

NIH-funded study finds high HIV infection rates among gay and bisexual black men in the US

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The rate of new HIV infections among black men who have sex with men (MSM) in the United States, particularly younger men, is high and suggests the need for prevention programs specifically tailored to this population, according to initial findings from the HPTN 061 study. The preliminary results were presented at the XIX International AIDS Conference (AIDS 2012) in Washington, D.C., by study co-chair Kenneth Mayer, M.D., medical research director for the Fenway Community Health Center in Boston.

The HPTN 061 study, which involved 1,553 black MSM ages 18 and older in Atlanta, Boston, Los Angeles, New York, San Francisco and Washington, D.C., found a 2.8 percent overall rate of new HIV infections (known as HIV incidence) among the study population. Moreover, the researchers found a 5.9 percent HIV incidence rate among individuals 18 to 30 years of age.

MSM of all races and ethnicities are most heavily affected by HIV/AIDS in the United States., accounting for 61 percent of all new infections in 2009, according to the U.S. [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) (CDC). Further, [CDC data](#) indicate that young black MSM (those aged 13 to 29 years old) had a 48 percent increase in new HIV infections from 2006 to 2009.

The two-year observational study, which began in 2009, was designed

to 1) assess whether community-level interventions intended to prevent [HIV infection](#) would be used by the study population, and 2) help determine whether a larger clinical trial of community-level [prevention interventions](#) among black MSM in the United States might be feasible.

In addition to incidence data, early study analyses found that HIV infection was associated with high rates of untreated sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and poverty. Ninety-seven percent of study participants agreed to HIV testing. Of the study participants who self-reported as being HIV-uninfected or did not know their status, 12 percent (165 men) proved to be infected at time of enrollment. All participants who were HIV-infected at entry into the study, or who became infected while in the study, were referred for medical care and treatment.

Provided by NIH/National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases

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