



High Risk Behaviors in MSM in Six US Cities: Call for New, More Intensive Prevention Efforts

Margaret A. Chesney¹, Beryl A. Koblin², Thomas J. Coates¹ for the EXPLORE Study Group

¹Center for AIDS Prevention Studies, AIDS Research Institute, UC San Francisco, CA, USA; ²New York Blood Center, NY, NY, USA

Background

- HIV incidence rates among men who have sex with men (MSM) are rising in the USA
- New prevention strategies are needed

Design

- Randomized two-arm HIV prevention trial:
 - * Intensive behavioral counseling & HIV testing
 - vs.
 - * Standard semi-annual HIV counseling & testing
- Participants: 4296 MSM; 1:1 randomization
 - 40% 30 years and under
 - 72.5% White; 27.5% non-White
- Multi-site trial - Six sites throughout USA
- Outcome: HIV infection
 - HIV testing and risk assessment every six months
 - Final follow-up in July 2003

Behavioral Intervention

- 10 individual counseling sessions tailored to participant's pattern of risk
- Quarterly maintenance sessions throughout follow-up
- Underlying Theories
 - motivational interviewing
 - social learning
 - information-motivation-behavior

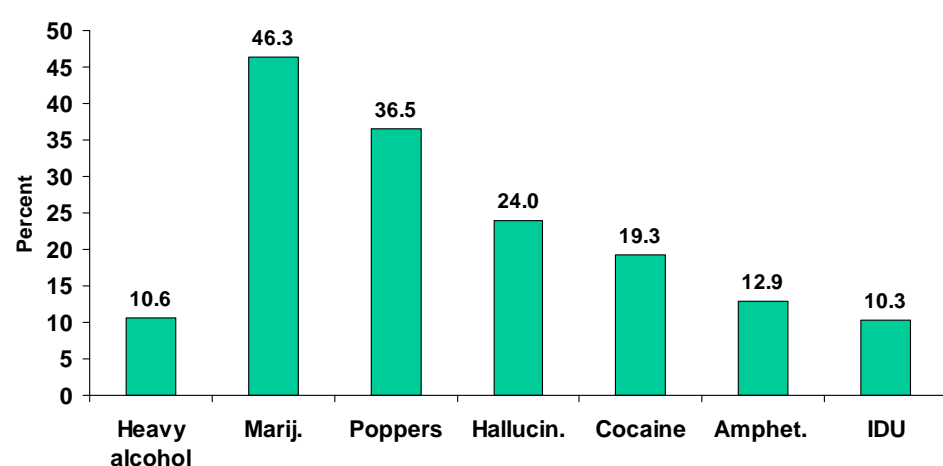
Focus of Sessions

- Identify and address contextual variables: alcohol, substance use; risk environments; social norms, partner types
- Teach individualized risk reduction skills
- Develop lower risk alternative behaviors
- Emphasis on harm reduction & self-efficacy
- Maintenance of lower risk behaviors

Baseline Risk

Alcohol/Drug Use and Risk Behavior

Alcohol and Drug Use in Six Months Prior to Baseline



Sexual Risk Behaviors in Six Months Prior to Baseline

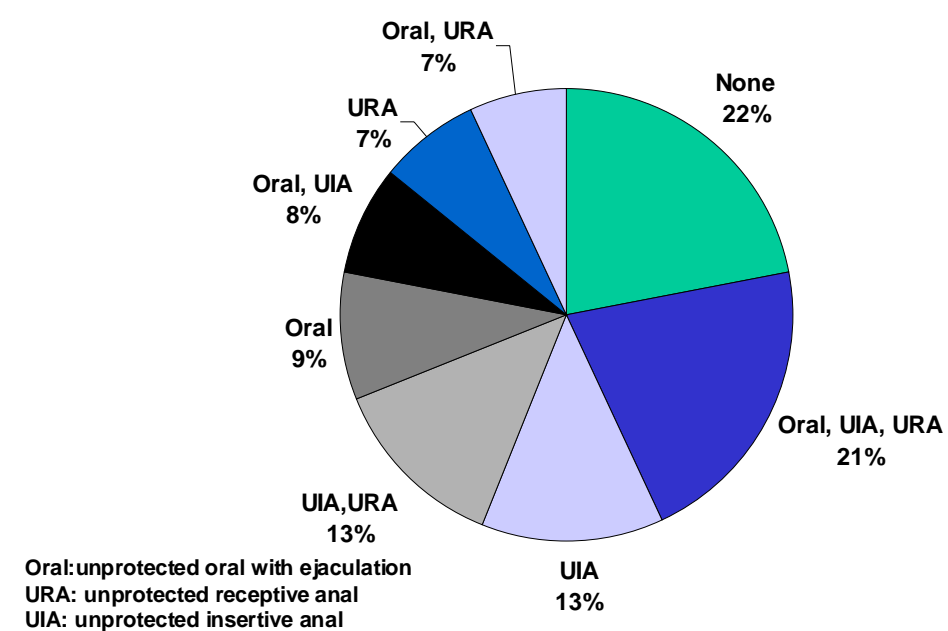
No. of male partners	%
0	1.0
1	7.1
2-5	32.3
6-9	17.5
10+	42.2
Unprotected receptive anal sex (URA)	48.0
Unprotected insertive anal sex (UIA)	54.8

Heavy alcohol use significantly associated with URA and UIA:

	Heavy Alcohol Use		p
	YES	NO	
% URA with HIV + partners	8.4	5.7	.02
% URA with Unknown status partners	32.2	24.1	.0001
% UIA with unknown status partners	38.4	30.9	.001

- Poppers, hallucinogens, sniffed cocaine & amphetamines associated with URA and UIA with HIV+ and unknown status partners (all p<.001)

Many Participants Practice a Combination of Risk Behaviors



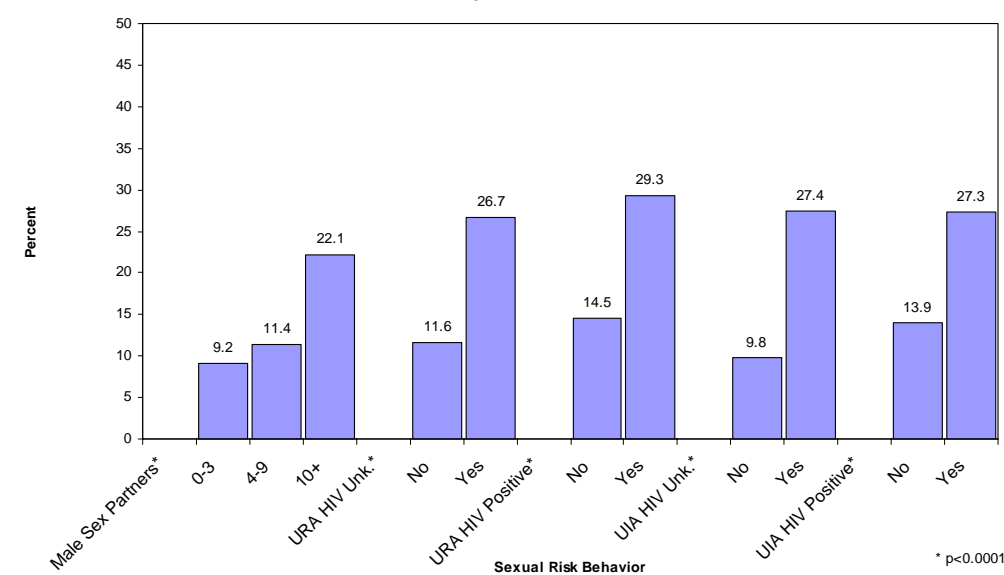
Risky Attitudes, Norms & Skills Percent Scoring High*

	%
Negative attitudes about safer sex	15.3
Difficulty in communication about safer sex	34.5
High risk social norms	17.8
Enjoyment of unsafe behavior	75.2

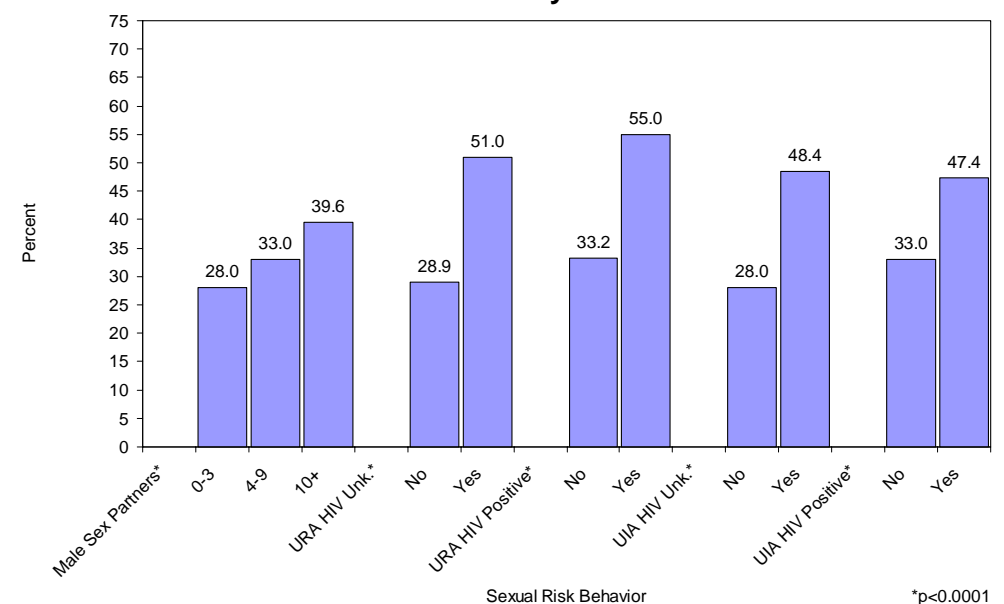
*> = 50% on scale or "enjoy somewhat or very much"

- Scoring high on risky attitudes, norms and skills significantly associated with higher number of male sex partners and URA and URI with HIV+ and unknown status partners.

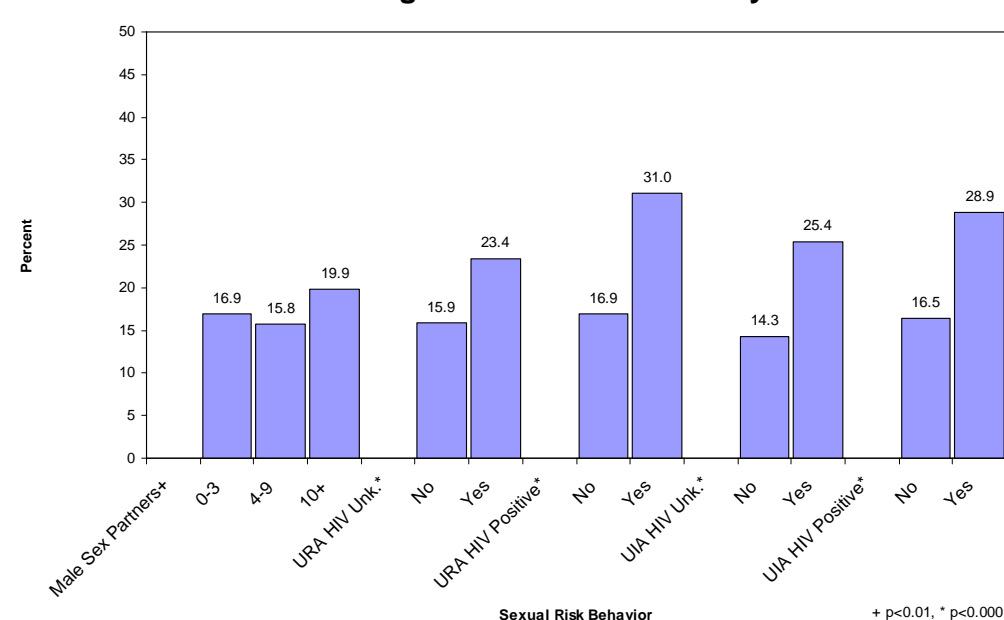
Percent with Negative Attitudes about Safe Sex by Sexual Risk



Percent Having Difficulty in Communicating about safer sex by Sexual Risk



Percent with High Risk Social Norms by Sexual Risk



Summary

- MSM in US cities continue to engage in risk behaviors despite two decades of prevention
- Patterns of risk behavior vary across individuals requiring tailored approaches
- Prevention efforts need to confront attitudes that encourage risk taking
- Special attention should be placed on non-injection drugs and alcohol which are widely used in this population