



PATTERNS OF HIV BEHAVIORS AMONG COLLEGE STUDENT LET'S STOP HIV TOGETHER-PROTECT NOT REGRET



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PURPOSE

This research aimed to investigate patterns of preventive HIV behaviors among the LGBT community. Specifically, the project sought to understand practices of condom use in committed and non committed relationships between LGBT partners. Condoms are most effective in preventing HIV transmission. This study's results could develop interventions that would reduce the incidence and prevalence of HIV and increase the uptake of HIV testing and PrEP use.

DEMOGRAPHIC

The target demographic of this research project was African American college-age students, 18-24, from a local college in the Memphis Shelby County community. At least one-half (50%) of all new HIV infections in the US were among college students under age twenty-five.



METHODS

The research methods and procedures were designed to gain valuable perceptions about HIV knowledge, awareness, access to resources and services to reduce rates of new cases of HIV, reduce the number of individuals living with HIV, and increase the uptake of HIV testing and use of PrEP.

The Committee of HIV researchers, stakeholders, and students developed the qualitative survey for the study, designed to gain knowledge and attitudes about the difference in the use of condoms among committed and non-committed LGBT partners and the levels of confidence and skills to discuss HIV status, number of partners, and testing habits.

A toolkit described the project's purpose, methods, and other research information for students and the community. Students received an email with a flyer that informed students about the research project and the survey. Flyers, emails, social media, and personal conversations encouraged students to participate in the study. Participants signed a consent form for the IRB-approved research project and received a ten-dollar electronic gift card for completing the survey..

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

While the data collection is not complete at this time, the expected outcomes are:

1. More students would be familiar with the campus locations of free condoms to practice safe sex on campus.
2. Students would not be comfortable without knowing their HIV status,
3. Students would believe that at-home self-testing for HIV would be easier, private, and comfortable than testing at a clinic or an event.

STUDENT LESSONS LEARNED

Lessons learned from this project were:

- More heterosexual students participated in taking the survey than members of the LGBT community.
- The LGBT participants, in a previous research project, had more knowledge about HIV than about intimate partners violence.
- Partners must discuss HIV status because flu-like symptoms may go unnoticed in the acute HIV infection stage.

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