HIV Infection in Young Gay Men Linked to Lower Socioeconomic Status

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Young men who have sex with men (YMSM) in a New York City area cohort are more likely to contract HIV if they are of low socioeconomic status (SES). Publishing their findings in the Journal of Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndromes, researchers from the P18 Cohort study examined correlates to HIV acquisition among 600 YMSM who were 18 or 19 years old at the outset and who were followed for three years.

A total of 7.2 percent of the cohort (43 participants) acquired HIV during the study period. Low perceived SES was associated with a 2.45-fold greater likelihood of becoming HIV positive, when compared with higher SES. The black participants were 7.46 times more likely to contract the virus than whites, while those of mixed or "other" race were 7.99 times more likely than whites. Men who had their first sexual experience with another male before the age of 14 were twice as likely to contract the virus as those whose first experience came later.

"Taken together, these findings provide further evidence for the existence of significant racial/ethnic and SES related disparities in HIV incidence among YMSM," Perry N. Halkitis, a professor of applied psychology at New York University and a lead investigator of the study. "In addition, these findings suggest that for sexual minority men, effective HIV prevention programs will need to attend to not only behavioral factors, such as age of sexual debut, but also structural and social conditions that continue to place this new generation of YMSM at heightened risk for acquiring HIV."

To read a press release on the study, click here.

To read the study abstract, click here.

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http://beta.docker.poz.com/article/SEX-risk-YMSM-27278-1248