Ecological and Syndemic Predictors of Drug Use During Sex and Transactional Sex among US Black Men Who have Sex with Men

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Authors
Natalie M. Leblanc\textsuperscript{1}, Hugh Crean\textsuperscript{1}; Typhanye P. Dyer\textsuperscript{2}, Chen Zhang\textsuperscript{1}, Rodman Turpin\textsuperscript{2}, Nanhua Zhang\textsuperscript{3}, Martez Smith\textsuperscript{1}, James McMahon\textsuperscript{1}, LaRon Nelson\textsuperscript{4}

ABSTRACT

Situational sex is especially relevant to HIV/STI transmission, as it is often associated with social vulnerability and behaviors that threaten sexual health. Black men who have sex with men (MSM) in the U.S. bear a disproportionate burden of HIV and other STIs. Using SEM and a prospective cohort of Black MSM from the HIV Prevention Trial Network (HPTN) 061 dataset we tested a conceptual model of a mediating syndemic factor at 6-months (drug use, depression, life stress) in the relationship between ecological constructs at baseline (anti-black and homophobic experiences, childhood trauma and economic vulnerability) and situational sex at 12-months (drug use during sex, transactional sex). Key findings included significant pathways from reports of childhood trauma at baseline to drug use during sex, and an association between being homosexual/gay identified (vs. other non-heteronormative identity) and drug use during sex. General drug use had a direct association with both situational sex outcomes.

Key words: Ecological factors, situation sex, Black MSM, Sexual vulnerability, Violence and Stigma and sexual health

\textsuperscript{1} University of Rochester School of Nursing, Rochester, NY 14623
\textsuperscript{2} University of Maryland, School of Public Health, College Park, MD 20742
\textsuperscript{3} Division of Biostatistics & Epidemiology, Cincinnati Children’s Hospital Medical Center, University of Cincinnati College of Medicine
\textsuperscript{4} Yale University School of Nursing, New Haven, CT;