

**Police Harassment and Psychosocial Vulnerability, Distress, and Depressive Symptoms
Among Black Men who have Sex with Men in the U.S.: Longitudinal Analysis of HPTN 061**

Molly Remch¹
Dustin T. Duncan²
Amanda Geller³
Rodman Turpin⁴
Typhanye Dyer⁴
Joy D. Scheidell⁵
Charles M. Cleland⁵
Jay S. Kaufman⁶
Russell Brewer⁷
Christopher Hucks-Ortiz⁸
Willem van der Mei⁵
Kenneth H. Mayer^{9, 10}
Maria R. Khan⁵

¹Department of Epidemiology, UNC Gillings School of Public Health, Chapel Hill, NC USA

²Department of Epidemiology, Columbia University Mailman School of Public Health, New York, NY USA

³Department of Sociology, New York University, New York, NY USA

⁴Department of Epidemiology and Biostatistics, University of Maryland School of Public Health, College Park, MD USA

⁵Department of Population Health, New York University School of Medicine, New York, NY USA

⁶Department of Epidemiology, Biostatistics, & Occupational Health, McGill University, Montreal, Quebec, Canada

⁷Department of Medicine, University of Chicago, Chicago, IL USA

⁸John Wesley Community Health Institute, Inc., Commerce, CA, USA

⁹Harvard Medical School, Boston, MA USA

¹⁰Fenway Institute, Fenway Health, Boston, MA USA

Address Correspondence to:

Molly Remch
Department of Epidemiology
Gillings School of Global Public Health
UNC – Chapel Hill
Chapel Hill, NC
CB 7435 McGavran-Greenberg Hall
Email: mremch@email.unc.edu

Abstract

Objectives: To estimate the impact of police harassment on psychosocial vulnerability, distress, and depressive symptoms among Black men who have sex with men (BMSM).

Methods: A sample of 1,155 BMSM were recruited from 2009 to 2010 in 6 U.S. cities (Atlanta, Boston, Los Angeles, New York, San Francisco, and Washington D.C.) and completed a baseline and 12-month follow-up interview. We estimated associations between reported recent police harassment and psychosocial vulnerability (elevated racial/sexual identity incongruence), psychological distress (being distressed by experienced racism and/or homophobia), and depression measured six months later.

Results: Overall, 622 men (59.6%) reported experiencing police harassment between the baseline and 6-month interview due to their race and/or sexuality. Adjusted analyses suggested police harassment was independently associated with an 11- and 9-point increase in distress due to experienced racism and distress due to experienced homophobia scores, respectively. Police harassment perceived to be dually motivated predicted disproportionate levels of distress.

Conclusions: Police harassment is prevalent and associated with negative influences on psychosocial vulnerability and psychological distress among BMSM participants. Reducing exposure to police harassment may improve the psychosocial health of BMSM.