Gays May See Monogamy as Barrier to HIV, Even Without Testing

November 4, 2014

Research suggests that young gay men's understanding of what constitutes "safer sex" factors in condoms, testing and monogamy, aidsmap reports. But they often rely on trust rather than testing to ensure a monogamous partner is HIV negative. Nicola Boydell, a doctoral student at the University of Glasgow, presented results from her interviews with 30 Scottish gay men at GAYCON 2014, the 5th National Conference for Scotland on Gay and Bisexual Men's Health and Wellbeing.

Boydell asked the men, ages 18 to 29, to describe how they conceived of "safer sex." Some said safer sex included getting tested for HIV in addition to using condoms for anal sex. Condom use was often described as contingent on the nature of the relationship with the sexual partner. The men expressed eagerness to do away with condoms when in a committed relationship. However, instead of clearly delineating rules about monogamy and getting tested for HIV before forgoing condoms with a partner, men were more inclined to skip such conversations, instead depending on their trust for the other man to decide.

Previous research has suggested that between one-third and just over two-thirds of new HIV infections among gay and bisexual men occur between primary partnerships. Studies have found that these men are more inclined to use condoms with casual partners and that they tend to forgo latex as a means of expressing trust and intimacy with more serious partners. But if both men aren't tested for HIV past the test's "window period," and if they don't make rules about monogamy to help ensure that neither partner acquires HIV elsewhere, this scenario can open the door for HIV transmission. Pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) is another option gay men may consider to add to their HIV prevention arsenal.

To read the aidsmap story, click here.

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http://beta.docker.poz.com/article/safer-sex-definition-26365-1206