



## COMMUNITY MAPPING AND RESPONDENT DRIVEN SAMPLING (RDS) AMONG GAY AND BISEXUAL MEN IN VANCOUVER, CANADA

### Importance of this study

- *Respondent Driven Sampling* (RDS) is an important method for reaching 'hard-to-reach' populations such as men who have sex with men (MSM)
- *Formative research* is recommended before implementing an RDS study to define the population of interest, and understand its characteristics and means of access.
- There is no consensus on the most effective qualitative methodologies for conducting formative research
- This study demonstrated how community mapping can be used to identify underlying social network structures and aid in the implementation of RDS

What is an effective method to understand gay men's social networks prior to the implementation of an RDS study?

**Community mapping is an effective formative research methodology for guiding the implementation of RDS among gay and bisexual men.**

### How this study was conducted

- Local community-based organizations were used to recruit community members into 6 Focus Group Discussions and 24 Key Informant Interviews
- Individual community maps were created by participants to conceptualize local social-sexual networks in Vancouver, BC

### What the study found

- Despite the growing use of online networks for gay men to connect, physical spaces are still important factors that structure men's social networks
- Gay men's social networks are demographically diverse, with overlap between various sub-groups  
Substance use preferences differentiate distinct sub-communities of gay and bisexual men in Vancouver

### What this means

- Community mapping is an effective qualitative formative research tool to shed light on underlying network structures and attributes of gay and bisexual men, particularly in urban settings.
- Use of flexible study participation incentives, social media and electronic recruitment strategies, and monitoring of substance use and sexual-social identities are important applications of the rich data community mapping can provide to the implementation of RDS studies among gay and bisexual men.

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# Research Summary



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