

Depression associated with risky sexual behavior among truck drivers in Kenya

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Credit: Nanno Jiskoot

Truck drivers in sub-Saharan Africa are particularly at risk for both mental health disorders, including depression, and sexually transmitted infections, including HIV, due to the stressful, transient lifestyle associated with their occupation.

In a study published Thursday in the journal *PeerJ*, CUNY SPH doctoral student Matthew Romo and Associate Professor Elizabeth Kelvin assessed the prevalence of depression and explored its association with sexual risk behavior in a sample of long-distance truck drivers seeking services at two roadside wellness clinics in Kenya.

The researchers used data from an interviewer-administered questionnaire from 284 [truck drivers](#) who participated in a randomized controlled trial evaluating whether offering oral HIV self-testing could increase HIV test uptake.

Overall, 24 percent of participants had probable major depressive disorder (MDD) and 58.2 percent reported having one condomless sex partner in the past six months, whereas 27.3 percent reported having had two or more. In a multivariable Poisson regression model adjusted for demographic and other relevant variables, including number of sex partners, MDD was significantly associated with a greater number of condomless sex partners. General self-efficacy, which can be defined as "one's belief in their ability to influence events that affect their life," significantly mediated the association between MDD and number of condomless sex partners.

"The high prevalence of depression highlights the need to test mental healthcare interventions for this population, possibly integrated with HIV prevention services," says Kelvin.

More information: Matthew L. Romo et al. Depression and sexual risk behavior among long-distance truck drivers at roadside wellness clinics in Kenya, *PeerJ* (2019). [DOI: 10.7717/peerj.7253](https://doi.org/10.7717/peerj.7253)

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