

Poster presentation

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P07-05. HIV and STI prevalence among men who have sex with men (MSM) recruited through respondent driven sampling (RDS) in Buenos Aires, Argentina

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Background

MSM constitute one of the populations most affected by HIV and other STIs in Argentina. Previous prevalence studies were based on convenience samples. RDS, a methodology designed to access hidden populations, is being used for the first time in Argentina to recruit MSM.

Methods

RDS recruitment started in November 2007 with 16 first generation participants (seeds) who were selected for their potential to tap in MSM networks. Recruitment is ongoing. Men must be 18 years of age or older, be residents of Buenos Aires, self-report having sex with men at least 10 times in their lives and at least once in the past six months. They must have a coupon indicating they have been referred by a study participant. Specimens are being collected for HIV and STI diagnosis. All data are weighted using the RDS Analysis Tool (RDSAT).

Results

To date, 333 MSM were recruited through RDS showing a prevalence of 11.3, 16.6, 7.9, 17.6, 4.0 and 88.3% for HIV, HBV, HCV, *T. pallidum*, *Chlamydia* and HPV, respectively. *Chlamydia* and HPV diagnoses were only performed in 73 and 79 participants, respectively. Among HPV positive

individuals, 47.8% had almost one of these high risk types (16, 58, 33, 45, 18 and 31) and 32% had multiple infections with 2 or more types.

Conclusion

Compared with previous studies, these results show similar HIV, HBV and *T. pallidum* prevalences but higher HCV prevalence. For the first time, an elevated prevalence of HPV was detected on MSM, with high frequency of types associated with ano-genital cancer. Preliminary analyses of socio demographic data show that RDS helps recruit a diversity of MSM, particularly of lower socio-economic level usually missed with other recruitment methods. The high prevalence of coinfections in this population should be taken into account if MSM are part of vaccine trials given that STI may increase HIV sexual transmission.