



Project C.O.A.C.H: Counseling Others about Contacts and exposures with HIV

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BACKGROUND

- Over 20% of HIV-infected people are unaware of their serostatus.
- Partner services (PS) notifies sexual and needle-sharing partners of exposure to disease.
- Rate of newly diagnosed HIV infections among tested partners ranges from 10-30%.
- Referral rates for PS are suboptimal.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- Why are referral rates of PS suboptimal?
- What are the perspectives and experiences with PS among:
 - Men who have Sex with Men (MSM);
 - Medical Case Managers (MCM);
 - Disease Intervention Specialists (DIS)?

FINDINGS

- Barriers to PS are multi-factorial:
 - Trusting relationships across disciplines and with clients are fundamental but challenged by stigma associated with HIV and sexual orientation;
 - Competing agendas of a vulnerable population (housing, food) deprioritize PS;
 - Inadequate knowledge of PS and referral process among MSM, MCM and other health care providers.

METHODS AND SAMPLE

- In-depth interviews and focus groups guided by community-based participatory research principles.
- Multidisciplinary coding team using constant comparison method for qualitative data analysis.

Men who Have Sex with Men

In-Depth Interview
n=18

Medical Case Managers

Focus Group
n=14

Disease Intervention Specialists

In-Depth Interview
n=7

ILLUSTRATIVE QUOTATIONS

Stigma and Fears of Rejection

"It's easier for me to talk about my drugs and drinking than to talk about being gay. I can talk about drinking and drugging all day."

Managing Personal Judgment

"What works best for me is to remind myself that my common sense is different from someone else's.. I have to kind of try to hold back judgment...that's the really hard part."

Direct Personal Communication

"[If] you talk down to them, of course, you're not going to get anywhere. If you talk above them, you're not going to get anywhere either."

RECOMMENDATIONS

PROMOTE DISCLOSURE AND PS

- PS Awareness Campaign targeting MSM, MCM and health care providers;
- Support efforts to destigmatize HIV and homosexuality.

FOSTER MULTIDISCIPLINARY TEAM APPROACH

- Integrate DIS into clinical services;
- Trainings on cultural competency, including interview skills for MSM.

IDEAL PS PROCESS

MSM

MCM

DIS

