

Venue-based Sampling of Young Men who have Sex with Men

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Summary

CITY is a randomized trial of a community-level intervention designed to promote safer sex practices in young men who have sex with men (YMSM). To evaluate the intervention, we survey a cross-sectional, representative sample of YMSM in each of our thirteen study communities during four summers. Effective access by project staff to YMSM was assured through a two-stage time-space sampling protocol (Kalton & Anderson 1986). The protocol is an adaptation of methods used to generate a sample to estimate HIV seroprevalence among YMSM (Mackellar, Valleroy, Karon, et al. 1996). Before and during each survey wave in a community, a dynamic sampling frame was constructed of venues, venue-specific days and times within days (VDTs) when YMSM are likely to attend. Venues are identified through ethnographic methods. Optimal VDTs were determined through enumerations of eligible venue attendees. VDTs were also categorized as "large" or "small" attendance, with cut-points varying by community. Each month, survey enrollment and new enumeration data were used to update the sampling frame. The first stage sample is a random selection of VDTs stratified by size. The selected VDTs are used to construct a 'survey event' calendar. In addition, up to three scheduled once-a-summer events can replace "large" VDTs. The second stage sample is collected during the survey events; interviewers visit the chosen venue and follow a systematic protocol to enroll eligible YMSM who visit during the time period (Stueve, O'Donnell, Duran, et al. 2001, Muhib, Lin, Stueve, et al. 2001).

Surveys were conducted at a wide variety of venues and events. Approximately 250 young men will have been surveyed in each community

each year. To be eligible for the interview, a respondent had to be between 15 and 25 years of age, a resident of the community (defined by zip codes), and to have had sex with another man in the past year. For all but four communities, we also imposed a race or ethnicity requirement. Enrollment success depends on the ability of survey staff to intercept venue attendees. The first two waves resulted in 2621 and 3038 completed, usable interviews. The third wave was completed as of September 30, 2001. In each of the first two waves, 31% of interviews with Latino men were completed in Spanish. In wave 1, 32% of participants identify as Latino, 28% as African-American, 22% as Caucasian, 12% as Asian or Pacific Islander, .5% as Native American, 2.3% as more than one race, 2% declined to identify.

The venue-based sampling protocol allows researchers to detect and accommodate differences in communities and changes over time and is easy to replicate. Our use of the protocol has resulted in one of the largest samples of young men who have sex with men of color.

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