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## Use of Social Media to Engage Sexual and Gender Minority Youth of Color in HIV and Substance Use Prevention and Treatment

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### Outline

- I. Information on HIV/Substance Use and Health Disparities among Sexual and Gender Minority Youth of Color
- II. Overview on Social Media Use by Youth
- III. Information on Social Media Use for Engagement and HIV/Substance Use Intervention Recruitment and Delivery
- IV. Present findings of *Conectando Latinos en Pareja: A Couple-based HIV/STI Prevention Intervention for Latino MSM and their same-sex partners*



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## Introduction

### What we know...

- Latinos represent approximately 16% of the US population but accounted for 21% of new HIV infections. Latinos also accounted for 21% of new AIDS diagnoses in 2011
  - Most (79% or 6,700) of the estimated new HIV infections among Latino men were attributed to male-to-male sexual contact
  - Among Latino men who have sex with men (MSM), 67% of estimated new HIV infections occurred in those under age 35 (CDC, 2011)
- African Americans accounted for an estimated 44% of all new HIV infections among adults and adolescents (aged 13 years or older) in 2010, despite representing only 12% of the US population
  - In 2010, African American gay, bisexual, and other men who have sex with men represented an estimated 72% (10,600) of new infections among all African American men and 36% of new HIV infections among all gay and bisexual men
  - More new HIV infections (4,800) occurred among young African American gay and bisexual men (aged 13-24) than any other subgroup of gay and bisexual men (CDC, 2010)



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## Introduction

### Prevention Challenges

- Prevalence of unprotected anal intercourse is reported to be between 33% and 49% (Harawa et al., 2004, Ramirez-Valles, 2008)
- Substance use is relatively high among sexual and gender minority youth of color (SGMYC), ranging from 26% to 40% (Diaz et al, 1991, Fernandez et al., 2005, Muñoz-Laboy, 2014)
- Elevated rates of problematic alcohol consumption have been observed among SGMYC, between 8% and 45% report harmful alcohol consumption (Muñoz-Laboy, 2014; Balan et al., 2013; Celentano et al., 2006; Cochran, et al., 2000)
  - Substance and alcohol use has been identified as a coping mechanism used by SGMYC to mitigate depression, family rejection, and discrimination (Martinez et al., 2011; Martinez, et al., 2012; Kissinger et al., 2013)
- Transactional sex (TS) is a widespread phenomenon among SGMYC. Several express concern that TS increase the risk of unprotected sex and therefore HIV transmission, mainly due to pressure from sex partners to have sex without a condom (USAID, 2010)



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### Social Media Use

- In 2011, most Americans polled rated their relationships with their mobile phones as more important than alcohol, caffeine or exercise, and chocolate (Epstein, 2011)
- Particularly for young people, the Internet has become a medium to create and maintain social relationships
  - According to the Pew Internet and American Life Project, 90 percent of 18- to 29-year-olds in the U.S. use social media
  - Teenagers/Millennials admit to socially sensitive items (sex, drug use, violence) more on computers and online than in “pen and paper research”
- Social Media has aided HIV/AIDS and substance prevention research:
  - (a) become the largest setting for sexual education and solicitation,
  - (b) tool for communication among sexual minorities,
  - (c) serves as the development of virtual communities among populations typically not recruited through face-to-face venues, and
  - (d) instrumental tool for data collection and intervention delivery



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## Intervention

- The objective of the SEXword Project was to use social networking to reach young men who have sex with men (YMSM) in the Bronx. The team partnered with peer leaders and a social-media marketing company to develop an intervention in which the peer leaders designed and disseminated tailored HIV-prevention messages to their large online networks of “friends”
  - Through this process, they reached an estimated 5,000 young MSM in the Bronx and other boroughs in New York City with tailored messages about regular HIV testing and consistent condom use



Drs. Patel and Lounsbury

<http://www.slideshare.net/YTHorg/the-sex-word>



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## AIMS Latinos en Pareja Project



**Aim 1:** To adapt and refine the existing 4-session *Connect 'N Unite (CNU)* couple-based HIV/STI preventive intervention originally for drug using Black MSM for a new target population of drug and substance using limited-English proficient Latino (LEP) MSM

**Aim 2:** To acquire information that enhances the likelihood of successfully testing the revised intervention in a subsequent NIH funded grant (e.g., recruitment and retention strategies, barriers to participating in the intervention, and ethical issues)

11/16/2014 CDC - Connect, Risk Reduction, Coping, Research - Treatment Research - HIV/AIDS

**CDC** Centers for Disease Control and Prevention  
CDC 267: Saving Lives. Protecting People.™

[HIV A-Z Topics](#)

**Compendium of Evidence-Based Interventions and Best Practices for HIV Prevention**

- [New Linkage to, Retention in, and Re-engagement in HIV Care \(LRC\) Chapter](#)  
(/hiv/prevention/research/compendium/lrc/index.html)
- [Medication Adherence \(MA\) Chapter](#)(/hiv/prevention/research/compendium/ma/index.html)
- [Risk Reduction \(RR\) Chapter](#)  
(/hiv/prevention/research/compendium/rr/index.html)
- [/hiv/prevention/research/compendium/rz/index.html](#)

**Connect (Couple or Woman-alone)**

**BEST-EVIDENCE:**

**ClinicalTrials.gov**  
A service of the U.S. National Institutes of Health

**Connect 'N Unite: Couple-Based HIV/STI Prevention for Drug-Involved, Black MSM (CNU)**

This study is currently recruiting participants. (see Contacts and Locations)

Invited May 2013 by Columbia University

**Sponsor:**  
Columbia University

**Collaborator:**  
National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA)

**Information provided by (Responsible Party):**  
Elen Wu, Columbia University

Full Text View | Tabular View | No Study Results Posted | Disclaimer | How to Read a Study Record



**Connect**

**Connect 'N Unite**

**Latinos en Pareja**



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## Data Collection/Eligibility Criteria

- **Data Collection (January 2014 to March 2014)**
  - Pre-screened potential participants over the telephone or in person to determine eligibility
- **Eligibility criteria refer to couples:**
  - 18 years or older
  - Both of the partners must consider the other as their male “main partner”
  - At least one partner must self-identify as Latino or Hispanic
  - At least one partner must have limited English proficiency and both partners must be proficient in Spanish
  - At least one partner must report one or more unprotected acts of anal intercourse in the past year, within or outside of the relationship
  - At least one partner must report using illicit substances or report drinking 5 or more alcoholic drinks on the same occasion on at least 1 day in the past 30 days (binge drinking) or 5 or more drinks on the same occasion on each of 5 or more days in the past 30 days (heavy drinking)



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## Methods

- We relied on community stakeholders to help guide recruitment of participants through social media, from the development of materials to the wording and message of postings
  - A total of 12 stakeholders from a wide range of community-based organizations and Latino gay couples met weekly to develop social media recruitment materials
- We also used McGuire's communication/persuasion matrix as a model for understanding and creating an effective recruitment campaign
  - The model identifies the variables relating to effective persuasive communication, including receiver, channel, message, and source



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## Recruitment

### Social Media



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# Recruitment

## Social Media

Proyecto sobre Latinos en Pareja

Estudio sobre Parejas gay Latinas

Comoviendo relaciones saludables entre hombres latinos y sus parejas del mismo sexo. Cada participante puede recibir hasta \$120. Llámenos ya: (646) 322-7918. Nos puede escribir al correo electrónico: latinospareja@gmail.com

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# Recruitment

Journal of Medical Internet Research

Original Paper

Still a Hard-to-Reach Population? Using Social Media to Recruit Latino Gay Couples for an HIV Intervention Adaptation Study

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Love Is Love

4 Years 6 Months Together

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## Discussion

- I. Importance of incorporating communication technologies into the recruitment and engagement of participants in HIV prevention
  - The success of our social media recruitment strategy shows that this population is not particularly “hard to reach”, as it is often characterized within public health literature
- II. Ecological models that highlight the influence of social contexts and structural factors (e.g., social media) should be considered in health disparities research
- III. Methodological Challenges
  - A. low response rates,
  - B. low participation rates among non-gay identified MSM, and
  - C. inadequate generalizability of findings due to recruitment through web banners and ads



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## Discussion

- IV. Online consent forms
  - a. focus on what users want to know
  - b. provide options for participants and
  - c. design to current standards

Is this the consent form of the future?
- V. Appropriately powered studies
  - a. beware the seduction of large numbers which was time for no benefit
- VI. De-duplication – ensuring only one survey per participant
  - a. IP addresses
  - b. Payment requests and paypal emails
- VII. Cross-validation – ensuring person is consistent (at eligibility and end of survey)
  - a. Age, US Zip code

The study has 50 questions

- Asks about recent sex and drug use
- Takes 20 min. to complete
- Pays \$15
- Must be 18+

To read more, check out Dr. Rosser's work -

<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3345812/>



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## Discussion

**VIII. We challenge researchers and providers to move beyond the association of UAI as equivalent to 'risky sexual behavior', and the continued emphasis on condom use as the prevention toolbox has diversified**

- **We argue that sexual pleasure must be taken more seriously and addressed more realistically in public health approaches to HIV prevention, particularly for sexual and gender minorities**



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Thank You  
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