Study: Black Men on DL Pose No Greater Risk of Spreading HIV

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A new study has found that African-American men who identify as being on the “down low” (DL) do not affect the high rate of HIV in the black community more than openly bisexual men who have female partners, the *Philadelphia Gay News* reports.

According to the article, researchers from the Public Health Management Corporation interviewed more than 1,100 gay-, bisexual- and heterosexual-identified men who have sex with men (MSM) in the New York and Philadelphia area to access their sexual practices; 361 of them identified as DL.

In the study, funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, about 56.3 percent of men who did not identify as being on the DL were HIV positive compared with 43.7 percent of DL-identified men. The study also found that the definition of down low varied among different people.

PHMC senior researcher Lisa Bond, MD, said she believes that the study’s findings emphasize the importance of focusing on high-risk behavior as opposed to “subjective labels.” “Rather than crucifying black gay and bisexual men, it’d be more productive if we spent our time demanding further action to address this crisis,” says Bond.

Editor’s Note: "DL-identified men" is an update to the third paragraph.

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