

HIV Disclosure: Issues for Rural African American Men

**Satellite Conference and Live Webcast
Wednesday, September 28, 2011
10:00 am - 12:00 pm Central Time**

**Produced by the Alabama Department of Public Health
Video Communications and Distance Learning Division**

Faculty

**Susan Gaskins, DSN, ACRN
Professor
College of Nursing
The University of Alabama**

Background

- African American men have the highest rate of HIV in the country
- The South has the highest prevalence rate of people living with HIV/AIDS in the country
- The number of new AIDS cases increased more in the deep South than any area in the country between 2000 and 2005

HIV/AIDS in the Deep South

- Delayed HIV diagnosis
- Delayed entry in clinical care after diagnosis
- Limited engagement in HIV care

HIV Disclosure

- Advantages
- Emotional support
- Decreased stress
- Disadvantages
- Rejection
- Discrimination
- Violence

HIV Disclosure Study

- 40 African American men from rural areas
- Interviewed about HIV disclosure decisions
- Two had only disclosed to health care providers

HIV Disclosure Study

- **Most disclosed selectively**
- **Family members were the most likely recipients**
 - **Parents, siblings, extended family members**

Reasons for Disclosure

- **To relieve stress**
 - **I decided to tell somebody because I had been holding it in for so long, and it was not knowing and thinking “I am going to die, I’m going to die”**

Reasons for Disclosure

- **The need to tell**
 - **First and foremost, I told a couple of people that I knew I was going to be sexually involved with**

Reasons for Disclosure

- **To help others**
 - **I know that it is devastating this country**
 - **Especially African American males and young adults**
 - **I play a role in eradicating that and educating people**
 - **I owe it to my brothers and sisters**

Reasons for Disclosure

- **To receive support**
 - **I did not have any problem telling my parents because I was going to need them somehow to help me through it**

Reasons for Non-Disclosure

- **Fear of negative reactions/stigma**
 - **There is discrimination**
 - **There are stereotypes**
 - **Some people are somewhat dark, and will try to do stuff to you**

Reasons for Non-Disclosure

- Fear of disclosure recipients telling others
 - It is always in the back of your mind that somebody is going to go tell someone else
 - Then he will spread it, and your whole business will be in the street

Reasons for Non-Disclosure

- No need to tell
 - I do not want anybody to know my business
 - I do not want it to be out in the street where people talk about you

Reasons for Non-Disclosure

- Not ready to tell
 - I will talk about it one day
 - Right now, I am not ready to tell a lot of people because the word is going to get out
 - I live in a small town, you know

Reasons for Non-Disclosure

- Not wanting to burden others
 - It took me a long time to tell my Mom because I had a brother who was diagnosed in '93 and he passed in '95
 - I did not want my Mom to think “Oh my God, I’m going to have another child to die”
 - So I did not tell her

Discussion

- The high rate of disclosure to family members highlights the important role of the African American family in the South
- Even though sexual partners were identified as people who need to know about one’s HIV status, the men did not always disclose to them
 - Especially casual partners

Discussion

- Stigma was a major reason for not disclosing and the men thought it was related to people not being educated about HIV/AIDS
- Prior relationships determined the likelihood of disclosure

Discussion

- **Trusting recipients not to tell others was a major consideration in making decisions about disclosure recipients**

Recommendations

- **It is important that health care providers counsel people with HIV/AIDS to make appropriate disclosure decisions that will lead to positive outcomes**

Recommendations

- **HIV stigma needs addressed by**
 - **Service programs**
 - **Health care providers**
 - **Communities**
 - **Both at the intrapersonal and interpersonal level**

Recommendations

- **PLWHAs need to understand their role in prevention**
 - **Disclosure**
 - **Practicing safer sex**
 - **Educating others**
 - **Adhering to their medications**

Recommendations

- **Educating others helps them understand their risk of infection and increase the likelihood of testing**