

A Community-Level HIV Prevention Intervention for Young Black MSM

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Project Description

This project will test the efficacy of a community-level intervention (an adaptation of the Mpowerment Project) in reducing sexual risk behavior and increasing testing among young Black men who have sex with men. We will implement the Black Mpowerment Project for two years in Dallas, TX. Houston, TX will be the comparison community.

We will conduct cross-sectional surveys of young Black men who have sex with men before and after the intervention in both communities to determine the efficacy of the intervention in:

- Reducing the proportion and frequency of sexual behaviors that are likely to transmit HIV, including reducing the number of sex partners
- Increasing the proportion of men who know their HIV serostatus
- Modifying psychosocial mediating variables that may be related to HIV risk reduction
- Changing psychosocial factors that are indicators of positive mental health and well-being

Additionally, we will conduct process evaluations of the intervention to assess how the Black Mpowerment Project is implemented and to assess the perceptions of the project at both the individual- and community-level. We will also look for changes in sexually transmitted infection rates in both communities.

Interesting Findings

The guiding principles, structure and intervention components of Mpowerment continue to be relevant for young Black men who have sex with men. However, many issues arose regarding the need for substantial adaptation of the intervention. Following are selected themes:

- **Emphasize Whole-Man:** Young Black men do not want to be reduced to their sexual activities and desires. Recognize that their identity includes family, spirituality, community, history, etc.
- **Diverse Sexual Identities:** Young Black men have a variety of sexual identities and many are reluctant to join a “gay” project. However, many Black MSM do have a strong gay identity.
- **Church/Religiosity/Spirituality:** Frequently mentioned by those who feel alienated from the church and those who still participate in it. A need exists for young Black men to discuss how religion affects them.

Project Recruitment Dates: Recruitment began in February 2009

Project End Date: December 2011