

## Gay Couples Study

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## Project Description

The Gay Couples Study Continuation is a five year longitudinal study that seeks to identify and examine relationship dynamics in gay couples and how those dynamics affect sexual risk behaviors with primary and outside partners. Relationship dynamics include issues such as communication style, power dynamics, interpersonal relations, and agreements around sex. Other objectives include exploring broken agreements, internal (or safety) agreements, and HIV testing rates for gay couples.

The study will have a preliminary, exploratory qualitative phase as well as a longitudinal quantitative phase. For the Qualitative Phase, 20 gay couples will participate in face-to-face, in-depth, semi-structured interviews. Interviews will focus on broken agreements, internal (or safety) agreements, and HIV testing rates for gay couples. Themes from the interviews will help inform the development of a new quantitative survey instrument to be used during the Longitudinal Phase. For the Longitudinal Phase, 500 gay couples will be surveyed every six months for three years. Couples from the original Gay Couples Study will be invited to participate and we estimate that approximately 100 couples will continue. In the final year, we will test the feasibility and acceptability of prevention intervention designs and content concepts with gay couples. Findings will be used for an intervention with gay couples to be pilot tested in 2014.

## Significance

With high rates of seroconversion among gay men in relationships, and primary partners a source of many new HIV infections, studying gay couples is an important next step in HIV research and prevention. The Gay Couples Study Continuation endeavors to take that step.

**Study End Date:** August 2015