

Interventions I: BATHHOUSES

Domestic Prevention Working Group

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What is a bathhouse?

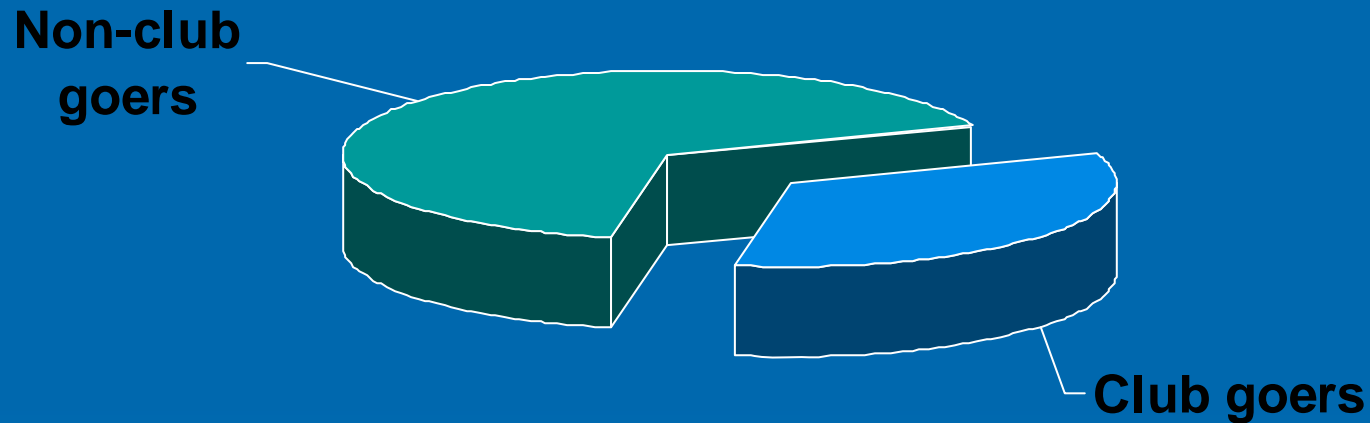
- Social/sexual venue for MSM
 - ~ sexual purpose is explicit
 - ~ physical setting facilitates sex
 - ~ usually some social component

- How define for research purpose?
 - ~ physical address listed in guides
 - ~ open at least 3 nights/wk

How is a bathhouse unique?

- How they differ from other PSEs?
 - ~ non-"players" do not enter space
 - ~ some space where sex is allowed
 - ~ safe space for sex between men
 - ~ explicit prevention possible
 - ~ extensive prevention services possible

How do men who go to clubs compare to MSM who don't go?



Who goes to the bathhouse?

Compared to non-club goers, higher proportion of club goers:

- ✓ High risk men
- ✓ HIV-positive
- ✓ Non-gay identity
- ✓ Men of color

What goes on at bathhouses?

- Most sex at club was oral
- During visit most men ...
 - had only 1 partner
 - used a condom during anal sex
 - minimized risk (e.g., withdrawal)
 - did not use drugs/alcohol
- Men were more likely to report risk behavior at home than at club

What policies have been tried?

- Close down
- Structural regulations (public/private space)*
- Provide prevention**
(condoms/information/screening)

*Community Prevention Policy & Programs in Risk Settings (PIs: Woods & Binson)

**1996/7 Manager Survey (Woods, Binson, et al., - 2001) & 2004/5 Manager Survey (Woods, Euren, et al., 2007)

Closing the Baths

- 1980s, several cities tried closing:
SF, NY, LA, Atlanta
- Today all have bathhouses
(although go by different names)



Regulatory vs. Non-Regulatory

- Regulatory Policy
 - focus on enforcement/compliance
 - tension in communication
 - no data to support regulations
 - prevention = only what's required
- Non-Regulatory Policy
 - policy disregards bathhouses
 - policy to cultivate cooperation
 - prevention = minimal to dynamic

Structural Regulations

- San Francisco – no private spaces
- New York – no sex in public areas
- Los Angeles – can monitor rooms
- Chicago – no regulations

At best, *moves* the behavior
– does not *change* it

Prevention Programs

- Distribution of Condoms & Lube
 - Information & Education (outreach)
 - HIV/STD Testing
 - Special Events
 - Health Educators/Counselors
- 

Prevention Programs

Except for HIV testing programs, there have been no evaluations of these prevention activities.



Summary

- Men with highest risk behavior go to bathhouses ... so they are ideal places for HIV/STD prevention work.
- Most men do not engage in high risk sex at the bathhouse ... so effective prevention will reduce risk *wherever* they have sex.

Thank You!!



Bathroom Testing Refs

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