

Researchers find alcohol plays no role in disclosing HIV status among Russians

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Disclosure of HIV positive serostatus to sexual partners is considered an important public health goal to prevent new infections. Disclosure can motivate sex partners to make informed choices and change behavior through negotiation of safer sex practices. It might also prompt partner testing and counseling.

A team of Boston University School of Medicine (BUSM) researchers in cooperation with Pavlov State University investigated nondisclosure of [HIV infection](#) in a cohort of 700 people living with HIV in St. Petersburg, Russia. In Russia, an [HIV epidemic](#) is currently growing at explosive rates, particularly among [injection drug users](#). Russians are also worldwide leaders in [alcohol consumption](#), which has led to a national health crisis, adds further to health problems and potentially facilitates the spread of HIV.

The BUSM and Pavlov team found that approximately half (52.4 percent) of all participants surveyed reported not having disclosed their HIV serostatus to all partners since they had known of their infection. The study findings, which currently appear on-line in the journal *AIDS Behavior*, suggest that alcohol seems to play no major role in the decision to disclose or not. However, those in a relationship with a casual partner, an HIV negative partner, or with multiple sex partners were less likely to disclose.

"We now know that nondisclosure of [HIV status](#) to sex partners is still very common in Russia and that risky alcohol use is also very common

however we were there we were unable to detect an association between any alcohol use and the outcome of recent nondisclosure," explained lead author Karsten Lunze, MD, a fellow in the Clinical [Addiction Research & Education Unit](#) at BUSM.

According to the authors these results emphasize that Russian health care providers should find out whether their patients have casual, HIV negative, or multiple sex partners, and particularly counsel and encourage those patients to disclose their HIV diagnosis to help prevent a further spread of the dramatic HIV epidemic in Russia.

Provided by Boston University Medical Center

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