

The Information Practices of HIV Positive Black Gay Men Post-Diagnosis

Megan Threats

HIV/AIDS information is a critical resource for people living with HIV (PLWH). Managing HIV requires PLWH to consistently seek, monitor, share, and use HIV/AIDS information. As advancements in HIV treatment and prevention continue to evolve, we need a better understanding of the information needs and practices PLWH engage in over time. Previous literature has focused on the information practices of broad populations of PLWH in the United States and Canada (Hogan & Palmer, 2005; Veinot, 2009). Few researchers have examined the information needs and practices of young, Black men who have sex with men (YBMSM) living with HIV in the United States.

YBMSM experience the highest burden of HIV infection in the United States. YBMSM have a one in two chance of becoming infected during their lifetime compared with one in five among Latino MSM, and one in eleven among White MSM (Hess et al, 2017). High rates of late diagnosis of HIV infection and undiagnosed HIV infection have been observed among YBMSM (Koblin et al., 2017; Mannheimer et al., 2014). Undiagnosed HIV infection may contribute to ongoing HIV transmission, and could potentially present as a more advanced disease (AIDS) at a later date (Koblin et al., 2017; Mannheimer et al., 2014). The underutilization of repeat screening for HIV and other sexually transmitted infections (STIs), along with the low adoption of other HIV protective and risk reduction behaviors such as pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP)¹ initiation and adherence, and the treatment of other STIs (e.g. – chlamydia, gonorrhea, syphilis) may contribute to the high burden of HIV infection among YBMSM.

This poster presents preliminary results from a mixed methods study examining the information needs and practices of YBMSM following a diagnosis of HIV infection, and factors in their social-technical environment that deter or motivate their utilization of HIV/STI prevention, treatment and care services. Data were collected through a self-administered online survey and semi-structured, in-depth interviews. The findings presented in this poster are a subset of results from a larger study examining the influence of social-technical environmental factors on the information practices and HIV protective and risk reduction behaviors of YBMSM in North Carolina. Ten participants, all diagnosed with HIV, were interviewed following their completion of the online survey. Thematic analysis of interview transcripts is ongoing. The findings will be shared during the poster session.

¹ Pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) is when people at high risk for acquiring HIV take HIV medicines daily to diminish their likelihood of getting infected. When taken consistently as prescribed, PrEP reduces the risk of getting HIV from intercourse by 92% (CDC, 2017).

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