

I. Rationale

This study will aim to investigate the association between intimate partner violence (IPV) and HIV testing frequency. Intimate partner violence is defined as controlling and abusive behavior that may include physical, psychological, emotional, verbal, and sexual abuse. Research has suggested that victims of IPV may experience higher risk of unprotected sexual risk behaviors and seroconversion. Being an HIV positive MSM may also have an association with becoming a victim of IPV. Higher frequency in HIV testing will increase the chances of a diagnosis at earlier stages of HIV infection that can significantly improve treatment outcomes. A diagnosis in the later stages of HIV infection will result in delayed initiation of ART treatment and subsequently a higher risk of AIDS and mortality for the individual. Those who do not know their HIV status will also have the increased likelihood of transmitting the virus to others.

A study utilizing data from HPTN 061 has been done by Mannheimer et al. to analyze the prevalence and covariates of infrequent HIV testing. Possible correlates included pre-defined baseline participant demographics, sexual identity, prior healthcare utilization, substance use, incarceration history, HIV risk behaviors, HIV status of sexual partners, perceived racism, internalized homophobia, internalized HIV stigma, HIV conspiracy, symptoms of depression, and study site. The variable of IPV was not examined. A study by Williams et al. investigated the prevalence of childhood sexual abuse, intimate partner violence, and depressive symptomology and their association with HIV sexual risk behaviors in black MSM in 6 US cities. However, the association between IPV and HIV testing frequency was not examined. There has been limited research on the effects of IPV on same sex couples even though the incidence rates are comparable or greater to those of heterosexual women.

Bettering our understanding of the interaction between IPV and HIV frequency among black MSM will infer on the development of future interventions to increase HIV testing frequency and result in better treatment outcomes. Recognition of the differences in where the testing was conducted and the reasons for testing could also help in the development of interventions targeting victims of IPV.

II. Clear Statement of Objective

The main objective would be to examine the association between IPV and HIV testing frequency in black men who have sex with men (BMSM) in 6 US cities. A secondary objective would be to explore the differences in the type of facility for testing and reasons for testing between those have and have not suffered from IPV.

III. Hypothesis

BMSM who report to have experienced IPV in the highest strata (always) will have a significantly decreased frequency of HIV testing as compared to those in the lowest strata (no).

Note: According to the questionnaire, there were 5 answer choices for each of the IPV questions.

III. Expected product (conference, journal, etc)

The expected product is a thesis manuscript that could be considered for publication in a journal.

IV. Recommendation of writing team members, including lead

V. How will the perspective of the community be incorporated into the concept and final product?

Black Caucus will review.