



Pilot Study to describe the substance use experiences of HIV-positive young Black men who have sex with men (MSM) between the ages of 18-35 in San Francisco

Austin Nation, RN, PHN, MSN and Howard Pinderhughes, PhD
University of California, San Francisco – School of Nursing



1. INTRODUCTION

The prevalence of HIV among young Black men who have sex with men (MSM) is three to nine times higher than white MSM, in addition, young Black MSM have had a 48% increase in incidence of HIV infections between 2006-2009 rivaling those among the general population in the developing world.

Previous research studies cite crack cocaine use, sex while high on crack cocaine, marijuana and alcohol, or sharing needles for injection drugs as strongly associated with HIV infection among young Black MSM

2.. PURPOSE OF STUDY

The goal of this study is to offer insight about the range of factors and enhance our understanding about the role that substance use plays in the lives of HIV-positive young Black MSM. This information might also contribute to the development of prevention education strategies specifically tailored to this population that address issues surrounding substance abuse in HIV transmission.

- What role does substance use plays in the lives of HIV-positive young Black MSM?
- What does it mean to be a young Black MSM with substance use?

3. SAMPLE

Recruitment from CBOs and ASO in SF

- Bay Area Positives
- Larkin Street Youth Services

Participant demographics

n =4 originally from North Carolina, Ohio, Richmond, East Bay

Ages: 19-24

3 – HS education, 1 - Some College

3 – Unemployed/Looking for Job,

1 – Working Part-time

HIV diagnosis date:

April, 2007 – November, 2012

Sex Initiation: age 13-16

Drug Initiation: as young as age 11

4. METHODS

QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS

- a.) Initial read-through of all transcripts and verification with audio recording
- b.) Open coding – general content analysis line-by-line, chunk-by-chunk
- c.) Refining of codes (collapsing)
- d.) Salient themes emerging
- e.) Categories developed
- f.) Conceptual abstraction
- g.) Member verification

5. FINDINGS - THEMES

Experiential trajectory – salient themes

Family - includes issues with being stigmatized due to their sexual orientation along with rejection, judgment, discrimination, and lack of acceptance. In addition, there is also early exposure to drugs and sex in the family.

MOVE TO SAN FRANCISCO

all participants move or are asked to leave home
Survival - they talk about HIV, being homeless, needing money for meet their basic needs including food and housing so they can have a place to sleep and shower

Relationships - include feelings of abandonment, alone, lonely, and the need to find a community and have a sense of belonging. This is coupled with their fear of being rejected and issues with love and trust.

Methamphetamine Exposure, Prevalence and Access

- among their newfound SF community, peer pressure to do the drug, part of their need to belong, drugs for emotional numbing to deal with their circumstances, sexual enhancement benefit of methamphetamine leads them to engage in high risk behaviors such as unprotected receptive anal intercourse.

Transactional Sex – male prostitution, a way to support their substance use and meet their need for money, food, and housing, power in youth sex with older men who start to place demands on them in order to get more drugs or money

HIV DIAGNOSIS

as a sense of relief and something they are not surprised about, there is a resignation about eventually being HIV infected, life-changing and considered a blessing to them because of their self-described destructive path.

Moment of Realization for Need to Change -

empowerment, need to take control of their lives by changing their behavior including stopping or reducing their drug use.

6. LIMITATIONS

- Small purposive sample size
- Limited age range of participants
- Only done with HIV-positive young Black MSM in San Francisco
- All participants recruited from community-based organizations

7. SUMMARY – CONCLUSIONS

Surprisingly, the results of this study do not draw the same conclusions as previously cited studies with HIV-positive young Black MSM in other cities. It appears that the high exposure, prevalence, and access of methamphetamine in San Francisco among the predominantly White MSM population has had an impact on these young Black men. For a follow-up to this study, it would also be important to find out the race of the older men who are the “tricks and john” since it is likely that older White MSM would be in a position to afford drug and to offer these young men money to engage in sex.

Other pilot study follow-up

- HIV Disclosure workshops
- Relationship Building
- Creating new partnerships with CBOs and ASOs
- Working with HIV physician on future project
- Comparative analysis of other young MSM groups

ULTIMATE GOAL: Be involved in developing educational programs with targeted prevention message strategies specifically tailored to the young Black MSM community that address the substance use risks encountered in San Francisco.

CONTACT INFORMATION

austin90621@gmail.com
714-401-6913 (cell)

This research is funded in part by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration Grant # 5T06SM060559-03.