

Body Image and Anonymous Sex among Men who have Sex with Men

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Background

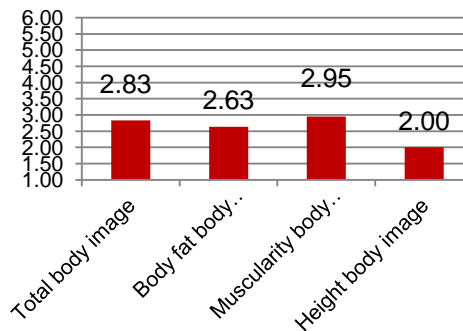
- Men who have sex with men (MSM) have poorer body image than heterosexual men
- Reports in women link body image and sexual behavior, but the relationship is less studied among MSM
- This is first analysis, to our knowledge, to examine relationship between body image and anonymous sex among MSM
- Understanding how body image is associated with sexual behaviors of MSM inform future interventions

Methods

- Cross-sectional study of MSM presenting to urban, public STD clinic in the midwestern United States (Data collected 7/31/12 – 10/31/13)
- Eligibility:
 - 18 years or older
 - Read and speak English
 - Report anal sex with a man within the past year
- Body image and behavioral data collected via self-administered survey on tablet computer
- Body image assessed using Male Body Attitudes Scale (MBAS)
 - Validated scale that produces a total score and muscularity, body fat, and height subscores
 - Scores have potential range of 1 to 6; higher scores indicate poorer body image
- Anonymous sex defined as sex with a partner without knowing his/her name.
- Modified Poisson regression used to compute unadjusted and adjusted associations between body image and anonymous sex in the last 3 months.

Results

Median body image scores among MSM (n=103)



Sample Characteristics (n=103)

- Median age: 26 years (interquartile range (IQR): 22-35)
- 70% had some college or higher education
- Approximately half were white (53%)
- 73% were employed at least part-time
- 74% identified as gay/homosexual and 15% identified as bisexual
- 51% had healthy BMI, 7% were underweight, and 41% were overweight or obese
- 19% of participants knew they were HIV-positive at time of interview
- 29% reported anonymous sex in the past three months

Table. Unadjusted (u) and adjusted (a) prevalence ratios (PR) for the relationship between body image and recent anonymous sex

Body Image	uPR	95% CI
Total body image score	1.28	0.96, 1.69
Body fat subscore	1.24	1.02, 1.50
Muscularity subscore	1.05	0.82, 1.35
Height subscore	1.02	0.83, 1.26
	aPR*	95% CI
Body fat subscore	1.28	1.02, 2.03

*Adjusted for age, race, muscularity subscore, and height subscore

Conclusions

- Men with poorer body fat body image were significantly more likely to report anonymous sex in the past three months
- Anonymous sex in the past three months was not significantly associated with total body image, muscularity body image, or height body image
- Further study is warranted to understand the temporality of the relationship between body fat body image and anonymous sex
- Future research should explore the association between body image and other specific risky sexual behaviors among MSM

Acknowledgements

This project was supported by the Ohio State University Center for Clinical and Translational Science (OSU CCTS). The OSU CCTS is supported by the National Center for Research Resources, Grant UL1RR025755, and is now at the National Center for Advancing Translational Sciences, Grant 8UL1TR000090-05. The content is solely the responsibility of the authors and does not necessarily represent the official views of the National Center for Advancing Translational Sciences or the National Institutes of Health.

The authors thank Mysheika Williams Roberts, Jose Bazan, and the Division of Infectious Diseases at The Wexner Medical Center at Ohio State University for their support of this project. The authors thank Alexandra Medoro, Aliza Spaeth-Cook, Angela Palmer-Wackerly, Chelsea Muyskens, Courtney Maierhofer, Julie Anderson, Laura Drew, Samantha Lahey, and Tiffany Wang for their assistance with data collection.

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