

ASSOCIATIONS BETWEEN MULTIPLE TYPES OF STIGMA AND DISCRIMINATION AND SEXUAL RISK BEHAVIOR AMONG YOUNG BLACK MEN WHO HAVE SEX WITH MEN AND TRANSGENDER WOMEN IN THE UNITED STATES

AUTHORS: Sara LeGrand, Ph.D, Kathryn Muessig, Ph.D, Seul Ki Choi, MPH, Karina Soni, Helene Kirchke-Schwartz, Lisa Hightow-Weidman, MD, MPH

Background: In the United States, young, black men who have sex with men and transgender women (YBMSM/TW) are the only populations with increasing HIV incidence. Stigma and discrimination related to sexuality, race, and HIV contribute to this health disparity by influencing risk factors for primary and secondary HIV transmission and hindering prevention, testing, and treatment.

Methods: healthMpowerment.org (HMP) is a mobile-phone-optimized, Internet-based intervention designed to reduce sexual risk behaviors among HIV-positive and HIV-negative YBMSM/TW. Baseline data from 474 HMP randomized controlled trial participants were analyzed to determine bivariate and multivariate associations between stigma and discrimination related to sexuality, race and HIV and one or more episodes of unprotected anal intercourse (UAI) in the last 3 months.

Results: Participants' mean age was 24.3. Most identified as gay (65.4%) or bisexual (18.1%). Others identified as queer (1.5%), transgender (1.9%), questioning (2.1%), straight (1.7%), and other (9.3%). The majority reported negative or unknown HIV status (60.5%) vs. positive HIV status (39.5%). Overall, 66.1% reported at least one episode of UAI in the last 3 months. UAI did not vary significantly by HIV status. In bivariate analyses of those who reported HIV-negative/unknown status, higher levels of perceived HIV stigma and perceived homophobia were marginally associated with UAI ($p=0.07$ and $p=0.09$, respectively). The relationship between experienced racial discrimination and UAI was significant ($p<0.01$). In multivariate analysis, racial discrimination was associated with a greater likelihood of UAI (OR 1.18; CI 1.03-1.34) after controlling for age, education and income. For HIV-positive participants, higher levels of experienced HIV discrimination ($p=0.02$), perceived HIV discrimination ($p<0.01$), perceived HIV stigma ($p=0.02$) and racial discrimination ($p=0.02$) were associated with UAI in bivariate analyses. Experienced sexual minority stigma was marginally associated with UAI ($p=0.06$). In multivariate analysis controlling for age, education and income, greater perceived HIV discrimination was associated with increased likelihood of UAI although the relationship was only marginally significant (OR 1.07; CI 0.99-1.14).

Discussion: YBMSM/TW experienced multiple, intersecting types of stigma and discrimination. Examining the unique effects of these factors on UAI can identify priority areas for structural and individual-level interventions to help reduce risk of HIV transmission among this population.

✉
🚫 152
✅
💎
🛒
LOGOUT

MPower YOURSELF

TOOLS FOR HEALTH

TESTING & CARE RESOURCES

ASK DR. W



DESCRIPTION OF MEASURES

HIV STIGMA AND DISCRIMINATION

HIV stigma and discrimination were measured using Steward et al.'s HIV stigma model:

- Experienced discrimination (enacted stigma) measured HIV-positive individuals' experiences of discriminatory acts due to HIV infection ($\alpha = 0.84$).
- Internalized stigma measured the extent to which an HIV-positive individual believed they should be treated in a discriminatory manner or a target of stigma ($\alpha = 0.92$).
- Perceived stigma (felt-normative stigma) measured individuals' perceptions of the prevalence of HIV stigmatizing attitudes in their community ($\alpha = 0.95$).
- Perceived discrimination (vicarious stigma) measured the frequency with which participants heard stories about discriminatory acts directed at HIV-positive individuals ($\alpha = 0.91$).

SEXUAL MINORITY STIGMA AND DISCRIMINATION

Three scales were used to measure experienced sexual minority discrimination, internalized sexual minority stigma and perceived sexual minority stigma.

- The Multiple Discrimination Scale (MDS) was used to measure interpersonal, institutional and violent forms of experienced sexual minority discrimination ($\alpha = 0.88$).
- The 5-item Revised Internalized Homophobia Scale (IHP-R) was used to assess internalized sexual minority stigma ($\alpha=0.87$).
- Perceived sexual minority stigma items were adapted from Hatzenbuehler et al.'s study of minority stress predictors of HIV risk behavior, substance use and depressive symptoms among gay men.

RACIAL DISCRIMINATION

The Race subscale of the MDS was used to assess experienced discrimination due to race/ethnicity ($\alpha = 0.88$).

HIV+ RACIAL DISCRIMINATION



HIV STIGMA

- Experienced Discrimination
- Internalized Stigma
- Perceived Stigma
- Perceived Discrimination

SEXUAL MINORITY STIGMA

- Experienced Discrimination
- Internalized Stigma
- Perceived Stigma

Associations between stigma and UAI among HIV negative individuals n = 235

	Bivariate	Multivariate
Perceived Discrimination	1.02 (0.98, 1.06)	1.00 (0.96, 1.04)
Perceived Homophobia	1.05 (0.99, 1.12)	1.03 (0.97, 1.10)
Racism	1.20(1.06, 1.36)**	1.18 (1.03, 1.34)*
Age	1.03 (0.94, 1.12)	0.99 (0.90, 1.08)
Education		
Degree in prof/tech school/college/more than college	1.00	1.00
High school grad/GED to some prof/tech school or college	0.89 (0.49, 1.63)	1.24 (0.64, 2.42)
Some high school or less	0.61 (0.21, 1.76)	0.87 (0.27, 2.84)
Income		
<\$10,999	1.00	1.00
\$11,000-20,999	1.68 (0.78, 3.63)	1.59 (0.79, 3.57)
\$21,000-30,999	1.50 (0.70, 3.19)	1.48 (0.65, 3.39)
\$31,000 or more	2.32 (1.01, 5.34)	2.26 (0.90, 5.68)

$p<0.05^*$, $p<0.01^{**}$, $p<0.001^{***}$

HIV- RACIAL DISCRIMINATION



HIV STIGMA

- Perceived Stigma
- Perceived Discrimination

SEXUAL MINORITY STIGMA

- Experienced Discrimination
- Internalized Stigma
- Perceived Stigma

Associations between stigma and UAI among HIV positive individuals n = 154

	Bivariate	Multivariate
Experienced Discrimination	1.26 (1.04, 1.52)*	1.15 (0.9, 1.14)
Perceived Discrimination	1.09(1.04, 1.15)***	1.07(1.00, 1.14)
Experienced Stigma	1.13 (1.00, 1.29)	0.98 (0.80, 1.20)
Perceived Stigma	1.05 (1.01, 1.09)*	1.01 (0.96, 1.06)
Perceived Homophobia	1.06 (0.98, 1.14)	1.01 (0.92, 1.11)
Racism	1.19 (1.03, 1.38)*	1.05 (0.85, 1.30)
Age	1.15 (1.03, 1.29)*	1.15 (1.01, 1.31)*
Education		
Degree in prof/tech school/college/more than college	1.00	1.00
High school grad/GED to some prof/tech school or college	0.45 (0.16, 1.28)	0.50 (0.16, 1.58)
Some high school or less	0.23 (0.05, 0.95)	0.18 (0.03, 0.99)
Income		
<\$10,999	1.00	1.00
\$11,000-20,999	1.16 (0.49, 2.78)	0.93 (0.35, 2.51)
\$21,000-30,999	1.23 (0.43, 3.54)	0.69 (0.20, 2.38)
\$31,000 or more	1.37 (0.45, 4.22)	0.57 (0.15, 2.15)

$p<0.05^*$, $p<0.01^{**}$, $p<0.001^{***}$