

***Sexual Regrets, Sexual Freedom:
The Intersection of Class, Race, Culture and
HIV Vulnerability among Black and Latina Women***



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Washington, DC

Cynthia A. Gómez, PhD
Professor, Health Education
Director, Health Equity Initiative,
San Francisco State University

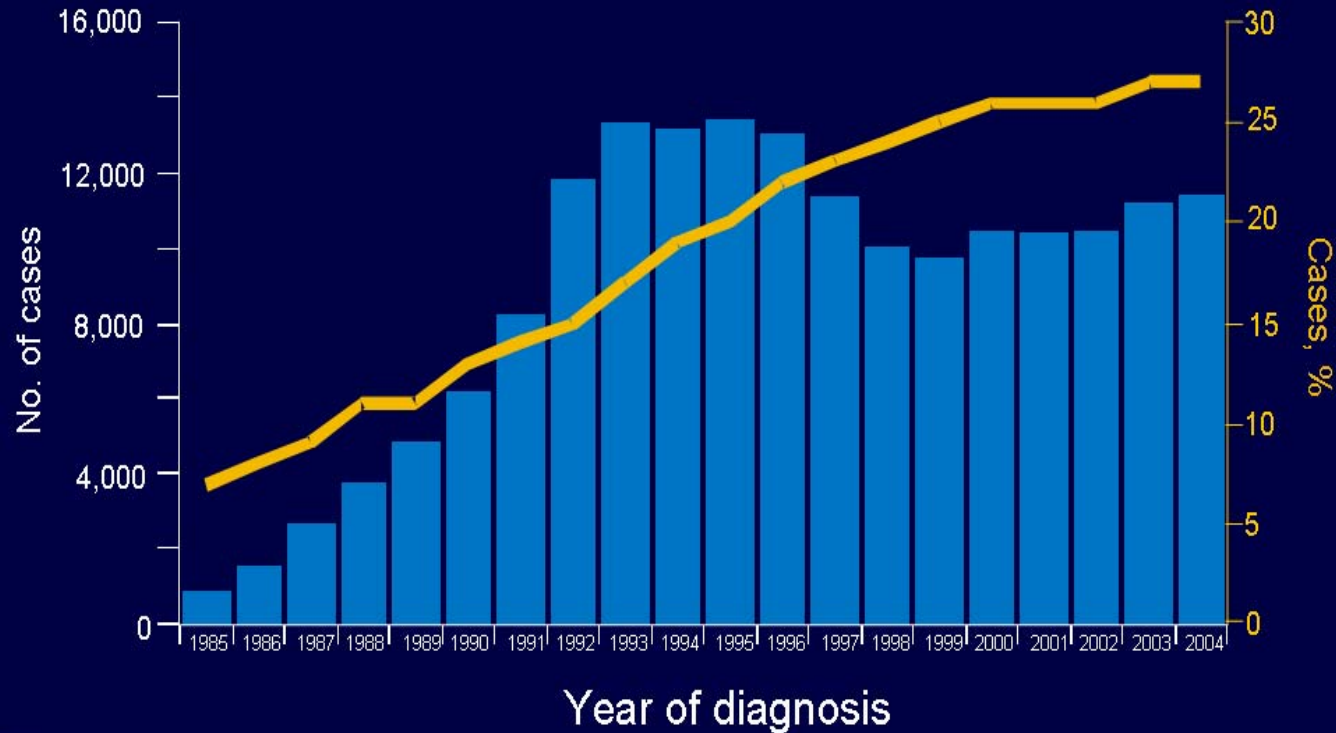


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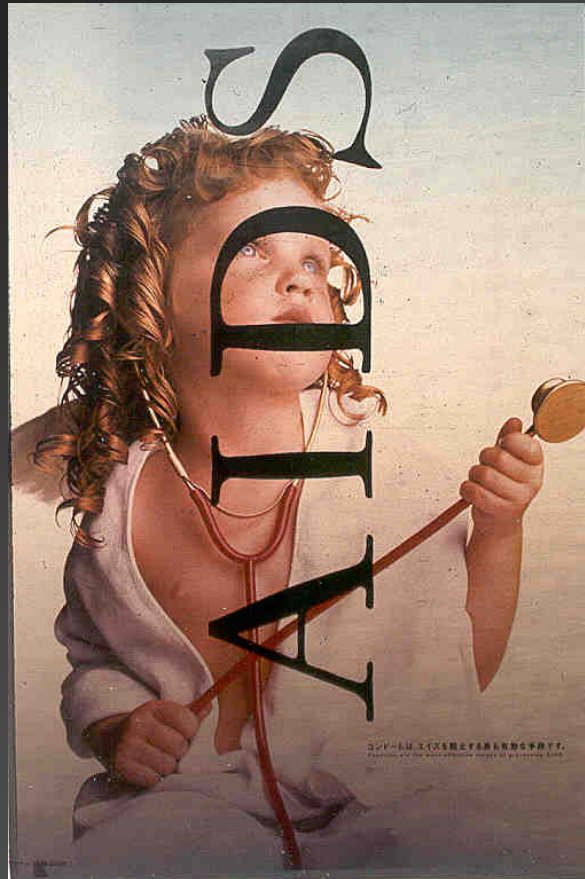
Number and Proportion of AIDS Cases among Female Adults and Adolescents 1985-2004—United States



Note. Data have been adjusted for reporting delays.



Vectors

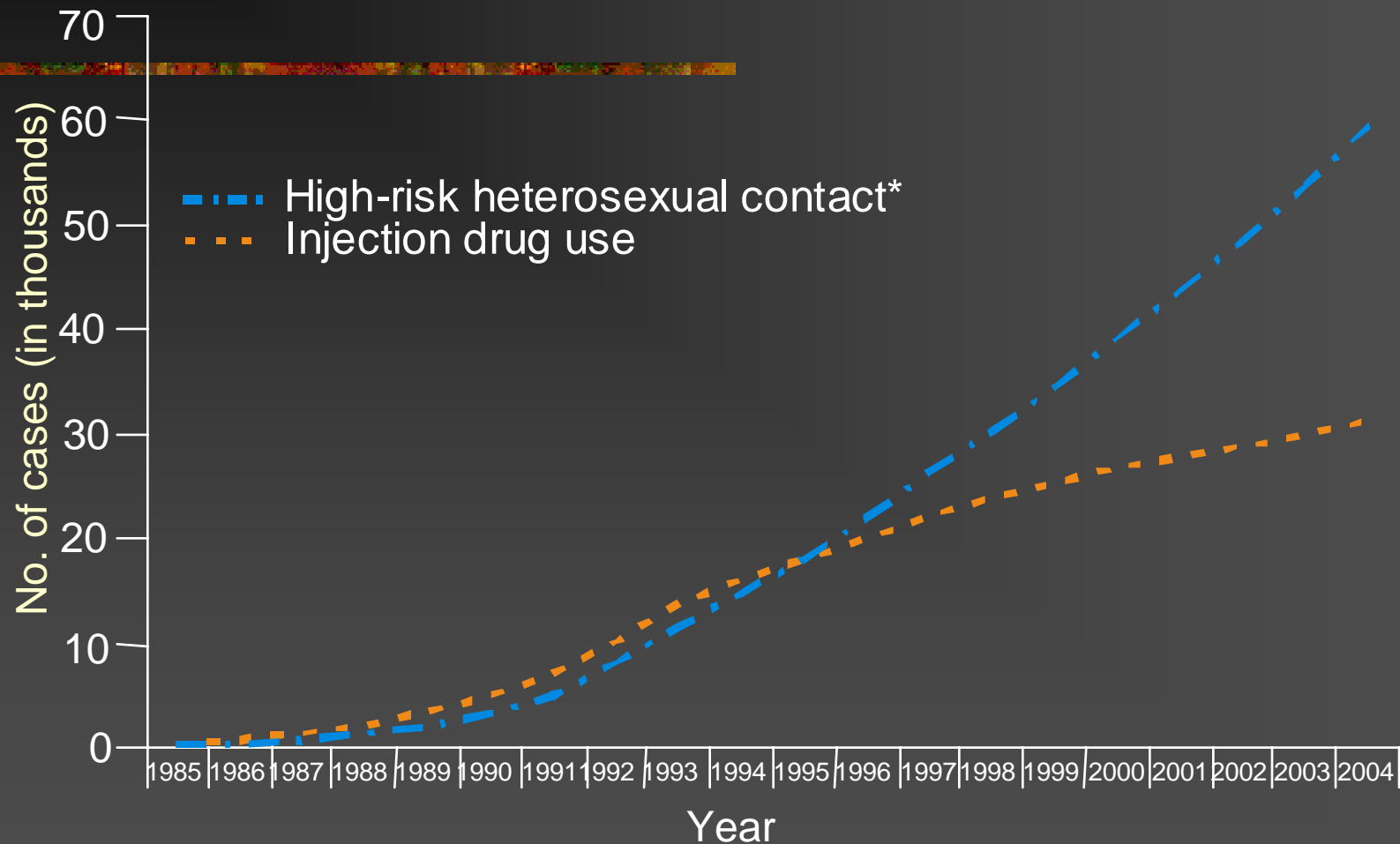


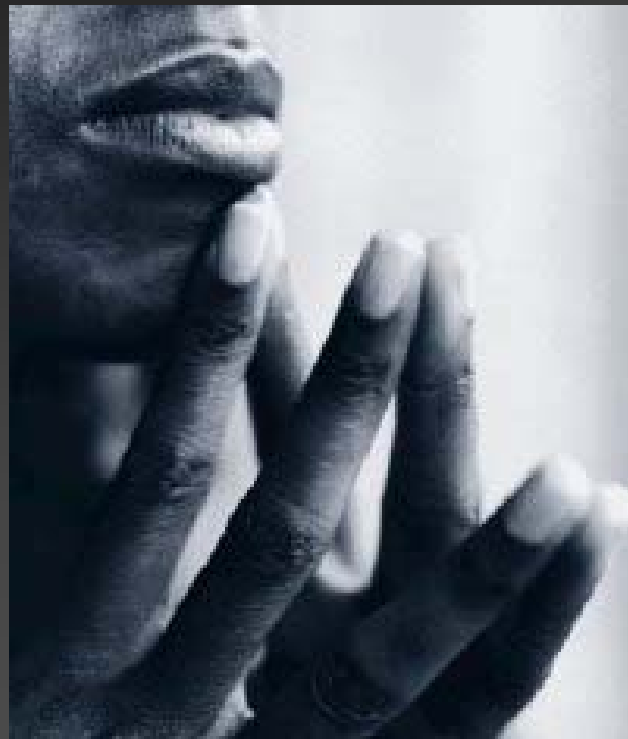
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Female Adults and Adolescents Living with AIDS by Transmission Category, 1985-2004, United States





Victims



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A Gender-Economic Model of HIV Risk in African-American and Latina Women

A longitudinal study that examines the extent to which the intersection of socio-culturally prescribed sexual gender norms and socioeconomic context (SEC) are associated with sexual risk behaviors among African American and Latina women.



Gender Economic Model

Cynthia Gomez, PI

**Olga Grinstead, Co-Investigator
Hortensia Amaro and Gail Wyatt,
Consultants**

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Why are women so vulnerable to HIV?

- Biological Factors
- Lack of information/skills
- Control over sexual relations, violence against women
- Economics
- Competing priorities
- Structural patterns



Economics/Gender



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GEM is a longitudinal study that examines the extent to which the intersection of socio-culturally prescribed sexual gender norms and socioeconomic context (SEC) are associated with sexual risk behaviors among African American and Latina women.

Street Name

A study of African American & Latina women's health.

Women's
Vision



For information call: 1-877-283-1212 (toll free)



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Eligibility Criteria

- Women who self identify as African American or Latina
- Women 18 years of age or older
- Women who live in the Bay Area
- Women who have had a least one male sex partner in the previous 12 months

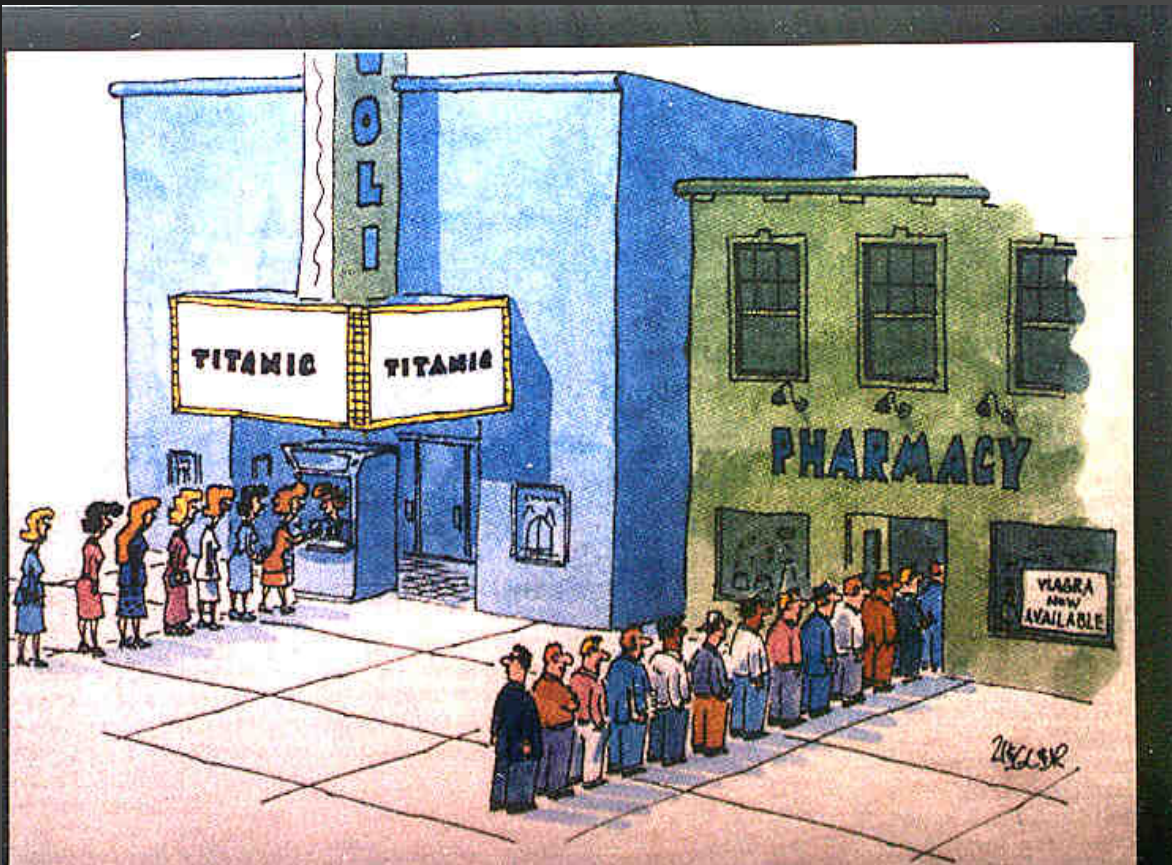


Formative Findings: Gender Roles

Latina women talked about gender roles in relation to men, whereas African American women talked about gender roles in relation to society's expectation of African American women



GENDER ROLES



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African-American Women

- Concern of public vs. private view of African-American women: “black women are strong in the street, but weak under the sheets...”
- Scarcity of African-American men leads women to hide independence or intelligence – “ we have to dumb down for our men”
- Slave history made us survivors



Latina Women

- In order to be successful, women had to "put their sexuality out there" - your sexuality comes into play in your success
- We no longer need a man for money but want respect
- Latinas needing new "values" from men
- Decision making is often based solely on gender (because he's a man)



Economics & Social Capital

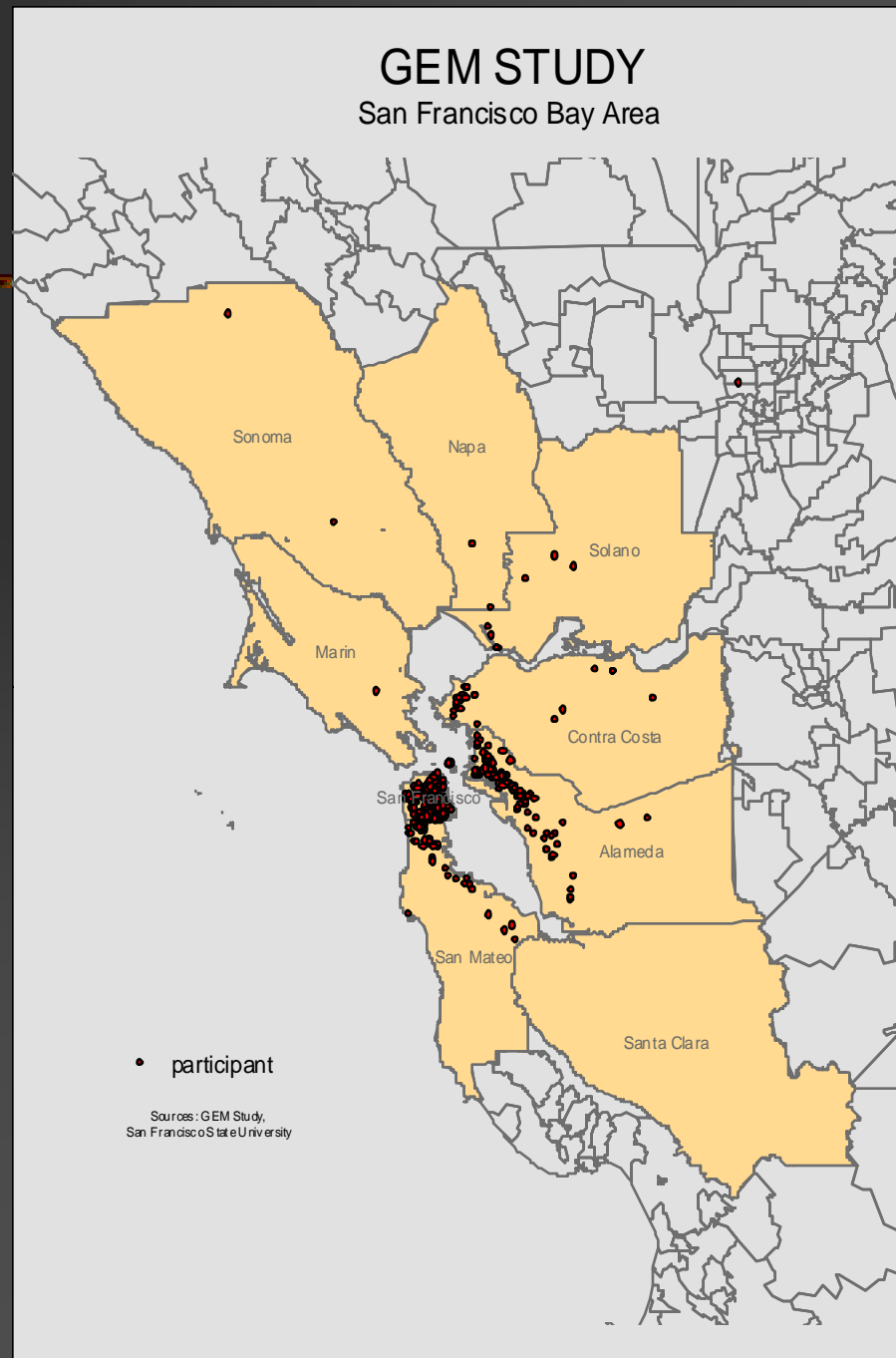
- More similarities based on class than those based on race/ethnicity
- Women with high SC were still perceived to be at risk for health issues and for STDs/HIV
- SC may work very different for women from low and high SES levels
- SC may be a vehicle for sexual risk



Methods

- Recruitment
 - Street-based
 - Venue-based
 - Quasi-RDS
- Design (N=600); 4 data points
 - ACASI
 - Neighborhood/Resource Maps
 - Qualitative component
 - Epi/neighborhood measures

Final N= 512

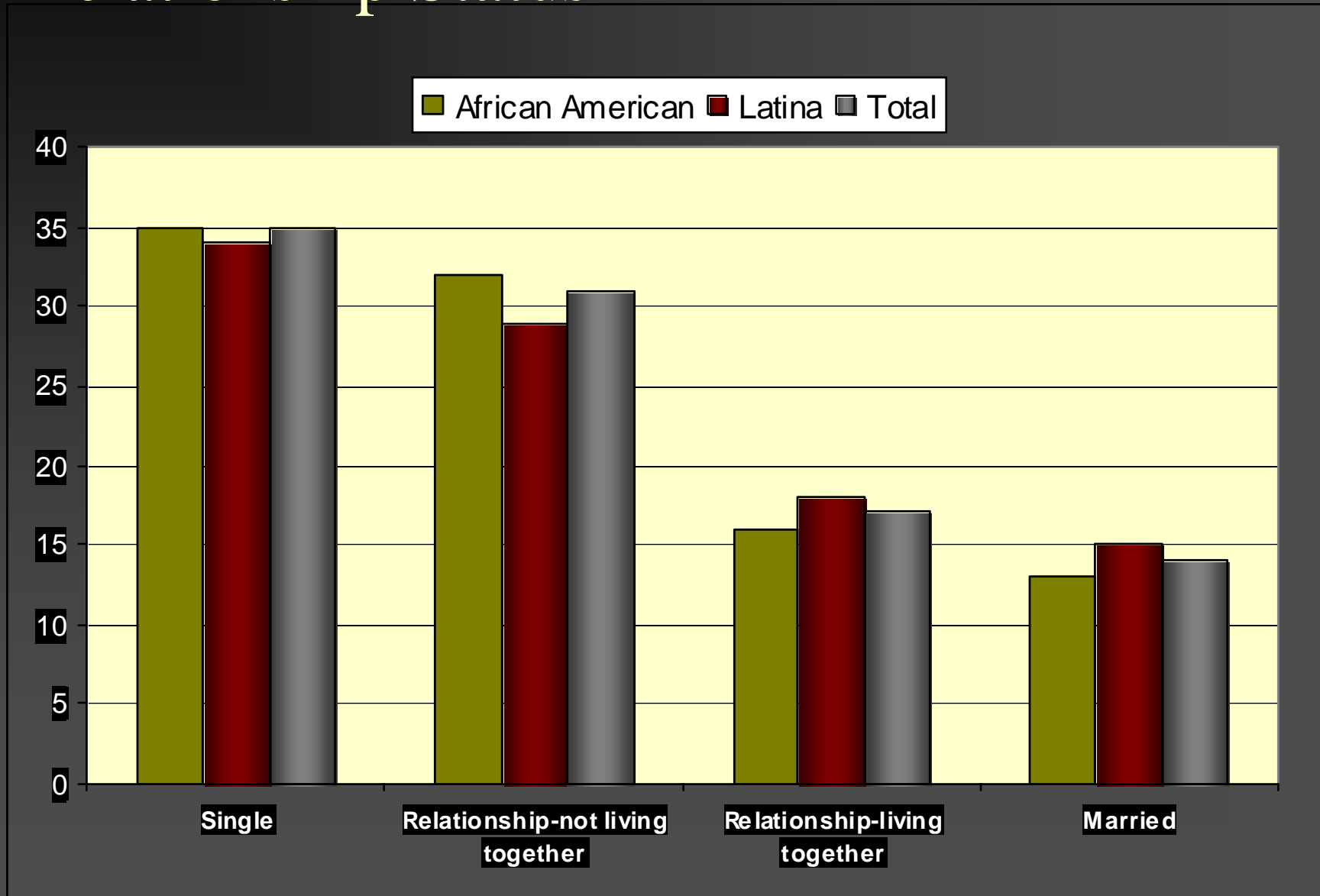


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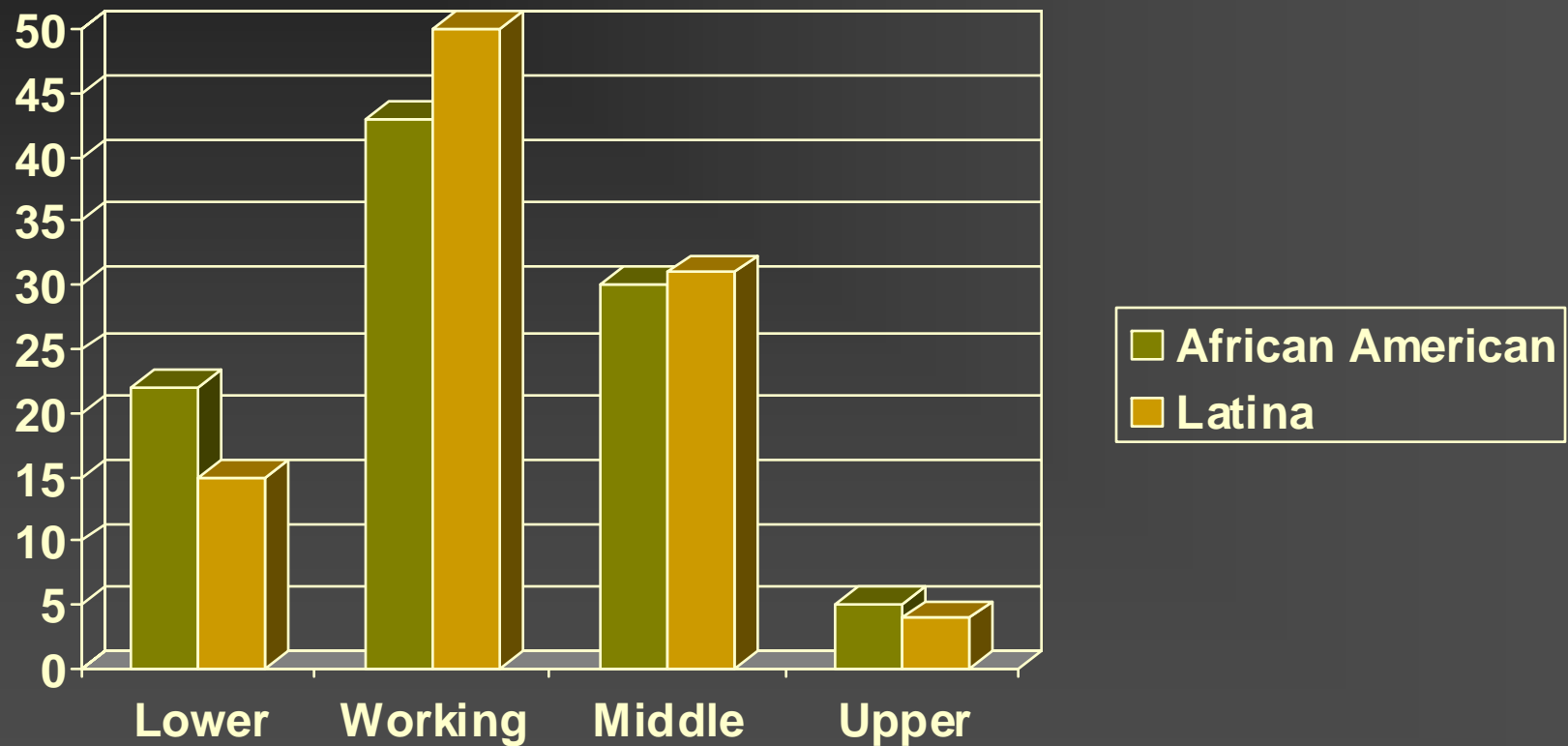
Demographic Characteristics

Characteristic	Black (N=272)	Latina (N=240)	Total (512)
Mean Age in Years (range 18-67)	36	32	34
Highest year of school (%)			
< High school	12	11	11
High school/GED	26	23	25
Some college	42	38	41
College Grad+	19	28	23
Mean Family Income (\$)	28,835	33,493	30,947

Relationship Status



Perceived Social Class



Sources of Income in Previous Six Months

	% Black Low/Working N = 173	% Black Middle/Upper N = 94	% Latina Low/Working N = 155	% Latina Middle/Upper N = 83	p< value
Full time work	38	41	45	46	
Part-time work	34	28	35	24	
Temp/odd jobs	24	32	34	23	
AFDC	30	13	12	10	.000
Section 8	14	13	8	1	.05
SSI	4	3	3	3	
Recycling	7	11	11	8	
Sex trade	4	4	3	1	
Selling/running drugs	1	2	<1	3	
Panhandling/asking others for money	4	4	3	1	

Women's Power



Women's Assets

	% Black Low/Working N = 173	% Black Middle/Upper N = 94	% Latina Low/Working N = 155	% Latina Middle/Upper N = 83	Sig P<
Itemized Deductions	11	37	14	36	***
Owns Real Estate	2	12	2	10	***
Owns Vehicle	36	46	45	59	**
IRA/Keogh	8	15	6	21	**
401K/403b	17	21	21	30	
Savings Account	64	49	53	67	**
Money Market Acct	5	12	3	15	**
CD	3	9	7	12	*
Mutual Funds	5	17	3	15	***
Owns Stocks	5	19	5	18	***

Stressors in Previous Six Months

	% Black Low/Working N = 173	% Black Middle/Upper N = 94	% Latina Low/Working N = 155	% Latina Middle/Upper N = 83	P< value
Insufficient money for necessities	73	62	73	42	.0001
Break-up with partner/ husband/lover	30	36	32	31	
Death of a close person	42	38	21	21	.0001
Physically attacked or raped	8	10	6	5	

Control over sex, coercion, violence



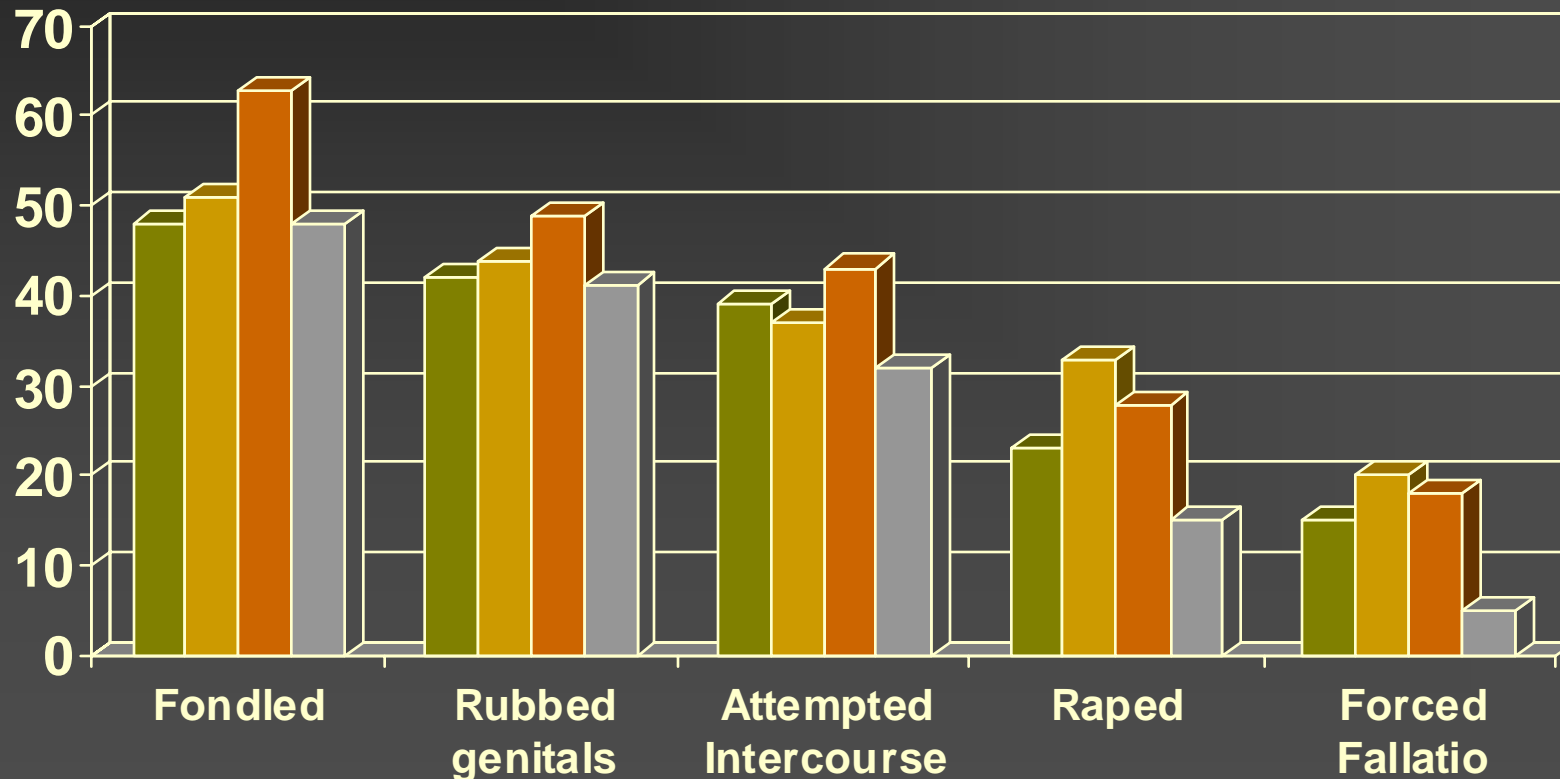
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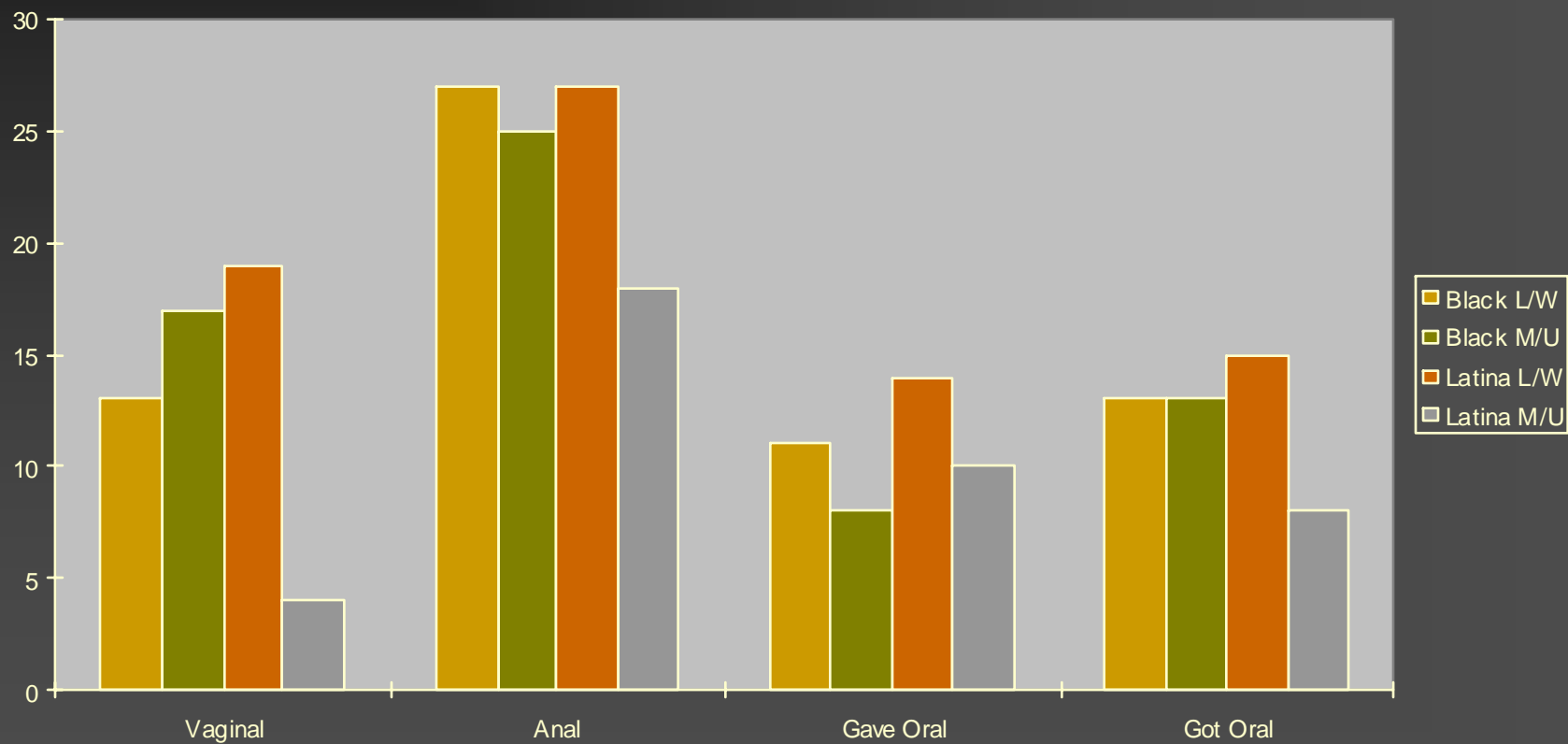
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Unwanted Sexual Experiences Prior to Age 18

■ Black L/W ■ Black M/U ■ Latina L/W ■ Latina M/U



Sexual Initiation without Choice



Women's Desires



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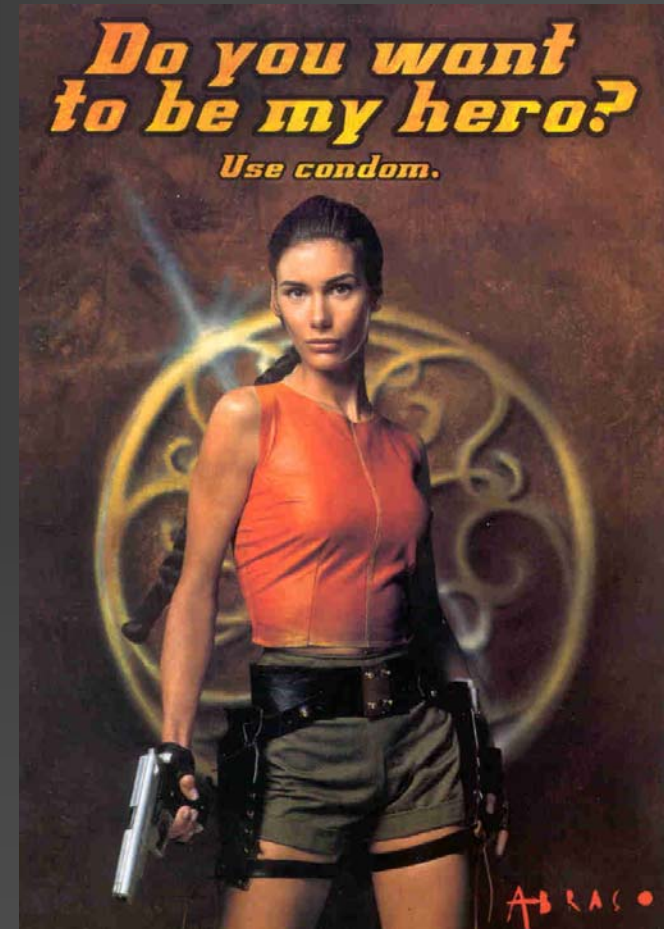
Sexual Sensation-Seeking

	% Black Low/Working N = 173	% Black Middle/Upper N = 94	% Latina Low/Working N = 155	% Latina Middle/Upper N = 83
I like "wild" uninhibited sexual encounters	51	46	45	44
Physical sensations are the most important thing about having sex	61	55	55	61
I enjoy the sensation of intercourse without a condom.	79	81	70	78
My sexual partners probably think I am a "risk taker."	19	19	19	21
When it comes to sex, physical attraction is more important to me than how well I know the person.	20	17	15	10

Sexual Sensation Seeking

	% Black Low/Working N = 173	% Black Middle/Upper N = 94	% Latina Low/Working N = 155	% Latina Middle/Upper N = 83
I enjoy watching "X-rated" videos.	48	43	42	44
I have said things that were not exactly true to get a person to have sex with me.	10	12	13	10
I am interested in trying out new sexual experiences.	59	54	57	67
I feel like exploring my sexuality. * $p < .01$	48	54	66	63
I like to have new exciting sexual experiences and sensations. * $p < .05$	63	66	76	76

Make it sexy or make it heroic?



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Sexual Partners

	% Black Low/Working N = 173	% Black Middle/Upper N = 94	% Latina Low/Working N = 155	% Latina Middle/Upper N = 83
Mean # Lifetime Male	23	16	13	10
% Ever Female	27	25	18	19
Main Male (6mo)	84	83	82	89
Non-Main Male (6 mo)	27	29	40	20
Any Risky Male (6mo) ^{***}	59	51	60	34

Type of Partner in Past Six Months

	% Black Low/Working N = 173	% Black Middle/Upper N = 94	% Latina Low/Working N = 155	% Latina Middle/Upper N = 83
None	8	12	7	6
Main Only	66	59	54	74
Non-Main Only	8	5	12	5
Concurrent	18	24	28	15

Perceived Vulnerability



If married, no risk?

Male behaviors:

STD

MSM

MSW

IDU



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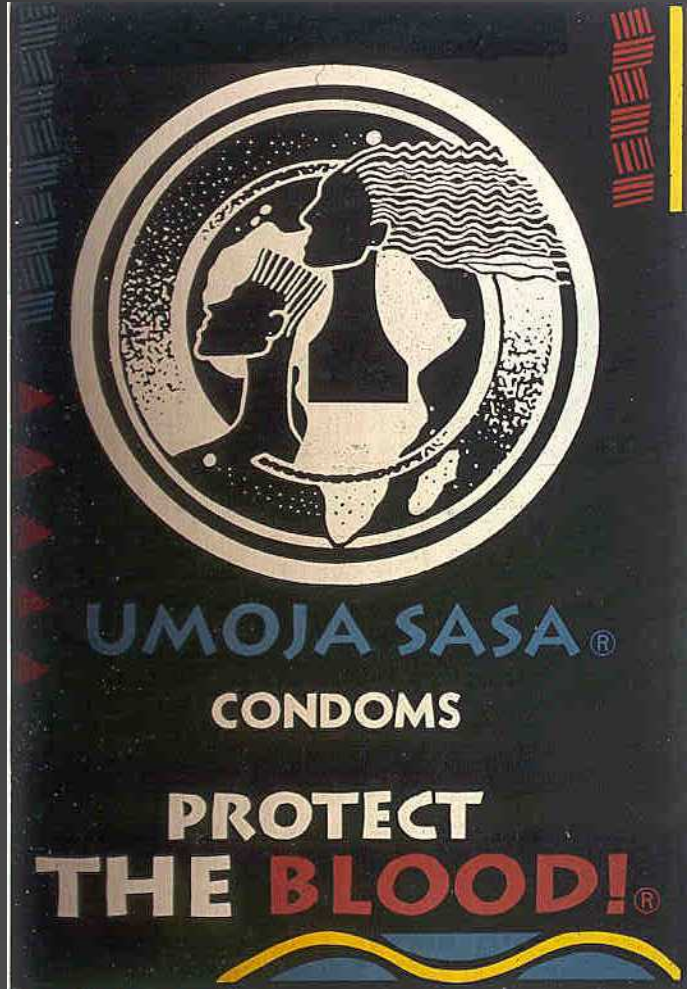
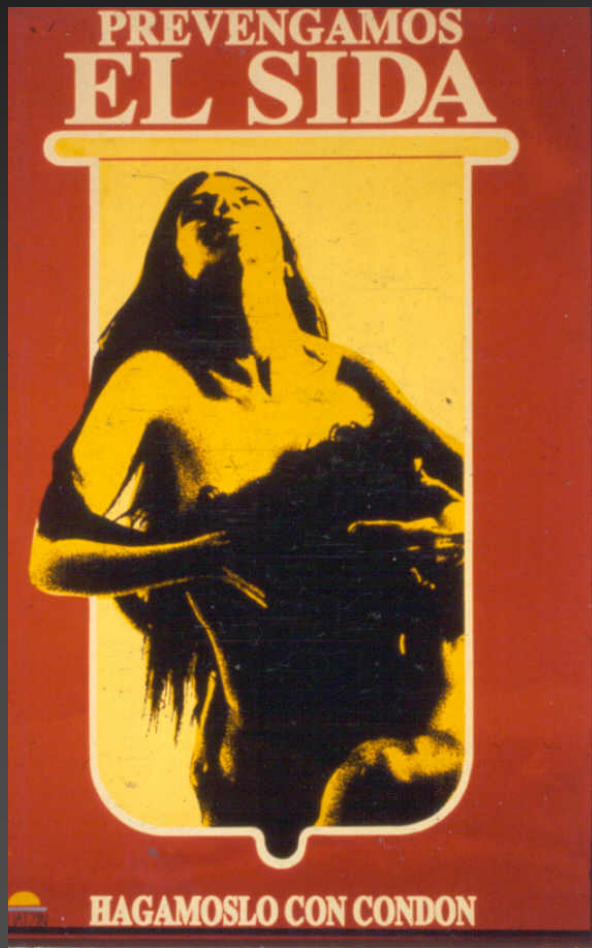
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Type of Risky Main Partner in Past Six Months (N=423)

	% Black Low/Working N = 146	% Black Middle/Upper N = 78	% Latina Low/Working N = 127	% Latina Middle/Upper N = 72
HIV+	2	3	3	0
STD	6	5	13	6
IDU	2	5	4	1
MSM	6	8	4	3
MSW***	47	37	41	23

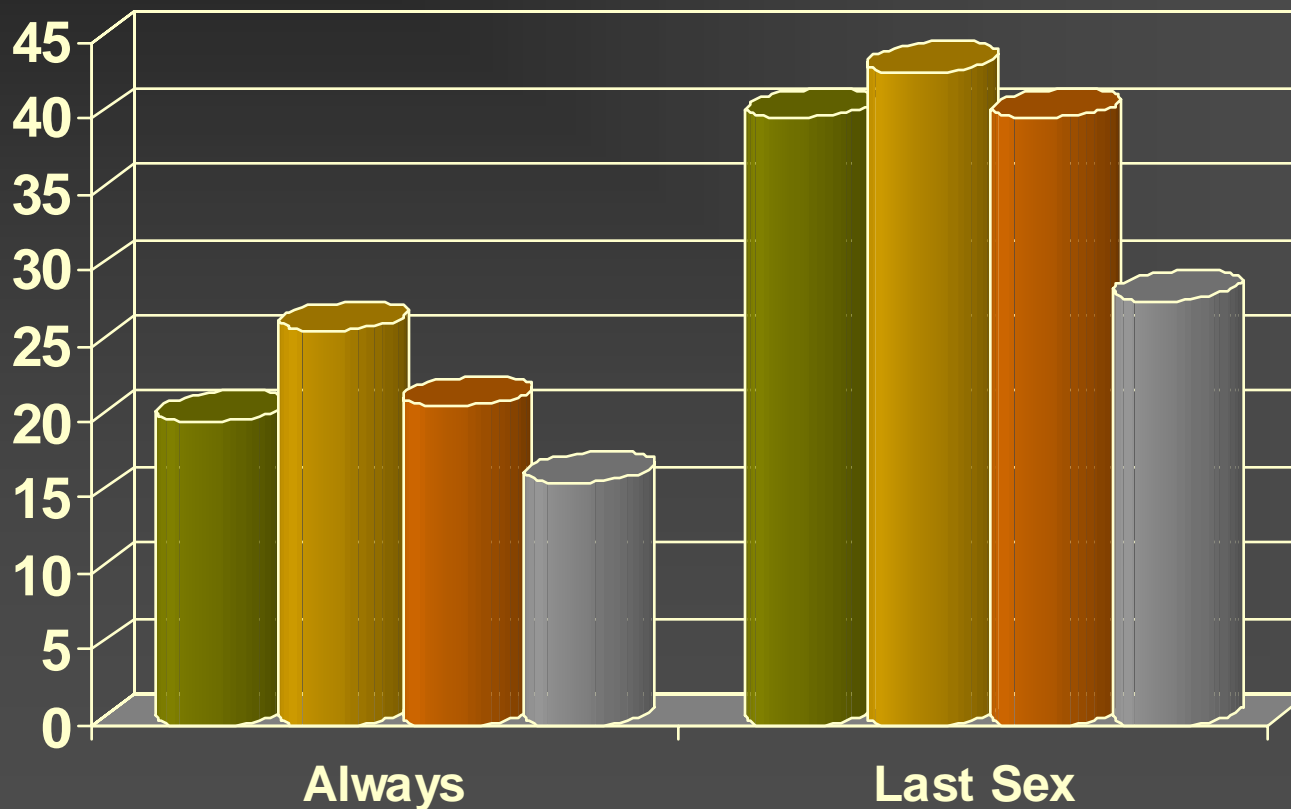
Type of Risky Non-Main Partner in Past Six Months (N=104)

	% Black Low/Working N = 22	% Black Middle/Upper N = 16	% Latina Low/Working N = 52	% Latina Middle/Upper N = 14
HIV+	23	3	19	0
STD	50	24	25	21
IDU	13	12	8	8
MSM	37	58	51	50
MSW	92	95	94	93



Condom Use with Any Partner

■ Black L/W ■ Black M/U ■ Latina L/W ■ Latina M/U



Qualitative

- Think about all your sexual experiences as an adult and tell me about a sexual encounter you had that you later regretted doing?
- Many of us have an ideal partner in mind, what would your ideal partner be like?



Sexual Regrets

- **Having sex too young:**
 - “should have listened to my mother” “men only want one thing”
 - Having sex in high school “I slept with him just because he was cute” felt uncomfortable around him and never spoke with him after it happened.
- **Having had too many sexual partners:**
 - “I was a whore” at 18 started sleeping around; once arrested for prostitution regrets influencing friends to do what she was doing.
- **Having sex without really wanting to have sex:**
 - Having sex so boyfriend can leave her alone
 - Having sex when she didn’t want to with the guy she has been dating for 6 years. Feels obligated to have sex with him; if not, he would get mad and verbally abuse her. She is a little afraid of current boyfriend because he has shown some signs of abusive behavior like pushing her around and choking her, but she played it off like he was just playing around.



Summary

- No differences regarding:
 - Sex trade
 - Physical/ sexual assault in past six months
 - Rates of childhood sexual abuse
 - Rates of forced initiation of sexual behaviors
 - Proportion of those seeking uninhibited sexual encounters, enjoying X-rated videos
 - Large proportion of high-risk non-main partners
 - Low levels of consistent condom use
 - Proportion with concurrent relationships



Differences

■ Race/Class:

- Black women more likely to experience economic stress and death of close person in their life
- Black women have larger number of lifetime male partners
- Lower class Black women have higher proportion of MSW main partner
- Latina women more likely to want to explore sexuality and have new/exciting sexual experiences
- Higher class Latina women less likely to identify high risk partner and least likely to use condoms at last sex.



Implications

- Sexuality – what does it mean?
- Regrets
- Desires
- Can women take control?
- Future Interventions



Acknowledgements

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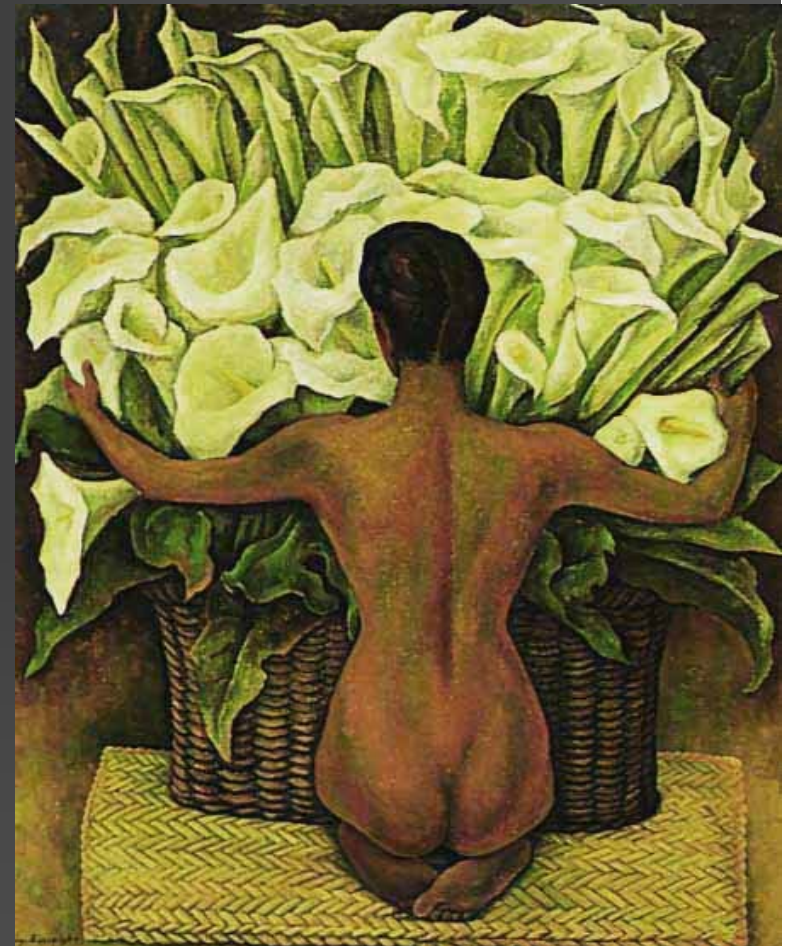
Tor Nielands, PhD

Our Participants

Contact:

drcgomez@sfsu.edu

Tel. 415-405-4350



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