

HIV RISK AMONG MALE PAROLEES AND THEIR FEMALE PARTNERS

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PROJECT DESCRIPTION

This study explores HIV risk among men who were released from prison within the last year and are currently on parole and the women who are in sexual relationships with them. Couples will be recruited from community sites in Oakland, CA for participation in a quantitative survey. Each couple will come to an appointment together but will be interviewed separately. Two hundred couples will participate in the survey; a sub-sample of forty-four couples will also be asked to participate in a qualitative interview to provide more in-depth contextual information about HIV risk and risk reduction among couples affected by incarceration. This study is funded by the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH).

SIGNIFICANCE

HIV and AIDS disproportionately affect prisoners in the United States. Low-income men of color, particularly African American men, are incarcerated at much higher rates than are low-income white males. Women of color and low-income women in the United States also have disproportionately high rates of HIV infection and AIDS diagnosis. Recent studies have indicated that racial/ethnic disparities in incarceration can be linked to health disparities, including disparities in HIV/AIDS. Research exploring how the disproportionate levels of incarceration among low-income men of color, of HIV/AIDS among incarcerated men, and of HIV/AIDS among low-income women of color are related is crucial.

Our preliminary studies have underscored the complexities of understanding how the context of a man's incarceration influences couples' decision-making processes involving HIV risk and risk reduction and have compelled us to undertake couple-level research on this issue. Public-health researchers have identified the necessity of developing and providing population-specific HIV interventions and services for people affected by incarceration both in prison and in their home neighborhoods post-release. This study will yield critical information about HIV risk and risk reduction in dyadic relationships between male parolees and their female partners that potentially can be used to develop population-appropriate and effective interventions for the millions of low-income people of color who experience their own or their partner's incarceration each year.

PROJECT RECRUITMENT DATES: April 2008 – December 2009.

PROJECT END DATE: 2011