

# Higher HIV Prevalence despite Lower Rates of Sexual Risk Behaviors among MSM of Color in Washington, DC

## Data from the National HIV Behavioral Surveillance system in Washington, DC

Manya Magnus<sup>1</sup>, Irene Kuo<sup>1</sup>, Gregory Phillips II<sup>1</sup>, Katharine Shelley<sup>1</sup>, Anthony Rawls<sup>1</sup>, Luz Montañez<sup>1</sup>, James Peterson<sup>1</sup>, Tiffany West-Ojo<sup>2</sup>, Shannon Hader<sup>2</sup>, and Alan E. Greenberg<sup>1</sup>

For more information:  
Manya Magnus, PhD, MPH  
P 202 994 3024  
F 202 994 0082

<sup>1</sup> Department of Epidemiology and Biostatistics, The George Washington University School of Public Health and Health Services; <sup>2</sup> HIV/AIDS, Hepatitis, STD, and Tuberculosis Administration, DC Department of Health

### Background

✓The District of Columbia has among the highest HIV/AIDS rates in the US and 3% of the adult population and 6.5% of black men are living with HIV/AIDS

✓Men who have sex with men (MSM) behavior is the mode of HIV transmission for 78% of White, 28% of Black, and 49% of Latino men

✓The purpose of this study was to compare HIV prevalence and sexual risk behaviors between racial/ethnic categories in a community-based sample of MSM.

### Methods

✓Data were collected as a part of the CDC-funded National HIV Behavioral Surveillance (NHBS) system in Washington, DC.

✓NHBS is a multi-site, serial cross-sectional study focusing on populations at high risk for HIV, including men who have sex with men (MSM), injecting drug users (IDU), and heterosexuals at high risk of HIV infection (HET).

✓NHBS-MSM-2 activities between July and December 2008 included:

- Face-to-face anonymous survey using venue-based sampling
- OraQuick ADVANCE<sup>®</sup> Rapid HIV-1/2 Antibody Test
- Screened and self-reported HIV+ persons given OraSure Western Blot confirmation and referred to care.
- Stata v9.0se was used for analysis
- Outcomes evaluated:
  - HIV+, new HIV+, self-report unprotected anal intercourse (UAI) at last sex, and race-specific predictors being HIV+.

### Inclusion Criteria

In order to be eligible for this analysis, participants had to:

- Be male
- 18 years or older
- Live in the metropolitan statistical area
- Have had sex with another male in the past 12 months
- Offer informed consent, and
- Able to complete interview in English or Spanish.

### Results

Description of 500 participants:

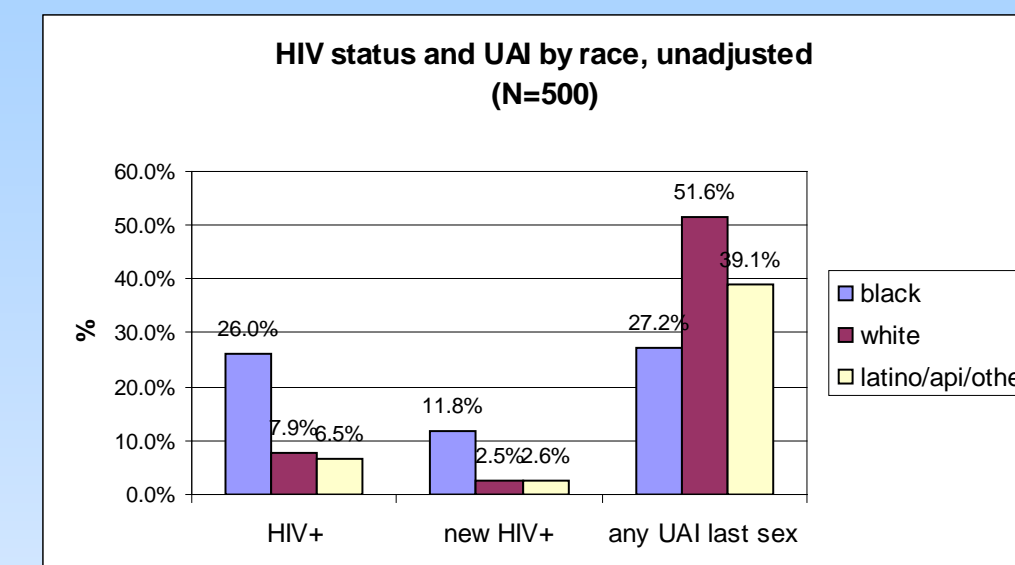
- 49% white, 35% black, and 16% Latino/API/other
- Median age 30.2 years (IQR 19.1 to 39.9)
- 85% gay identified
- Of 484 tested, 14.1% confirmed HIV+
  - Of these, 41.2% newly HIV+

After adjusting for male sex partners and ever barebacked status, predictors of being HIV+ were:

- Black race  
OR 4.53 (95% CI 2.15-9.54)
- Age 35 years or older  
OR 5.88 (95% CI 2.94-11.11)
- Age at MSM sexual debut < 18  
OR 2.62 (95% CI 1.38-4.97)
- Having < college degree  
OR 2.98 (95% CI 1.47-6.07).

•After adjusting for age, age at MSM sexual debut, educational attainment, number of male sex partners and ever barebacked status, relative to White MSM, others were less likely to report UAI at last anal sex:

- Black men  
OR 0.28 (95% CI 0.16-0.49)
- Latino/API/other men  
OR 0.28 (95% CI 0.16-0.49).



Black/white differences all  $p < 0.05$

### Conclusions

✓A disproportionate number of HIV+ and newly HIV+ MSMs were Black and Black MSM were significantly more likely to be HIV+ than other MSM

✓Black MSM were significantly less likely to engage in high risk sexual behavior than other MSM: The primary risk of HIV infection among Black MSM may be related to sexual network rather than individual level risk factors

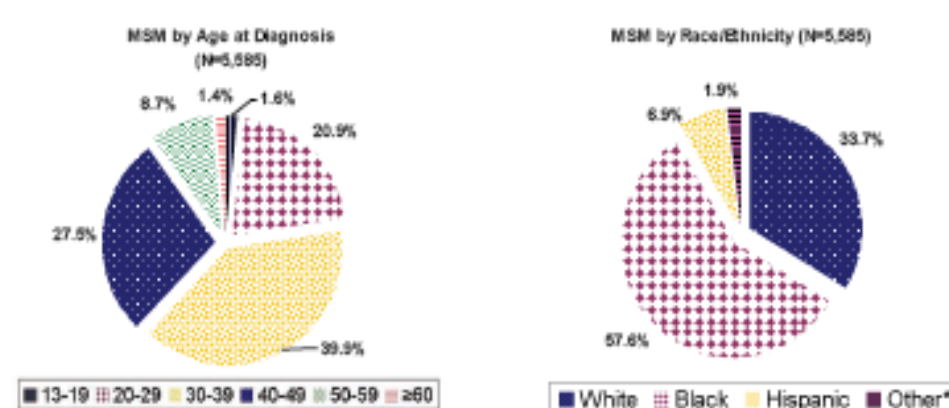
✓Future studies are needed to develop prevention strategies for Black MSM.

### Acknowledgements

Funding for this project comes from the Public Health/Academic Partnership between DC DOH/HAHSTA and GWU SPHHS, Contract Number POHC-2006-C-0030.

For their assistance and expertise throughout the study, the authors acknowledge Dr. Amanda Castel of GWU SPHHS; Dr. Amy Lansky, Dr. Elizabeth DiNenno, Ms. Tricia Martin, and Dr. Isa Miles of CDC; and the WORD UP Community Advisory Board Members. Interviewers Luz Montanez, Matthew Goldshore, Benjamin Takai, Sarah Jackson, Michelle Folkers, Kenny Landgraf, and Mariel Marlow. This study could not have been conducted without the enormous support of our community partners and the venue owners and managers at all the sampled locations or the residents of the District of Columbia.

Figure 27. Proportion of MSM Living with HIV/AIDS by Age at Diagnosis and Race/Ethnicity in the District of Columbia, 2007



District of Columbia, HIV/AIDS, Epidemiology Annual Update Report, 2008. Available at [www.doh.dc.gov](http://www.doh.dc.gov)