



Substance use, sexual behaviour and prevention strategies of Vancouver gay and bisexual men who recently attended group sex events

Importance of this study

- Condomless sex and drug use are frequently reported at sex events, which contribute to elevated risk of HIV/STI infection at these gatherings.
- There is emerging global evidence that some sex event attendees employ various prevention strategies to protect against potential infection.
- There is a need for intervention programming to encourage more attendees to adopt these strategies.
- This study identifies distinct characteristics regarding attendee sexual behaviour and substance use to help inform this programming.

Do recent GBM sex event attendees engage in higher levels of substance use and sexual adventurousness than non-attendees? And do risk reduction strategies also differ between these men?

Group sex events are important in gay and bisexual men's (GBM) sexual cultures, and are also significant from a public health standpoint.

How this study was conducted

- Survey data pertaining to self-reported sexual behavior and substance use were analyzed for Vancouver-based GBM who were enrolled in the Momentum study through respondent-driven sampling.
- Multivariable logistic regression compared sex event attendees to non-attendees.

What the study found

- Attendees reported more use of alcohol and sex drugs (crystal meth, poppers, Viagra) than non-attendees.
- Attendees also reported a higher proclivity to engage in condomless anal sex with sero discordant or unknown HIV status partners as well as engage in sexual pleasure maximization practices (more anal sex partners, fisting, and sex toy use).
- Among attendees, HIV-positive GBM relied more on withdrawal and sero-sorting as HIV-prevention strategies than HIV-negative GBM.
- Among attendees, HIV-negative GBM relied more on treatment as prevention strategies to reduce sexual risk, which included only having sex with HIV-positive men on antiretroviral therapy and with low viral loads.

What this means

- Vancouver area GBM who attend group sex events employ distinctive patterns of substance use, sexual behavior, and HIV/STI prevention strategies.
- Recognizing the importance of sexual pleasure maximization for group sex event attendees must be a central component of future educational and/or intervention programming as it affects what prevention strategies would be accepted and practiced by group sex event attendees.

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