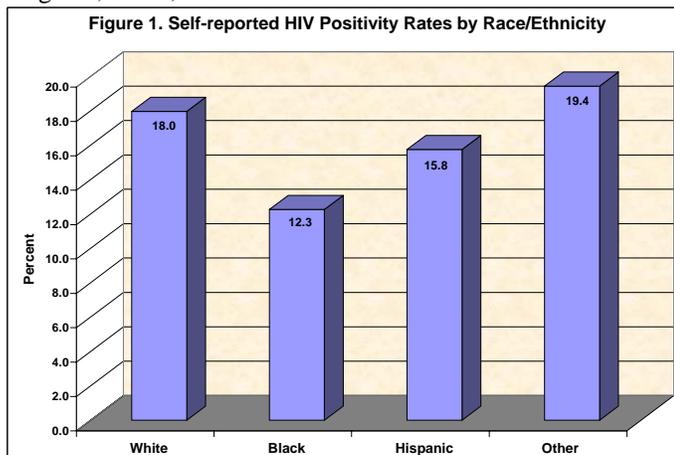


## National HIV Behavioral Surveillance (NHBS) – MSM Cycle Characteristics of men who reported being HIV infected

The Florida Department of Health, Bureau of HIV/AIDS was funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to develop and implement a surveillance system to monitor behaviors that place people at risk for HIV infection. This system is called the National HIV Behavioral Surveillance System (NHBS). NHBS consists of a repeated, cross-sectional survey of men who have sex with men (MSM), injecting drug users (IDU), and heterosexuals at risk for HIV infection (HET) from twenty-five metropolitan statistical areas (MSAs). The MSAs were selected based on high AIDS prevalence rates. NHBS was initiated to help state and local health departments establish and maintain a surveillance system to monitor selected behaviors and access to prevention services among groups at highest risk for HIV infection. The overarching goal of NHBS is to help direct and evaluate local and national prevention efforts by identifying the prevalence and trends of sexual and drug-use risk behaviors among MSM, IDUs, and HET, and their exposure to and utilization of HIV testing and other prevention services funded by the CDC, state, and local health departments.

The bureau is collaborating with the CDC and the University of Miami to conduct NHBS activities in Miami-Dade and Broward counties. The project is known locally as ACXION (Assessing Characteristics of population X In ON-going surveillance). NHBS activities are being implemented in multiple cycles; cycles will be repeated over time such that data are collected from any given risk group every three years. Individuals who agree to participate undergo about a 25-minute, anonymous interview. In addition to the standard NHBS questionnaire, questions tailored to South Florida are asked. Examples of local questions used in Florida include questions on crystal methamphetamine use, use of the Internet for high-risk behaviors, depression, and social support.

During the first cycle of data collection (January 2004 - April 2005), surveillance activities focused on MSM. In 2004, MSM accounted for 64% of the reported male HIV cases (regardless of AIDS status) in Florida. Another 4% of all reported HIV infections among men were classified into the MSM/IDU risk category. NHBS-MSM is a survey of men who attend MSM-identified venues within locally defined geographic areas. In Miami-Dade and Broward counties, 1,540 MSM (defined as men who had one or more male sex partners in the past twelve months) participated in NHBS. Participants were asked questions regarding: race/ethnicity, age, history of drug-use, STDs, and sexual behaviors.



There were 1,453 MSM who responded to the survey question, "What was the result of your most recent HIV test?" The responses of those surveyed showed that 234 (16.1%) were positive, 1172 (80.7%) were negative, and 47 (3.2%) did not know their status. By race/ethnicity, 18.0% of the non-Hispanic whites and 19.4% of those classified as "other" self-reported being HIV positive (see Figure 1). Multiple logistic regression found that MSM over age 30 were more likely to be HIV positive. The majority of the self-reported HIV+ MSM reported that they received their first positive test result in either a private doctor's office (34.6%) or a public health clinic (29.9%). Most men who reported being HIV positive had private insurance (88.5%) and had taken antiretroviral medication (83.3%).

Data on drug-use revealed MSM methamphetamine users were more likely to self-report as HIV positive. The self reported positivity rate among MSM non-methamphetamine users was 14% compared to 30% among MSM who used methamphetamine. Of the 65 self reported HIV+ MSM who indicated using methamphetamines in the past 12 months, 57 of them were high /buzzed on the drug during sex. High positivity rates were associated with being diagnosed with syphilis (25.4%) and/or gonorrhea (26.0%) in the previous 12 months, and ever being diagnosed with hepatitis B (38.3%) and/or hepatitis C (51.9%).

NHBS participants were asked about their main and non-main sexual partners in the previous 12 months. Eighty-eight (37.6%) of the self reported HIV+ MSM indicated having more than 10 sexual partners in the previous year (see Figure 2 for HIV positivity rates). Of the 143 MSM who reported having unprotected anal sex with a non-main partner in the previous 12 months, 56 (39.2%) were self reported HIV +. Of the 56 MSM who reported having unprotected vaginal/anal sex with a main or non-main female partner, 10.7% were self reported HIV+.

Findings from NHBS will be used to enhance understanding of risk and testing behaviors, and to develop and evaluate HIV prevention programs that provide services to MSM.

