

Serosorting Practices among Injection Drug Users (IDUs) in South Florida

Lisa Metsch, Wei Zhao, Marlene LaLota, Dano Beck,
David Forrest, and Spencer Lieb

2007 National HIV Prevention Conference
Atlanta, GA

MILLER
SCHOOL OF MEDICINE
UNIVERSITY OF MIAMI



Background

- Evidence suggests that sexual risk is increasingly the route of HIV transmission among injection drug users (IDUs)
- Serosorting (selective unprotected sex with partners of the same HIV status) has been identified as a risk reduction strategy among men who have sex with men (MSM)
- Little is known about the serosorting practices of IDUs

National HIV Behavioral Surveillance (NHBS)

■ IDU phase of NHBS

- One of three risk groups studied every three years to assess HIV risk behaviors, testing behaviors, and use of prevention services

■ Cross-sectional data from the Miami and Ft. Lauderdale sites

■ Respondent driven sampling: modified chain referral method used to recruit 934 IDUs in 2005/2006

- 665 men and 269 women

Characteristics of Respondent Driven Sampling (RDS)

- Use of coupon
- Peer recruitment, with quota
- Dual incentive structure
- Final sample independent of “seeds” that began the sample
- Can make estimates to broader population

NHBS Sites, 2005



IDU Participants

- Eligibility included being over 18 years of age and resident of MSA
- Injected drugs (non-prescription) within past 12 months
- Has either...
 - Physical evidence of recent injection (fresh track marks, scabs, or abscesses)
 - Knowledge of drug preparation, injection, and needles and syringes

IDU Participants

- Mean age = 43 years
- 71% male, 29% female
- 29% white, non-Hispanic, 50% black non-Hispanic, 17% Hispanic, 3% other
- 67% have at least high school education
- 51% have total annual income <\$5,0000
- 89% born in U.S.
- 57% homeless
- 48% incarcerated in the past 12 months
- 96% report having been HIV tested in their lifetimes, and 62% report having been HIV tested in the past 12 months

Psychosocial Issues of IDU Sample

- 73% of sample is depressed (CES-D 10 scale)
- 16% self-report being HIV-positive
- 92% report having injected heroin, 63% injected speedball, 53% cocaine in past 12 months
- 63% report non-injection use of crack cocaine, and 23% report injecting crack cocaine in past 12 months
- Most are long-term injectors
 - 83% over 5 years
 - Median years of injection is 20
- 35% of sample reported having participated in drug treatment in past 12 months

Sexual Risk Behaviors Among IDUs

- **Over half the men (58%) report having more than 1 female sex partner during the past 12 months**
 - Median number of partners is 3
- **Over half of the women (53%) report having more than 1 male sex partner during the past 12 months**
 - Median number of partners is 2

Sexual Risk Behaviors – Male IDUs at Last Sex Act

- 50% of men report having a main female sex partner
 - 72% of these men report having unprotected vaginal sex with their main female partner at last sex act
- 76% of men report having a casual female sex partner
 - 45% of these men report having unprotected vaginal sex with their casual female partner at last sex act

Sexual Risk Behaviors – Female IDUs at Last Sex Act

- 59% of women report having a main male sex partner
 - 74% of these women report having unprotected vaginal sex with their main male partner at last sex act
- 69% of women report having a casual male sex partner
 - 32% of these women report having unprotected vaginal sex with their casual male partner at last sex act

Serosorting Practices Among IDUs

- **Multiple logistic regression analyses conducted to examine whether seroconcordant status (HIV+ to HIV+ or HIV- to HIV- vs. otherwise) was related to unprotected sex for:**
 - **males w/ main female partners**
 - **males w/ casual female partners**
 - **females w/ main male partners**
 - **females w/ casual male partner**
- **Dependent variable: reported unprotected vaginal and/or anal sex at last sex act**
- **Adjusted: demographics, drug/alcohol use in past 12 months, having an STD in the past 12 months, and IDU risk behaviors**

Serosorting Practices Among IDUs

- **Serosorting was only evident among men with their last main female partner**
 - Men were more likely to report unprotected sex with their last main partner of the same serostatus (both partners HIV positive or HIV negative) than with their last main partner of different serostatus (adjusted odds ratio [AOR] 1.87; 95% CI, 1.33, 3.09)
- **Serosorting was not identified among men with their last casual female partners or among women with their last main or casual partners**

Other Associations with Unprotected Sex

- **Having shared IDU equipment in the past 12 months was associated with unprotected sex for:**
 - **Females w/ last main male partner (AOR 3.27; 95% CI, 1.49, 7.18)**
 - **Males w/ last main female partner (AOR 2.03; 95% CI, 1.23, 3.34)**
 - **Males w/ last casual female partner (AOR 3.25; 95% CI, 2.01, 5.23)**
- **Having had an STD in the past 12 months (AOR 2.24; 95% CI, 1.28, 3.92) was also associated with unprotected sex for men and their last casual female partner**

Limitations

- Data are still preliminary
- Data are predominantly self-report and subject to recall bias
- Findings are based on unweighted data

Implications

- There is evidence of serosorting among this sample of IDU men with their last main female partner
- Women IDUs do not appear to be using serosorting strategies and further research is needed to better understand this observation
- Sexual risk behaviors in this sample of IDUs are high and warrant the need for continued intervention
- Intervention messages regarding serosorting should be made cautiously because persons may not always be aware of their HIV status and/or disclose their status when known

THANK YOU!

**A BIG THANK YOU TO THE
IDU BEHAVIORAL SURVEILLANCE TEAM FOR
THEIR OUTSTANDING WORK!**

David Forrest

Roxana Bell

Emelina Martinez

Cristobal Plaza

Cheryl Riles

Virginia Locascio

Barbara Escarra

Richard Walker

Dawn Lavoit

Renee Llanusa-Cestero

Contact Information

Dano Beck, M.S.W.
Behavioral Surveillance
Coordinator
Bureau of HIV/AIDS
Florida Department of Health

Dano_Beck@doh.state.fl.us

David Forrest, Ph.D.
Field Operations Director
University of Miami
Dept. of Epidemiology &
Public Health

DForrest@med.miami.edu

www.floridashealth.com/Disease_ctrl/aids/index.html

