

# HIV+ gay men taking ART are more likely to have unprotected sex with discordant partners when using “party drugs”

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## Objectives

To examine:

1. Sexual behavior patterns and
  2. The context of unprotected sex with partners of unknown or negative serostatus
- ...among HIV positive individuals in San Francisco, with detectable viral load, who are taking highly active antiretroviral therapy (HAART) and who use alcohol and/or other drugs.

## Why is HIV incidence increasing among San Francisco gay men?

- HIV/AIDS fatigue among older gay men?
- Few prevention efforts targeting marginalized gay men and MSM?
- Few prevention programs targeting HIV positive men?
- Young gay men never exposed to interventions?
- Treatment optimism?
- Circuit parties and sex clubs?
- Substance use?

## Methods

- These data were collected as part of a clinical trial designed to examine and increase adherence to HAART among HIV positive individuals with detectable viral loads, and who use alcohol and/or recreational drugs.
- Participants are recruited primarily through bars, gyms, and health clinics. They are assessed every four months for a year, using interviews, self-administered questionnaires, and blood tests.
- These analyses use data from the 161 gay and bisexual men who were among our first 200 study participants.

## Measures included in the present analyses include:

- Demographic information
- Sexual behaviors
- Alcohol and substance use
- Sex under the influence
- Relationship status
- Partner HIV status
- CES-D Depression measure
- UCLA Loneliness scale
- Perceptions of HAART

## Results

### Sample Characteristics n=(161)

Age	Race/ethnicity	
Mean: 41 years	Caucasian	55%
Range: 26-76 years	African-American	27%
	Latino	13%

### Alcohol and drug use (last 30 days)

Alcohol use	Percentage	Drug use (cont'd.)	Percentage
Daily/almost daily	17%	Poppers	27%
1-4 times/week	34%	Crack	20%
7+ drinks each time	14%	“Party Drugs”	8%
3-6 drinks each time	40%	(special K, ketamines, GHB and rohypnol a.k.a. roofies)	
		Cocaine	6%
<b>Drug use</b>		Ecstasy	5%
Marijuana	60%		
Methamphetamine	31%		

## Knowledge of HIV status of unprotected sex partners

Knew HIV status of all partners:	47%
All positive:	29%
All negative:	13%
Some positive/Some negative:	5%

Knew HIV status of some partners:	50%
The one's they knew were positive:	21%
The one's they knew were negative:	4%
Some positive/Some negative:	15%

Did not know HIV status of any partners:	3%
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## Sexual behaviors

Last 12 months:	
Unprotected anal or vaginal intercourse (UAVI):	48%
Mean number times:	16
Mean number times UAVI with casual partner:	5
UAVI with an HIV negative or unknown partner:	46%

Last 4 months:	
Sex under the influence of ETOH/drugs	57%
Sex while drunk:	31%
Mean number times:	2
Sex while high on drugs:	49%
Mean number times:	7
Sex while drunk and high:	34%
Mean number times:	3

## Correlates of unsafe sex

### Percent of participants reporting unprotected anal/vaginal sex with an unknown/negative status partner:

Proportion:	Yes	No	p
Sex while high on drugs	71%	35%	.0001
Sex while drunk	53%	52%	ns
Sex while drunk and/or high	67%	18%	.00001

Mean scores	Yes	No	p
Depression	8.3	7.6	ns
Loneliness	5.6	5.5	ns
Anger	9.9	7.2	.05

## Drugs associated with sexual risk taking

### Percent of users/non-users who reported unsafe discordant sex:

	Used	Didn't use	p
Poppers	63%	40%	<.01
Meth.	65%	39%	<.003
Party drugs	83%	44%	<.01
Ecstasy	63%	46%	ns
Cocaine	55%	46%	ns
Crack	43%	48%	ns

## Conclusions

- HIV positive gay men who have sex under the influence of poppers, speed and “party drugs” are twice as likely to end up having sex that could transmit HIV and other STIs.
- Specific drugs associated with sexual risk taking included poppers, methamphetamines and “party drugs” such as special K, ketamines, GHB and rohypnol a.k.a. roofies.
- Safe sex programs and substance use treatment may need to be integrated for this population in order to address the context of risk taking.
- Issues around disclosure need to be addressed in prevention programs as the majority of these men did not know the HIV status of all their unprotected sex partners.

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