



HIV/AIDS Prevention Research in Black/African American Communities



UCSF Center for AIDS Prevention Studies
Division of Prevention Sciences



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This booklet is produced by UCSF Center for AIDS Prevention Studies and UCSF Prevention Research Center. You might use it to:

- Stay up-to-date on our latest research
- Provide materials in trainings and presentations
- Advocate for services and funding
- Write grants
- Develop new or modify existing HIV prevention programs
- Connect with us. The Investigators are listed for each study

UCSF Center for AIDS Prevention Studies (CAPS)

UCSF Prevention Research Center (PRC)

Contact us - <https://prevention.ucsf.edu/contact>

Acronyms

MSM: We use the acronym MSM to include all gay, same gender loving, bisexual and other men who have sex with men.

MSMW: We use the acronym MSMW to refer to all men who have sex with other men and women. They may identify as gay, straight, bisexual, same gender loving, or prefer to use another term, or none at all.

PI: Principal Investigator. Lead researcher on the study.

MPI: Multiple Principal Investigators.

Message from the Director



Jae Sevelius, PhD
CAPS Director

Two years into the COVID-19 pandemic, we continue to be physically apart yet remain together in the fight to end the HIV epidemic. The UCSF Center for AIDS Prevention Studies (CAPS) has had a change in leadership, and I am excited to be serving as the new Director. We remain steadfast to our commitment to conduct community-engaged research that will help end HIV among populations that are most impacted.

Black/African American communities remain hardest hit by the HIV/AIDS epidemic compared to other racial/ethnic groups in the United States. While this group represents approximately 13% of the U.S. population, 41.7% of the 36,801 new HIV cases diagnosed in the U.S. and dependent areas in 2019 were among adult and adolescent Black/African American people.¹ Furthermore, compared to their non-Hispanic white counterparts,

- Black/African American people were 8.1 times more likely to be diagnosed with HIV
- Black/African American men living with HIV were 8.4 times more likely to be diagnosed with AIDS
- Black/African American women living with HIV were 15 times more likely to be diagnosed with AIDS ²

Among Black/African American people, 15,340 new HIV cases were reported in 2019. Men made up 70.2%; among men 84.7% were those who reported sex with men.³ Among the 5,863 cisgender women who acquired HIV through sexual contact, the majority (59.2%) were Black/African American.^{1,4} Two percent of all HIV diagnoses were among transgender people; 93% were among transgender women and the majority were Black/African American (46%).⁵

At the end of 2019, an estimated 1,059,784 adults and adolescents were living with HIV; 479,300 were Black/African American.¹ Outcome disparities also exist along the HIV continuum of care. Overall, for every 100 people living with HIV, 76 received some care, 58 were retained in care, and 66 were virally suppressed.⁴ In comparison, outcomes were worst for Black/African Americans: 63, 48, and 51, respectively.⁶

In 2020, 25% of people who were eligible for pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) were prescribed this proven HIV prevention medication; coverage differed by race/ethnicity, ranging from 9% for Black/African Americans to 66% for whites. PrEP awareness is high among HIV-negative

transgender women (92%) but only 32% reported use. A similar finding is reported for HIV-negative Black/African American transgender women: 96% and 31%, respectively.⁷

Progress is being made. Despite disparities highlighted above, the trend of newly diagnosed HIV cases among Black/African American people is downward overall and decreased by 9% from 2015 to 2019; new cases decreased 10.6% for women in this time period, and was stable among gay and bisexual men and those who identified as transgender.^{4,5} In no small way, this overall decrease resulted from research that enhanced our understanding of factors that reduce stigma as well as our commitment to address racial inequities, promote prevention strategies (e.g., PrEP), develop effective group-specific interventions, increase HIV testing, and improve treatment and engagement in high-quality HIV care. However, our work is not finished. Until HIV disparities cease to exist or we have a cure, there is no room for complacency. We are excited to share CAPS research summaries and projects that are recently completed, currently underway, or are on the horizon and hope that findings are useful to affected communities and our partners.

Jae Sevelius, PhD

CAPS Director

¹ CDC's HIV Surveillance Report: [Diagnoses of HIV Infection in the United States and Dependent Areas, 2019; vol. 32](https://www.cdc.gov/hiv/statistics/overview/index.html) – <https://www.cdc.gov/hiv/statistics/overview/index.html>

² DHHS, OMH. HIV/AIDS and African Americans. <https://minorityhealth.hhs.gov/omh/browse.aspx?lvl=4&lvlid=21>

³ CDC. HIV Basic Statistics. <https://www.cdc.gov/hiv/basics/statistics.html>

⁴ CDC. HIV in the United States and Dependent Areas. <https://www.cdc.gov/hiv/statistics/overview/ataglance.html>

⁵ CDC. Diagnoses of HIV Infection in the United States and Dependent Areas 2019: Special Focus Profiles. <https://www.cdc.gov/hiv/library/reports/hiv-surveillance/vol-32/content/special-focus-profiles.html#Transgender>

⁶ CDC. HIV and African American People. <https://www.cdc.gov/hiv/group/raciaethnic/africanamericans/index.html>

⁷ CDC. PrEP for HIV Prevention in the U.S. <https://www.cdc.gov/nchstp/newsroom/fact-sheets/hiv/PrEP-for-hiv-prevention-in-the-US-factsheet.html>

MSM

The LetSync Project: Creating a mHealth Tool for Enhancing HIV Care Engagement in the Dyadic Context

Investigator: Judy You Rong Tan

The primary relationship provides an important context for understanding HIV care engagement, but little is known regarding how the primary relationship helps Black or African American MSM engage in care and treatment. Mobile health (mHealth) holds potential for facilitating relationship factors conducive to HIV care engagement among Black men who are in a primary romantic relationship with another man. The goal of the LetSync Project is to develop a couples-focused mHealth tool that facilitates synchronization (“let’s sync”) of HIV care engagement among Black or African American men in couples. <https://letsync.ucsf.edu/>



Texas PrEP Implementation Study

Investigators: Susan Kegeles, Greg Rebchook, Robert Williams, Scott Tebbetts, Andres Maiorana

Texas has high rates of HIV infection despite the availability of PrEP. Young Black and Latino men who have sex with men (YBLMSM) are less likely than young white MSM to take PrEP, adhere to PrEP, and continue PrEP use over time. This study involves collaboration with two CBOs and an organization running two PrEP clinics. The three organizations will use Core Elements of the Mpowerment Project (MP), an evidence-based, community-level intervention to facilitate the empowerment of young MSM and reduce HIV risk. This project will assess the implementation strategies and outcomes of PrEP-enhanced activities.

Research Finding. The goal of this project is to learn how organizations can successfully implement innovative activities to increase the use of PrEP by YBLMSM engaged in MPs and that can also be implemented by PrEP clinics. We will share findings widely with PrEP clinics and MPs in Texas and throughout the US to help them successfully implement PrEP-enhanced MP activities. <http://mpowerment.org/>



Photo - The Mpowerment Project

MSM

Continued

We Are Family: Testing, Linkage and Engagement in Care among African American Gay, Bisexual, and Trans youth in the House Ball Community

Investigators: Emily Arnold (PI), Parya Saberi, Susan Kegeles, Torsten Neilands, Lance Pollack, Michael Benjamin (CAL-PEP), Felicia Bridges (CAL-PEP), and Gloria Lockett (CAL-PEP)

This 4-year study was supported by the California HIV/AIDS Research Program (CHRP) to develop and test intervention activities that build upon forms of social support already occurring among young people involved in the house ball and gay family communities, specifically related to HIV prevention and care. This is a collaboration between UCSF, CAL-PEP, and members of the house ball and gay family communities.

Research finding: Many Bay Area houses and gay families already share HIV prevention information and support to help one another connect to services if necessary. Building on family connections provides a natural forum to bring up the most recent prevention and treatment advances, such as home testing and PrEP/PEP, and U=U.

The Bruthas Project: Sexual Health Promotion Counseling Sessions

Investigators: Emily Arnold (PI), Gloria Lockett (Community PI)

Black men who have sex with men and women (BMSMW) are at high risk for acquiring and transmitting HIV, but few interventions exist to address their prevention needs. To address this, we developed the Bruthas Project, a series of four individualized sexual health promotion counseling sessions designed to build upon HIV counseling and testing (HIV-CT).

Research finding: In this randomized controlled trial of the Bruthas intervention, we compared participants who received culturally tailored HIV testing and counseling plus four individualized counseling sessions to those who received only the culturally tailored HIV testing and counseling. BOTH groups reduced their number of sex partners and episodes of condom-less intercourse. BMSMW are responsive to HIV prevention and testing efforts when they are provided in a culturally responsive and respectful manner.



Transgender Women

Prevention Research Center
Core Research Project: A
collaboration between Cal-PEP
and UCSF to evaluate the
implementation of Healthy Divas,
an intervention for Transgender
Women

It Takes Two

Investigators: Kristi Gamarel (MPI/University of Michigan); Jae Sevelius (MPI); Don Operario (MPI/Brown University); Lynae Darbes (University of Michigan); Tor Neilands; Mallory Johnson

Transgender women, particularly Black transgender women, are among the populations at the highest risk for HIV in the United States and worldwide. One of the most consistently reported contexts for HIV transmission among trans women is within a primary partnership. Despite the critical importance of primary partnerships for HIV prevention, the vast majority of HIV prevention studies and interventions for trans women have been individually-focused. The overarching goal of “It Takes Two” is to test the efficacy of a promising couples-focused HIV prevention intervention to reduce HIV risk among transgender women and their primary partners by integrating biomedical and behavioral risk reduction strategies to help couples choose the most appropriate HIV prevention plan for their relationship.



Investigators: Jae Sevelius, Greg Rebchook, Beth Bourdeau, Breonna McCree, Matthew Beld, Stephanie Cornwell (Cal-PEP), Angela Green (Cal-PEP)

Cal-PEP and the UCSF Prevention Research Center are collaborating to study the implementation and facilitate the dissemination of Healthy Divas, an intervention for transgender women developed at the UCSF Center for AIDS Prevention Studies. Cal-PEP and UCSF investigators are working together to determine facilitators and barriers to implementation, as well to develop an implementation toolkit to support organizations in the adoption and successful implementation of Healthy Divas.

<https://prevention.ucsf.edu/transhealth/research/healthy-divas>

<https://prevention.ucsf.edu/about/ucsf-prevention-research-center>



Youth

Connecting Resources for Rural and Urban Sexual Health CRRUSH-Sacramento

Investigators: Kimberly Koester, Janet Myers, Orlando Harris, Shana Hughes

In partnership with the Sacramento Zero Together Coalition, we are conducting research to increase PrEP uptake and decrease rates of sexually transmitted infections among men who have sex with men (MSM), particularly among racial and ethnic minority populations, in Sacramento County. New HIV diagnoses are highest among Latino and African American MSM between the ages of 13-44. PrEP coverage in Sacramento is substantially lower than coverage in nearby Alameda and San Francisco counties.

We plan to conduct a discreet choice experiment (DCE) to help us to identify which PrEP implementation strategies are most preferred by MSM. A DCE is designed to examine how people prioritize and make trade-offs among attributes or characteristics of a service or product. In this case, we will use the DCE method to understand what MSM want in a sexual health services program. The DCE will provide us with rigorously generated evidence or justification for selecting the implementation strategies we plan to ultimately test in a pilot study.

50+

Developing a group singing intervention for promoting psychosocial wellbeing among older people living with HIV

Investigators: Judy You Rong Tan

Loneliness and social isolation are common among older adults, including those who are living with HIV. Preliminary research and emergent evidence show that older PLWH desire social connections with other older PLWH that do not require disclosure of HIV-status and that help them regain a sense of control and purpose in living a fulfilling life with HIV.

This community choir intervention, with input from a community advisory council (CAC) of key stakeholders, aims to improve psychosocial wellbeing among older PLWH by enhancing group pride and personal control. This research partnership will adapt the COV intervention, modifying and refining COV's intervention protocols and procedures, ensuring integration of CAC's feedback into a final version of the UV manual and training procedures, which will be piloted to evaluate the acceptability and feasibility of implementation and assessment procedures and protocols, including randomization procedures. A final full-scale trial will provide foundational information on the first community choir intervention for addressing unmet social and psychological needs among a growing and underserved population and will inform future research.

Additional Resources



The Ujima Mentoring Program provides research mentoring and funding to early-stage investigators, particularly those at HBCUs who address HIV prevention, care, and treatment in Black/African American communities. <http://tiny.ucsf.edu/L9Ley8>

Resources and Guidance Related to HIV and COVID-19

<https://prevention.ucsf.edu/COVID19>

UCSF Anti-Racism Initiative

<https://diversity.ucsf.edu/antiracism-initiative>

VIDEO. Community Engagement: Representation and Respect. The discussion focuses on competent engagement and representation of communities of color in HIV and COVID research, practice, and communications. Featuring Michele Andrasik, Ph.D. and Tina Hoff (Greater than COVID-19).

CAPS/PRC Town Hall presents:
Michele Andrasik, PhD, and Tina Hoff -- Community Engagement: Representation & Respect
Part 2 in a 4-part Series on Laying Foundations of Trust: Moving Towards Health Equity
Sponsored by the CAPS Intervention & Implementation Science and the Community Engagement Cores

This session will focus on competent engagement and representation of communities of color in HIV and COVID research, practice, and communications.

Speaker: Michele Andrasik, PhD, Affiliate Assistant Professor Global Health, and of Environmental and Occupational Health Sciences, UW School of Public Health, Seattle, WA

Speaker: Tina Hoff, Senior Vice President, and Director, Social Impact Media Program, Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation, San Francisco, CA

Michele Andrasik focuses on addressing health inequities among Black, Indigenous, People of Color, and gender and sexual minority communities. An expert in Community-Based Participatory Research (CBPR), Historical Trauma and mixed methods research, Dr. Andrasik has led a robust Social and Behavioral Sciences research agenda for the HIV for almost a decade. She has extensive experience working with communities and community organizations, both as a researcher and as a service provider. Dr. Andrasik's research focus is on HIV prevention and social and structural factors implicated in health inequities.

Tina Hoff develops and directs large scale, health communications campaigns with public and private sector partners. Her Emmy and Peabody award-winning work with Viscom, MTV, BET and Univision, among others, pioneered a new mode for working with media on social issues. In 2009, she created *Greater Than AIDS*, a leading national social marketing initiative that delivers life-saving information and confronts the stigma of HIV in the U.S. In response to the COVID public health crisis, Ms. Hoff launched *Greater Than COVID*, which includes *THE CONVERSATION: Between Us, About Us*, a campaign featuring Black health care workers answering the questions Black people have about the COVID vaccines.

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Photo: Abouzar Saedi Murat, Toronto 2020

Fact Sheets

- Black gay men and the church (2013)
<https://prevention.ucsf.edu/research-project/black-gay-men-and-church-0>
- What are Black men's HIV prevention needs? (2020)
<https://prevention.ucsf.edu/research-project/black-men-2>
- What are Black women's HIV prevention needs? (2009)
<https://prevention.ucsf.edu/research-project/black-women>
- Fact sheets in English and Spanish
<https://prevention.ucsf.edu/resources/factsheets-english-and-spanish>

Intervention Curricula

- The Mpowerment Project and Black/African-American gay and bisexual men
<http://mpowerment.org/mp-4-black-latino-msm/>
- Project Style - Services developed to engage and retain men of color living with HIV in high-quality care. <https://style.ucsf.edu>
- Healthy Oakland Teen Curriculum
<https://prevention.ucsf.edu/research-project/healthy-oakland-teens-0>
- African American Men's Health Study Training Manual
<https://prevention.ucsf.edu/resources/intervention-curricula>

Evaluation Manuals

Working Together - [A Guide to Collaborative Research in HIV Prevention](#)

Transgender Resources - The HIV Testing Toolkit, Transgender Health Factsheets and Recommendations for Inclusive Data Collection of Transgender People in HIV Prevention. <https://prevention.ucsf.edu/transhealth/resources>





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