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 musculature, 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)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Total body image</th>
<th>Body fat body image</th>
<th>Muscularity body image</th>
<th>Height body image</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.83</td>
<td>2.63</td>
<td>2.95</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sample Characteristics (n=103)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Median: 26 years (Interquartile range (IQR): 22-35)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>70% had some college or higher education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment</td>
<td>73% were employed at least part-time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BMI</td>
<td>74% identified as gay/homosexual and 15% identified as bisexual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weight</td>
<td>51% had healthy BMI, 7% were underweight, and 41% were overweight or obese</td>
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<tr>
<td>HIV status</td>
<td>19% of participants knew they were HIV-positive at the time of interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anonymous sex</td>
<td>29% reported anonymous sex in the past three months</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

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, musculature 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

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