

When Straight Men have Gay Sex

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Background

- Data collected from 2004-2006 with 118 MSM who identify as heterosexual (straight)
- Data comes from structured interviews, surveys, risk assessments, case notes

Population Demographics

Race/Ethnicity

- White 66%, Black 17%, Latino 13%, Other/Mixed 4%

Education Attainment

College Grad 32%, Some College 45%, HS degree 13%, Some HS 10%

Age range 18-30

- Mean age-23, Median-22

Study Questions?

- How do heterosexual MSM define sexual orientation?
- What are the predisposing, reinforcing and enabling factors associated with MSM behavior in this population?
- What are heterosexual men's perceptions about MSM behavior in the general population? How do these compare to homosexual or bisexual men's perceptions?

Limitations

- Single study, not replicated
- Subject pool was highly educated
- Sexual orientation could be considered a social construct.
- No means of verifying sexual behavior reported by subjects
 - Self-reported

Significant Predisposing Factors

1. Knowing a "gay" or "bi" friend* (n=44)
2. Having a gay or bi relative on mother's side of family (n=26)
3. Having older brothers (n=24)
4. History of childhood sexual assault (n=24)
 - if mother ignored reports by son of assault or was involved in assault
 - If assault was a family member

Significant Enabling Factors

- Use of alcohol at time of sexual encounters (n=51)
- High sex drive (n=25)
- Privacy (n=17)
- Benefiting financially from sexual encounter (n= 11)
- Female partner isolation (physical or emotional) (n=11)

Significant Reinforcing Factors

- Felt good (n=58)
- Ease of sex (n=22)
- Discreet encounters (n=17)
- Money (n=11)
- Retained friendship (n=5)
- Being able to psychologically deal with the sex (n=5)

Perceptions

■ Straight

- 60-70% of men are MSM
- 80% of men been in love with another man
- 70% believed their friends are MSM
- 33% of men are bi or gay

■ **Bisexual, Gay** *(comparison group n=83)*

- 20-30% of men are MSM
- 10-20% of men have been in love with another man
- 20% believed their straight friends are MSM
- 15% of men are bi or gay

Other perceptions for Straight Men

- 65% believed if a male “came on to them” it meant they thought “I’m perceived as feminine.”
- 98% believed “it’s a phase.”
- 88% believed you can get more STD’s from men than women
- 73% believed HIV is mostly a gay disease

Consensual MSM Behaviors Engaged In (past year)

- Oral sex performed on them (100%)
- Performed Oral sex on another male (88%)
- Anal Intercourse as Insertive (top) Partner 73%
- Anal Intercourse as Receptive (bottom) Partner 62%
- Unprotected Anal Sex at top partner 43%
- Unprotected Anal Sex as bottom Partner 38%

Partner Comparisons- Non sex work (past year)

■ Male Partners

- Number in Past year Mean- 4.6
- Number of repeat partners Mean-1.4
- Incidence of Unprotected Anal Sex Mean-.94%
- Incidence of STD known to be contracted .22%

■ Female Partners

- Number in Past Year Mean-8.4
- Number of repeat partners Mean-2.8
- Incidence of Unprotected Vaginal Sex Mean-2.1
- Incidence of STD known to be contracted 3.8%
- Unwanted/Unplanned Pregnancy 9.8%

Most Important Elements to Defining Sexual Orientation

■ Straight Men

- Attraction
- Bonding
- Behavior

■ Gay Bisexual Men

- Bonding
- Attraction
- Behavior

Quotations from case files

- "I love my best friend. We have sex because he is gay and he comes onto me. I'm afraid if I turn him down I'll lose him as a friend."
- "Its way easier to hook up with a guy and get sex than with a girl. All you have to do is go online to a chat room and within an hour, you got sex."

Quotations continued

- "When I drink, I get horny. It don't matter who I do it with then."
- "It feels good, its just weird that I like it. I would never have a boyfriend though."
- "I do it for the money but it still gets me off."

Quotes continued

- "In a sick kind of way, its like getting back at my dad. If he knew I did this it would kill him."
- "Its different when I do it with a guy. I like to be physically dominated and forced into stuff. Girls can't do that right."
- "I deserve to be treated like a faggot I guess, been treated like that all my life. Least I get paid for it now."

Implications for Public Health

- Focus on behavior without trying to fit a label on it
- Use non-gender specific terms in prevention education, such as “your sexual partners”
- Sexual orientation should not be an issue, behavior should (unprotected anal sex, etc)
- Straight MSM may be a gender bridge for STD's, however it seems to be F to M transmission in this group

Strategies

- One-on-One strategies work best
- Allow for a client-centered approach
- Comprehensive Risk and Counseling Services (CDC intervention)
- Support groups/counseling for CSA
- Respect client's identification.. Do NOT try to get them to admit to being bisexual or gay.