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Predictors of Unprotected Anal Intercourse (UAI) with Casual Sexual Partners among HIV Positive MSM in Los Angeles County (LAC)

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Overview

Findings indicate sexual context factors (Internet sex, drugs and alcohol, and sex exchange) predicted UAI among the study population (N=433).

Background and Research Significance

- In 2000 and 2001, LAC experienced outbreaks of syphilis, primarily among MSM co-infected with HIV; many of these cases were linked to bathhouse encounters.
- Sexually transmitted disease (STD) co-infection among HIV positive individuals can lead to HIV disease progression, severe symptoms associated with STDs, and increased HIV/STD infectivity.
- Research is needed to explore the HIV/STD knowledge levels and sexual risk behaviors reported by HIV positive MSM.
- A better understanding of predictors of UAI by HIV positive MSM is essential for strategic planning of risk reduction interventions.
- Previous research has found that substance use and partner-level variables predict UAI among HIV positive MSM; we will examine if sexual contexts and STD/HIV knowledge, beliefs, or attitudes predict UAI among HIV positive MSM with casual partners.

Objectives

- To measure self-reported HIV and STD knowledge and sexual risk behaviors among HIV positive MSM.
- To identify variables that predict UAI with casual sexual partners among HIV positive MSM.

Study Design

- Cross sectional survey mailed to clients of a non-government organization serving PLWA.
- Outcome variable was self-reported UAI with male casual partners in the past six months.
- Independent variables in the regression models included self-reported demographics, STD/HIV knowledge and beliefs, disclosure attitudes, substance use, and sexual contexts.
- SPSS 10.1 software was used to run frequency distribution, cross-tabulation, and multiple regression analyses on these data.
- Significance was assigned at the P<.05 level.
- Findings were based on data collected from the 2001 APLA Client Survey; sub-population of MSM who reported having casual sexual partners in the past 6 months was selected for analyses (N=433).

2001 APLA Client Survey

- Survey was mailed to 4,328 clients (only those who agreed to receive mail) in November, 2001.
- Study population sample represented 55% of all APLA clients; white and male respondents were over-represented (P<.05).
- 1,365 surveys were returned and complete.
- Response rate was 31.6%.

Key Findings

(Study sample was HIV positive MSM with casual partners, N=433)

- At least 95% of the participants rated their knowledge of HIV and STDs as good to excellent.
- 88.4% reported awareness of the LAC syphilis outbreak.
- Half (49.7%) reported UAI with casual partners.
- The following variables predicted UAI with casual sexual partners: sex exchange (sex exchanged for money, drugs, or other benefits), meeting sexual partners over the Internet, using poppers, and feeling the influence of drugs or alcohol during sex (all were asked within the previous 6 months).
- Self-reported STD/HIV knowledge (e.g., "How would you rate your knowledge of HIV/AIDS, overall?"), STD/HIV transmission beliefs (e.g., "An HIV+ person whose level of virus in the blood is undetectable can still transmit HIV to a sex partner."), HIV disclosure attitudes (e.g., "If I plan to have sex with someone, I have a responsibility to let them know I'm HIV positive."), and demographics were not predictors of UAI among this population.

Study Limitations

- Based on self-reported data.
- Findings may not be generalizable outside of sample population.

Conclusion and Implications

- Perceived high levels of STD/HIV knowledge and awareness do not moderate the impact of high-risk sexual contexts on the sexual risk behaviors of HIV positive MSM.
- Interpersonal situations and sexual contexts (sex exchange, the Internet, and the influence of alcohol and drugs) are the strongest predictors of risk behaviors among HIV positive MSM.
- Interventions targeting HIV positive MSM should address the factors that heighten risk behaviors among HIV positive MSM in these interpersonal situations and sexual contexts.

Figures and Tables

- Study sample demographics.

Chart 1:

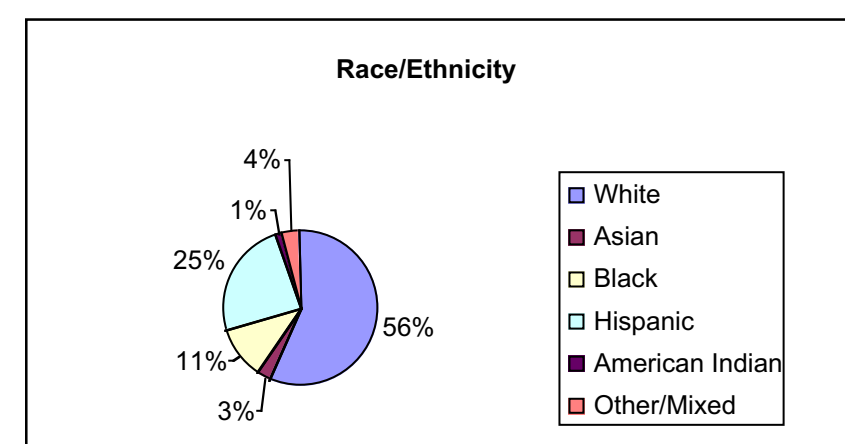
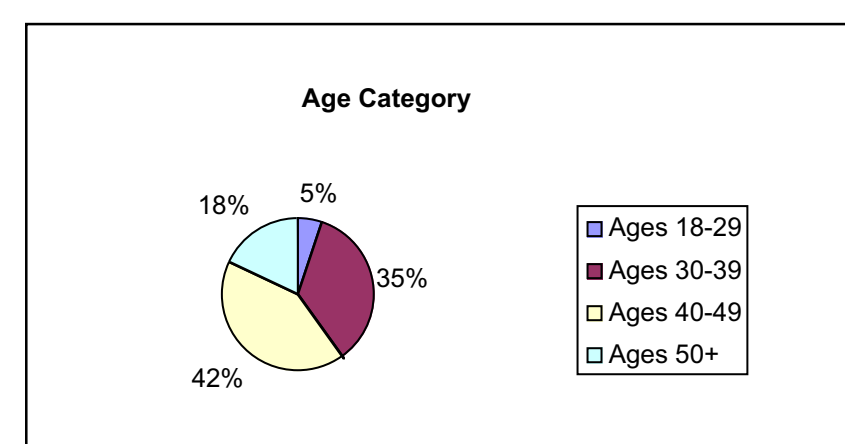


Chart 2:



- Predictors of Unprotected Anal Intercourse (UAI) with Casual Sexual Partners among HIV positive MSM in Los Angeles County (LAC).

Chart 3:

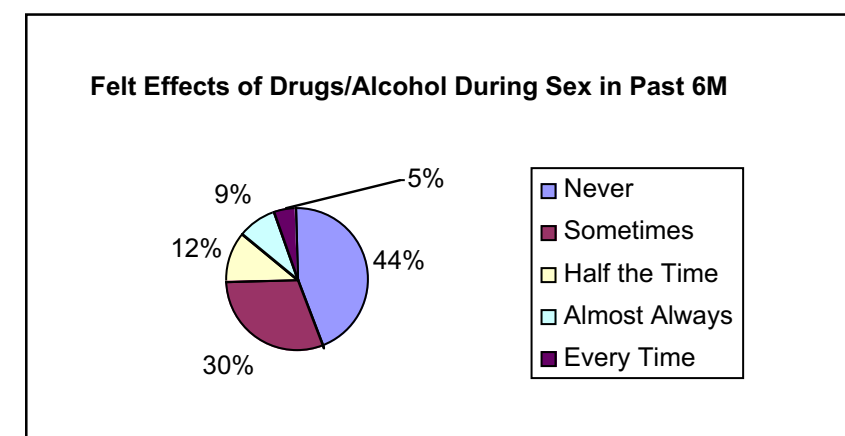


Chart 4:

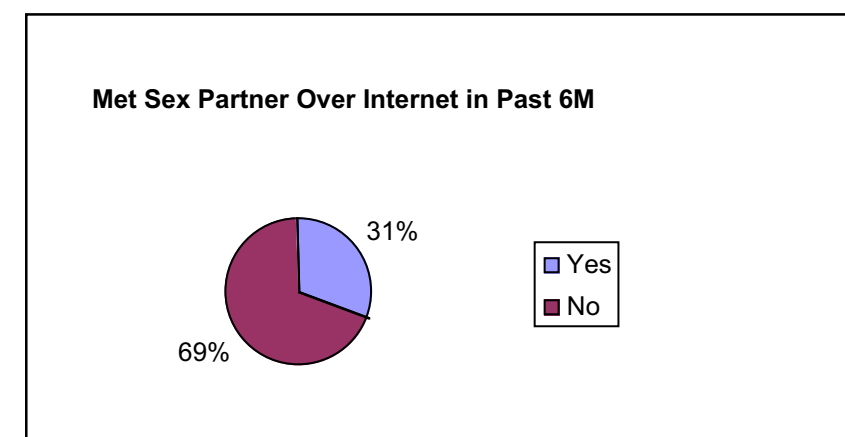


Chart 5:

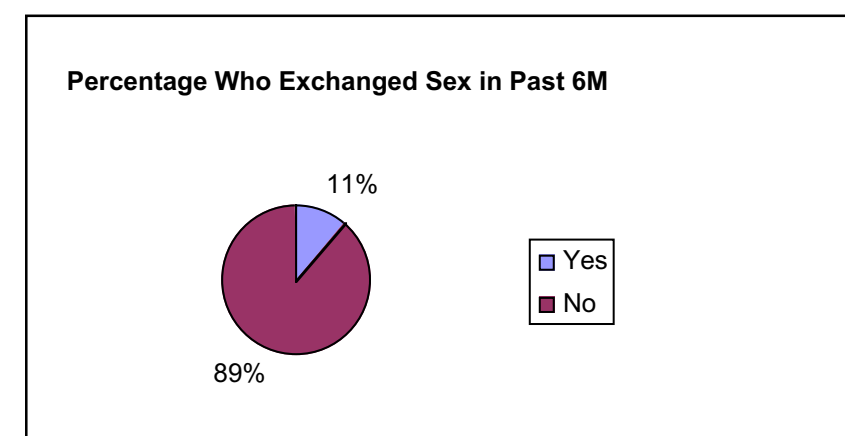


Chart 6:

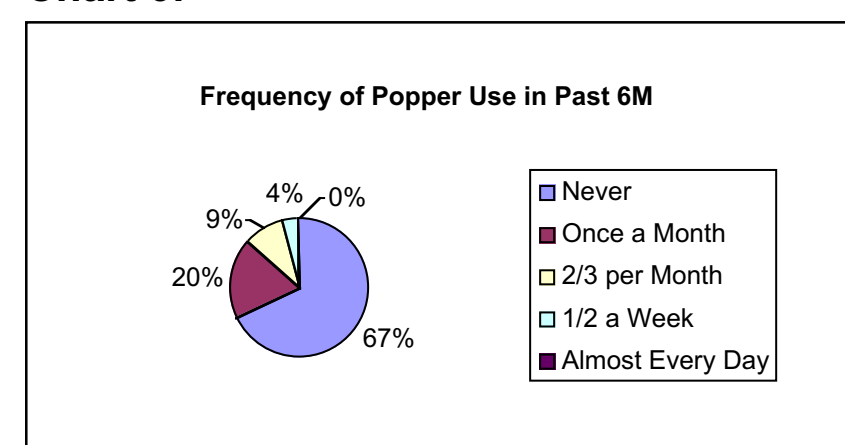


Table 1: Percentage Reporting UAI by Predictor Variables (P<.05)

Variable	No UAI (%)	UAI (%)
Internet Sex in Past 6M		
Yes	34.1	65.9
No	57.8	42.2
Sex Exchange in Past 6M		
Yes	21.7	78.3
No	53.5	46.5
Feeling Effects of Drugs/Alcohol During Sex		
Yes	35.5	64.5
No	63.6	36.4
Use of Poppers		
Yes	36.9	63.1
No	56.7	43.3

Table 2: Predictors of UAI with Casual Sexual Partners in Past 6 Months among HIV Positive MSM.

Predictor Variables*	Odds Ratio (95% CI)
Feeling Effects of Drugs/Alcohol During Sex	
Yes	1 Referent
No	0.73 (0.59-0.90)
Meeting Sexual Partners over the Internet	
Yes	2.80 (1.68-4.63)
No	1 Referent
Exchanging Sex for Money, Drugs, or Benefits	
Yes	2.36 (1.02-5.47)
No	1 Referent
Popper Use	
Yes	1 Referent
No	0.59 (0.36-0.98)

*Significance was assigned at P<.05 level