

HIV and Men who have Sex with Men in DC

The District of Columbia faces many problems associated with HIV/AIDS as well as its transmission. We know that at least 3% of the population over the age of 12 is living with HIV/AIDS¹. Some estimates put that number as high as 5%.

HIV and Men Who Have Sex with Men (MSM) in the District

MSM (Men Who Have Sex with Men) make up a large portion of the people living with HIV in DC. In 2008, 16,513 people in DC were living with HIV, and of those, 40% (6,722) were MSM². Of two reports, an estimated 14%-19% of MSM in DC are living with HIV². MSM over the age of 30 were more likely to be HIV-positive, and men of color were more likely overall to be HIV-positive², with the highest instances being among MSM between the ages of 20 and 49¹.

HIV Testing Among MSM

- More than 40% of MSM who tested positive for HIV were previously unaware of their status.
- MSM over the age of 29 were not likely to be offered an HIV test by health care providers, despite being the group more likely to be HIV-positive².
- 70% of MSM had been tested for HIV in the past 12 months².
- 71% of MSM under the age of 29 had been previously tested for HIV in the past 12 months, whereas only 62% of MSM over the age of 29 had been tested in the same period².

Behaviors of MSM

- More than one-third of MSM did not know the HIV-status of their last partner².
- Over 40% of MSM did not use condoms the last time they had sex².
- MSM under the age of 29 who have receptive anal sex (“bottoms”) were less likely to use condoms².
- MSM over the age of 29 who have insertive anal sex (“tops”) were less likely to use condoms².
- Two-thirds of MSM had a partner previously that they defined as “casual”².
- More than one-third of MSM had reported using the Internet to find a sex partner in the past three months. MSM that found a sex partner online were more likely to use a condom, compared to all partners².

African-American MSM

- The majority of African-American MSM that are living with HIV are between the ages of 30 and 39. This is the largest group of MSM living with HIV¹.
- 24.8% of African-American MSM that tested positive were under the age of 30, as compared to the 16.5% of their white counterparts¹.
- Despite these statistics, men of color were 50% more likely to use a condom than white men².

- African-American MSM in the District make up 58% of MSM living with HIV in the district, higher than the national average of 29%¹.

Young MSM

MSM between the ages of 13 and 29 made up 22.5% of MSM living with HIV in the District¹.

Senior MSM

MSM over the age of 50 made up 10.1% of MSM living with HIV in the District¹.

In Summary

HIV among MSM affects many sub-groups, including men of color, younger men, and even seniors. With the information provided by studies about HIV among MSM in the District of Columbia, we have the opportunity to help educate MSM to change their behaviors, and to help groups and health care providers reach the necessary demographics to get them tested or give them tools of prevention. Health care providers can be reminded to make sure that MSM over 30 that they see are offered regular HIV testing. MSM more likely to participate in unprotected sex can be reached and educated and provided with condoms, or with access to them.

-
1. District of Columbia HIV/AIDS Epidemiology Update 2008.
http://thedccenter.org/docs/2011/dc_hiv-aids_2008_updatereport.pdf
 2. HIV Behavior Study Series #2, HAHSTA, DC Department of Health
http://thedccenter.org/docs/2011/msm_in_dc_hahsta_behavior_study_2010.pdf