

**SHAPING ATTITUDES
CHALLENGING INJUSTICE
CHANGING LIVES**

June 2009

**TRANSFORMING
THE UK'S
RESPONSE
TO HIV**



Partnership Patterns and HIV Transmission among MSM

Aims

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Aims:

- **To discuss the contribution of partnership patterns among MSM to rates of HIV transmission in the UK**
- **To consider what implications, if any, there are for current HIV prevention strategies**

UNAIDS, prevention and partner numbers

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- ⌘ UNAIDS 'Intensifying HIV Prevention' documents
- ⌘ 'In the context of HIV, risk is defined as the probability that a person may acquire HIV infection. Certain behaviours create, enhance and perpetuate such risk (UNAIDS, 1998). These include behaviours such as injecting drug use, unprotected casual sex, and multiple concurrent long term sexual partners with low and inconsistent condom use (UNAIDS, 2007)'
- ⌘ The Lancet 'HIV Prevention' special issue August 2008: 'reduction in partner numbers' as key element in 'combination prevention'

'The knowledge, the will and the power'

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-  'The knowledge, the will and the power' – A plan of action to meet the HIV prevention needs of Africans living in England March 2008.
-  'Target Group 3: .. Priority group for HIV prevention ... are people with multiple sexual partners'. 'NAHIP partners think it is feasible and ethical to influence people to reduce the frequency with which they have intercourse with new partners, particularly if they are already in a sexual relationship'
-  Not explicitly translated in the document into an 'HIV prevention aim'
-  KWP Handbook will identify one-to-one interventions as appropriate place for discussion on partner numbers

'Making it count'

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-  'Making it count' – a 'framework to reduce the incidence of HIV infection during sex between men' 3rd edition October 2003
-  3.5.8: recognition that, amongst other factors, those MSM with more sexual partners are more likely to engage in sdUAI.
-  'We recognise that altering these is feasible. However, these are human rights, so we are **not** trying to:
 -  Stop men having sex;
 -  Change where men live;
 -  Change who they have sex with; or
 -  Change how many people they have sex with or how often.'

Health Protection Agency

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-  'Sexually Transmitted Infections and Men who have Sex with Men in the UK: 2008 Report
-  Ends with 'Sexual health messages for men who have sex with men (MSM)
-  'Have fewer sexual partners, and avoid overlapping or concurrent sexual partnerships'

Some NAT principles

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-  There is no single 'magic bullet' or easy answer to the challenge of HIV prevention among MSM
-  The human rights of MSM, and in that context addressing and combating homophobia and heterosexism, must be central to MSM health promotion
-  'I have a right to know about behavioural strategies which may reduce my risk of acquiring HIV infection' – part of the right to healthcare and to universal access to prevention
-  Evidence must inform our prevention efforts

Some questions

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-  How do partnership patterns relate to HIV risk? Do we have a consensus on the 'science'? Do we have an agreed terminology?
-  Do we know of interventions amongst MSM that have attempted to change partnership patterns? And with what result?
-  How do population-level and individual-level interventions relate to each other when considering this issue?
-  Should we be talking more widely about STIs, not just HIV?
-  Is it possible to deliver interventions around partner numbers, without feeding homophobia?



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