Migration-related health and social risks for urban MSM

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South Florida’s Gay Scene...
A 5-year randomized clinical trial comparing the efficacy of a small group empowerment theory-based intervention to an enhanced community standard of care HIV counseling condition.
Conceptual Model of Migration-related Health Risks

Developed from life history interviews with over 300 gay and bisexual men in South Florida.
Early life experiences in a homophobic environment:
- Family rejection
- Not fitting in with peers
- Secrecy
- Victimization
- Shame

Migration considerations:
Costs
- Lost social capital
- Lost social norms
- Lost relationships
Benefits
- Freedom
- Mental health
- Attraction/desire
- Safety
- Friendships

Urban Gay Subcultures:
- Escapist/spectacular
- Homophobic
- Competitive
- Temporary
- Normative drug use and hypersexuality
- Limited social networks

Cultural alienation:
- “Attitude”
- Sexual violation
- Depression
- Homophobia
- STI/HIV
- Substance use
- Sensation seeking

Conceptual Model
Group Intervention Approach

The 4 group sessions emphasize:

- A safe space to talk; building trust
- Open dialogue across age, ethnic, serostatus boundaries;
- Critical awareness of others’ sexual behavior norms, beliefs and motivations
- Increasing sexual and friendship intimacy
- Accessing broader social networks
- Strengths-based repositioning of the fast lane scene
- Making life changes; goal setting
- Overcoming barriers
Eligibility Requirements

- Ages 18-55
- 3 + times drug / heavy alcohol use in the last 30 days:
- Sex risk in the last 90 days:
  - 3+ times anal sex with a non-primary partner, including 1+ times UAI
### Demographics (N=325)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age (median; range: 18 - 55)</td>
<td>41 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education (median)</td>
<td>14 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income (median)</td>
<td>$25,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race/Ethnicity</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anglo</td>
<td>167</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic or Latino</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African American</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Participant characteristics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sexual Identity</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gay</td>
<td>271</td>
<td>83.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bisexual / other</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>16.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Health / Social Risk Indices</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Health insurance</td>
<td>211</td>
<td>64.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HIV Positive</td>
<td>147</td>
<td>45.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ever Arrested</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>61.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ever mental health dx</td>
<td>186</td>
<td>57.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ever substance abuse tx</td>
<td>147</td>
<td>45.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------------</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>-----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attacked w/ weapon</td>
<td>155</td>
<td>52.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical abuse</td>
<td>153</td>
<td>47.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual Abuse</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>32.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional abuse</td>
<td>236</td>
<td>72.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abused before age 18</td>
<td>176</td>
<td>54.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Mental health measures (clinical measures, past year)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Condition</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Depression</td>
<td>253</td>
<td>77.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anxiety</td>
<td>204</td>
<td>62.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traumatic stress</td>
<td>171</td>
<td>52.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DSM subst. abuse</td>
<td>240</td>
<td>73.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DSM dependence</td>
<td>204</td>
<td>62.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Current Substance Use (Past 90 days)

- Heavy Alcohol: 80.6%
- Marijuana: 63.4%
- Poppers: 56.6%
- Cocaine/Crack: 44.9%
- Rx Sedatives: 33.2%
- Methamphetamine: 26.8%
- Rx Opiates: 23.7%
- Ecstasy: 16.6%
- GHB: 14.8%
- Ever Inject: 29.2%
### Sexual behaviors (Past 90 days)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Means</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td># male anal sex partners</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td># anal sex times</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td># times no condom</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sex with women – 12 mos.</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>15.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using sex to cope</td>
<td>227</td>
<td>77.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Migration-related questionnaire items in the baseline instrumentation:

When, why, and from where did you move to South Florida?
Migration data analyses

Divided the sample into 3 groups:  

- Moved to SoFla in past year: 29
- Moved to SoFla in last 2-5 yrs.: 63
- Born in SoFla or moved there more than 5 years ago: 233
Annual income (mean)

Residency in South Florida

12 months or less  | 13-60 months  | More than 60 months

$25K  |  $35K  |  P<.006
How many friends use drugs?

Residency in South Florida

- 12 months or less
- 13 to 60 months
- More than 60 months

p<.017
Positive coping strategies

Residency in South Florida

- Getting Emotional Support
- Taking Action

12 months or less
13 to 60 months
More than 60 months

p<.017
p<.068
Sex sensation seeking
Using sex to cope

Residency in South Florida

- Sex Sensation Seeking
- Use Sex to Cope

p<.021
HIV prevalence

Unprotected sex times – Past 90 days

Residency in South Florida

- 12 mos. or less
- 13-60 mos.
- 61+

HIV prevalence

- 30%
- 50%

Unprotected sex times – Past 90 days

- p<.091
- p<.012
Theorized migration-related health and social risks are supported by preliminary survey results in South Florida.

No site differences (Miami vs. Ft. Lauderdale) were noted.

No age, education or ethnic differences in health or social risks were noted.
Discussion

- Do resort cities present unique risk environments?

- Is self-selection to certain cities a factor?
  
  (do men with certain risk profiles migrate to cities with risk-reinforcing subcultures)

- How many MSM succeed, and what resilience and protective factors are at work for them?
Limitations

- Preliminary analyses with small samples
- Cross sectional data; we don’t know men’s pre-migration behaviors
- Is South Florida representative?
- Qualitative data are needed to contextualize the findings