# MSM Chat Rooms Used for HIV Prevention

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HIV educators with Nashville CARES are using the popularity of online chat rooms to answer questions about HIV/AIDS and reduce the risk of exposure, infection and re-infection among men who have sex with men (MSM), *Out & About* reports.

According to the article, counselors initiate conversations with men online and inform them about their program and HIV. A study conducted by Scott Rhodes, MD, of Wake Forest University School of Medicine in Salem-Winston, North Carolina, found that these types of chat room–based HIV prevention interventions reaching the ideal audience of MSM.

Rhodes's research also showed that compared with MSM in the southeastern United States who did not participate in chat room–based outreaches, those who did participate were less likely to report risky HIV behavior. This included inconsistently using condoms during anal sex with a partner met online, having had a sexually transmitted infection and using drugs to enhance sexual satisfaction.

"The Internet is an excellent way for reaching and engaging men who might not be comfortable having these types of conversations face to face," Rhodes said. "The sort of anonymity, or the pseudo-anonymity, of the Internet allows people to be more frank and revealing about things they want to know about."

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