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C-TALK: HIV Prevention for Men Who Have Sex with Men and Who Use Stimulants

Use of stimulant drugs such as methamphetamine, crack cocaine, and Ecstasy greatly increases the risk of HIV among men who have sex with men (MSM). We recently completed a study of *C-TALK*, a program for men who have sex with men and who use stimulant drugs. The program or intervention uses techniques that are similar to those used in group therapy. The objectives of our research were to reduce drug use, reduce risky sexual behavior and create support networks among participants in our study.

Results:

- 70 men attended at least one group session. The average age was 44 years old; 72% of the men were African American, 6% were Latino, 13% white and 9% were from other groups.
- 78% of the men shared that they were HIV positive.
- Twelve weeks after the groups, the men reported that they had unprotected anal sex (UAI) and UAI while using stimulants significantly less often.
- The number of men who reported heavy use of stimulants (more than a few times/month) went down from 36% to 6%.
- Men who participated said that they were less likely to have sex without considering the consequences and that they were less lonely.

Conclusion:

- This evaluation did not include a comparison to another group that did not participate in the program (control group) but it does suggest that a program that uses group therapy and provides support in a community of men who have similar lifestyles may reduce risky behavior and substance use. Men also report they are more likely to think about their choices and were less lonely, implying better mental health.

For additional information about the findings please contact Thomas Lyons at thlyons@uic.edu

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