

# Gender, Sexual Relationships, and HIV Risk Among Homeless Men in Los Angeles County

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## Introduction / Study Goals

### Risk for HIV/AIDS is unequally distributed

•Homeless, poor, people of color, men are more likely to be infected, more women due to heterosexual sex

### Men who have sex with women have not received as much research attention

•Studies of HIV and heterosexual sex have typically focused on the women's perspective

### There is a need for a greater understanding of their point of view

•HIV risk, condom use, attitudes about gender roles  
•Some evidence that endorsement of gender roles are related to risky sexual behavior

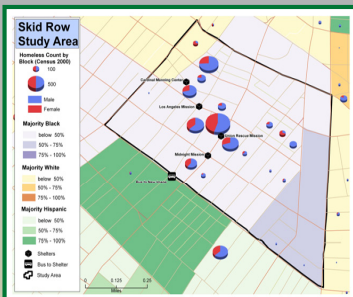
### Goal 1: Understand Context of HIV risk of homeless men who have sex with women

•Identify and describe the gender role beliefs of homeless men living around Skid Row  
•Explore the association between these beliefs and risky sexual behavior

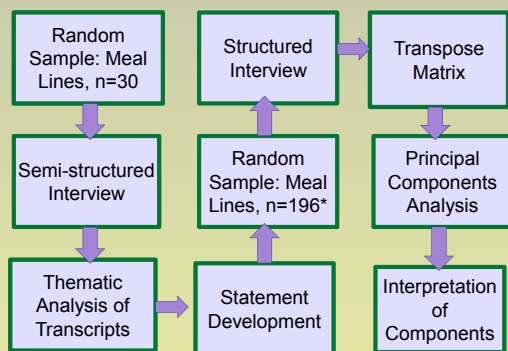
### Goal 2: Inform HIV risk reduction interventions with homeless men

•Improving Education, improving interactions with service providers  
•Identifying and removing structural barriers to healthy lifestyles

## Setting: Skid Row, Los Angeles



## Methods: Consensus Analysis



## Sample

	Ethnicity	Education	Age	Experience with Homelessness
Stage 1: n = 30	77% African American, 7% White, 14% Latino, 2% Other	Median 12 years	Median 44 years	Median 4 years (range 2 weeks, 16 years)
Stage 2: n = 196*	72% African American, 8% White, 13% Latino, 2% Other	Median 12 years	Median 48 years	Median 3 years 3 months (range 1 week, 36 years)

\*Preliminary analyses. Study sample will eventually be 300+

## Thematic Analysis

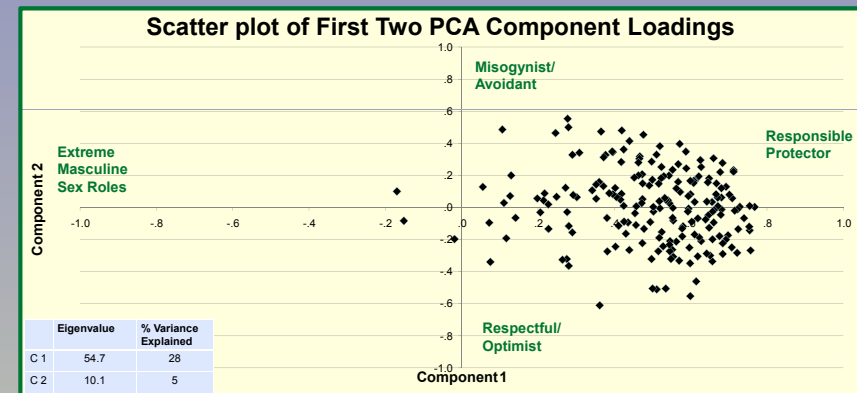
	Society	Families	Relationships	Sex Roles
Expectations of Men	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Responsible</li> <li>Stoic</li> <li>Productive</li> <li>Employed</li> <li>Heterosexual</li> <li>Blue collar work</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Breadwinner</li> <li>Pay the bills</li> <li>Make the big decisions</li> <li>Protect</li> <li>Discipline children</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Protector</li> <li>Decision Maker</li> <li>Provide financially in various ways, including buying expensive things for women</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pursuer</li> <li>Large sexual appetite</li> <li>Dominant</li> <li>Be physically strong and look tough</li> <li>Expected to be promiscuous</li> </ul>
Expectations of Women	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Educated</li> <li>Look good</li> <li>Be mothers</li> <li>Some men said that women can do anything that men can do</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Take care of children</li> <li>Cooking and cleaning the house</li> <li>Women are sometimes the real decision makers of the family</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Loyal</li> <li>Obedient</li> <li>Faithful</li> <li>Do what men want sexually</li> <li>Don't interact with other men</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Passive sexually</li> <li>Be a challenge for men sexually</li> <li>Responsible for contraception/protection</li> <li>Some men thought women can have dominant sexual role</li> </ul>
Homeless Men's Experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Considered outcasts by society</li> <li>Society expects them to work and does not understand when they are unemployed</li> <li>Expected to be drug or alcohol abusers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>They are expected to not have their own families</li> <li>Homeless men can't protect their families on the street</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Unable to have long-term stable relationships</li> <li>Have limited options for relationships</li> <li>Risky relationships are sometimes their only option</li> <li>Many relationships involve co-dependency and make recovery difficult</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lack privacy for intimacy with women</li> <li>Sexual relationships are usually short-term</li> <li>Men have to hide the fact that they are homeless</li> <li>They have to save up their money in order to have sex with women, either in relationships, meeting them in bars, or paying for sex</li> </ul>

## Example Quotes

	Society	Families	Relationships	Sex Roles
Expectations of Men	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>"Having certain things - you know, clothes, money, a car... Making the most money helps - having a car in your name, having a house in your name."</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>"You're supposed to protect your family and protect your loved ones, don't let any harm or danger come to them."</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>"Basically what you say, goes. But you know, according to the man, he still has the right to get an opinion from his girlfriend or his wife or his significant other, but mainly I think the man has the last say-so..."</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>"And they expect men to be...virile and sexual"</li> <li>"A man, you're a dog—so what? That's what we're expected to be. A man is expected to cheat. A woman is expected to be faithful, loyal or whatever."</li> </ul>
Expectations of Women	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>"You have certain things women can do, and certain things men are supposed to do, but some women can do them the same things as men..."</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>"Well, society expects a woman to do nothing but just cook and clean all day. That's society's point of view. My point of view is pretty much the equal role."</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>"Ask men for everything, how to do everything"</li> <li>"To be there for—support their mate. Stay loyal to their mate."</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>"Well, a woman is supposed to keep all her sexual stuff to her. It's not ladylike or anything for her to be open or talk about it in public. They expect her to be more like resisting in a sexual kind of way."</li> </ul>
Homeless Men's Experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>"Homeless men are the outcasts of society."</li> <li>"Society doesn't have any [expectations]. They expect homeless men to just put their blanket down in the doorway and go to sleep."</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>"[Regarding homeless men and families]: 'Society would be shocked. Most people don't want to even look at a situation like that, because it's very, very depressing.'"</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>"Usually, most women that are smart don't have a serious relationship with a homeless man. They have something like, you know, a hustle relationship. You know, 'When you get a few dollars, give me a call'."</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>"...there's a certain way that people downtown have sex. Sex on the sidewalk is big down here—I don't know if you know about it. Those tents you see, well what do you think the tents were set up for? For them to socialize?"</li> </ul>

## Results

### Consensus Analysis: Principal Components Analysis



## Interpretation of Components

	Agreement Statements	Disagreement Statements
Component 1: Responsible Protector/ Equal/ Relationship Difficulty Vs. Extreme Masculine Sex Roles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Responsible Protector</b></li> <li>A man's #1 responsibility is to protect and provide for his family.</li> <li>The most important thing for a man is to be respected.</li> <li>Men and women should share decisions equally.</li> <li>A man should NOT expect sex from a woman, just because he spent money on her.</li> <li>Women can be leaders as well as men can.</li> <li><b>Relationship Difficulty</b></li> <li>Protecting a woman on the street is difficult and dangerous.</li> <li>It's hard to have serious relationships on the street, because there is no privacy or place to be alone together.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Extreme Masculine Sex Roles</b></li> <li>A man can be in a relationship with several women at a time, but a woman should only be in a relationship with one man at a time.</li> <li>If a man has an opportunity to have sex, he should not turn it down.</li> <li>In a serious relationship, a woman who asks a man to use a condom is probably cheating on him.</li> <li>If a woman refuses sex with her man, she is giving him the "green light" to have sex with other women.</li> <li>Men who have a lot of sex with different women should be admired.</li> <li>A woman should hide her interest in sex.</li> </ul>
Component 2: Misogynistic/Avoidant Vs. Respectful/Optimistic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Misogynistic</b></li> <li>I think that most women would lie just to get ahead.</li> <li>When it comes down to it a lot of women are dishonest.</li> <li>It is generally safer not to trust women too much.</li> <li><b>Relationship Avoidant</b></li> <li>It's almost impossible to have a serious, long-term relationship with a woman if you're homeless.</li> <li>Homeless men don't have a lot of opportunities for sex unless they pay for it.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Respectful</b></li> <li>Women are just as trustworthy as men.</li> <li>A man should NOT expect sex from a woman, just because he spent money on her.</li> <li><b>Optimistic about Relationships</b></li> <li>It's difficult, but supporting a woman on the street is doable.</li> <li>Having a serious relationship on the street is worth the effort.</li> </ul>

## Correlations

	Component 1	Component 2
HIV Knowledge	.39**	-.08
Condom Efficacy	.17*	.06
Power Dynamics	-.34**	.28**
# of Recent Sex Partners	-.16*	-.07

p-value: \*<.05, \*\*<.01

## Conclusions

- Men identified a mixture of traditional and contemporary views of gender
  - Strong agreement among men endorsing male role of protector and role model and rejecting traditional masculine sex roles including a double standard
  - Strong agreement about difficulty forming stable relationships on street
- Some men endorsed a difficult but optimistic model while others endorsed a misogynistic/pessimistic model
- Recommend structural interventions that help men form stable relationships to help them fulfill the highly salient responsible/equal masculine role