% of seventh graders and 18% of eighth graders reported having had oral sex, sexual intercourse or both. Among those reporting coitus, 69% had used a condom at last coitus and 43% had multiple partners.

Interventions should begin before sixth grade and address oral sex, coitus and multiple partners. Such intervention should continue through the middle school years.

SOURCE: De Rose, C. J., et al. (2010). Sexual intercourse and oral sex among public middle school students: Prevalence and correlates. *Perspectives on Sexual and Reproductive Health*, 42, 197-205.

Dental dams not commonly used by female inmates

Among 199 female inmates in New South Wales interviewed, 36 reported sex with another inmate, mainly having oral sex. Yet, only 4% reported ever using a dental dam. Main STD risk was oral sex, manual sex, and shared dildos. The researchers recommended that condoms should be used on shared dildos and sex toys and latex gloves used to protect cut and grazed hands from vaginal and menstrual fluids.

SOURCE: Yap, L., et al. (2010). Sexual practices and dental dam use among women prisoners: A mixed methods study. *Sexual Health*, 7, 170-176.

T. vaginalis found in 8.5% female inmates

Female inmates from two prisons were tested for *T. vaginalis* DNA. 8.5% tested positive. Prevalence was much higher than general US population. Lower household income before arrest was the only significant correlate. Screening may be wise at prison entry.

SOURCE: Sutcliffe, S., et al. (2010). Prevalence and correlates of *Trichomonas vaginalis* infection among female US federal prison inmates. *Sexually Transmitted Diseases*, 37, 585-591.

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

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