Gay & Bi Men and Trans Women in Africa Contract HIV at Very High Rates

Having a rectal sexually transmitted infection is associated with a higher risk of testing positive for HIV in this population.

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Transgender women and cisgender men who have sex with men (MSM) in sub-Saharan Africa are contracting HIV at a very high rate, aidsmap reports.

Presenting their findings at the HIV Research for Prevention conference (HIVR4P) in Madrid, researchers from the HPTN 075 study recruited 329 HIV-negative individuals to receive HIV and sexually transmitted infection (STI) testing over the course of 12 months.

The participants needed to be between 18 and 44 years old and born biologically male and have reported anal sex with a man during the previous three months. They were recruited in Cape Town and Soweto in South Africa; in Kisumu, Kenya; and in Blantyre, Malawi.

The mean age of the participants was 24 years old. Sixteen percent identified as transgender or female.

Sixteen percent were diagnosed with rectal gonorrhea or chlamydia at their first study visit.

During a cumulative 301 years of follow-up, 21 study members tested positive for HIV. The diagnosis rate per 100 cumulative years of follow-up was 6.96 diagnoses overall and 1.34 diagnoses in Malawi, 3.75 diagnoses in Kenya, 8.97 diagnoses in Soweto and 14.44 in Cape Town.

After controlling the data for various factors, the researchers found that being diagnosed with a rectal STI at the first study visit was associated with a 2.68-fold greater likelihood of contracting HIV during the study's follow-up period.

To read the aidsmap article, click here.

To read the conference abstract, click here.

To view the study slides, click here.

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