More Gay and Bi Men With HIV Are on Meds

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Increasingly, HIV-positive men who have sex with men (MSM) receive proper care and treatment for the virus. However, troubling racial and economic disparities persist.

“The progress in linking gay and bisexual men to HIV care and treatment is a promising sign that our nation’s high-impact approach to HIV prevention is working,” says Brooke E. Hoots, PhD, MSPH, an epidemiologist at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s (CDC) Division of HIV/AIDS Prevention, who led the study that reached these conclusions. “But that progress must be accelerated.”

Hoots and her CDC colleagues analyzed 2008, 2011 and 2014 data from an ongoing survey of MSM in 20 urban areas.

Looking at responses from 240 to 360 men per survey year, all of whom had been diagnosed with HIV three months to three years before each survey, the researchers found that the proportion of men linked to HIV care within three months of diagnosis increased from 79 percent in 2008 to 87 percent in 2014. Those with more education, a higher income and health insurance were more likely to be linked to care.

According to responses from 1,350 to 1,700 HIV-positive men per survey, the proportion taking antiretrovirals (ARVs) increased from 69 percent in 2008 to 88 percent in 2014. ARV treatment rates were higher among whites and older individuals and those with more education, a higher income and health insurance.

In 2011 and 2014, MSM in the South had the lowest rate of ARV use compared with those in other regions of the country. But when the data were controlled for race and ethnicity, this difference disappeared. Consequently, the researchers concluded that the higher rates of African-American MSM living with HIV in the South compared with elsewhere drove this regional disparity.

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