Perceived norms

Efficacy

The model is a good fit for sexual behaviors for African American young adults.

Researchers have shown the TPB predicts condom use and other safer sex behaviors.\(^1,2,3,4\)

This study used baseline assessments from participants in a safer sex intervention, HOPE (HIV/STI Outreach, Prevention and Education) Parties.

We hypothesized that participating in HOPE parties will directly affect the participants’ knowledge, perceived norms, and self-efficacy related to safer sex behaviors. We also hypothesized that changes in these psychosocial factors will improve desired outcomes of communicating with sex partners and safer sex behaviors. In this study, we explore these hypothesized associations between the psychosocial factors and outcomes with the baseline data.

HOPE Intervention

African American young adults (ages 18-24) attended HOPE parties and received education on STIs and safer sex. HOPE parties typically occurred in the homes of volunteer hosts, who invite their friends, family members, and other acquaintances for a 2-hour program. HOPE parties offer participants the opportunity to learn about HIV/STI prevention methods, assess their risk, develop a risk reduction/safer sex behavior plan, and practice communication and decision making skills. HOPE parties include role-playing to identify and address triggers to risky sexual behavior, and facilitate discussions about partner exclusivity, reducing sex partners and refusing sex. Participants will uniquely determine their partners and safer sex behaviors.  

We tested intervention effectiveness of HOPE parties to validate our theoretical model. The model (as depicted above) has an excellent fit to the data. All paths shown are statistically significant and all statistically significant paths are shown (this is the parsimonious model). Knowledge is only related to Communications with Partners and Safer Sex Behaviors through the mediated relationships through Perceived Norms.

Both Perceived Norms and Self-Efficacy uniquely predicted Communications with Partners and Safer Sex Behaviors. Communications with Partners also uniquely predicted Safer Sex Behaviors.

This model explained 14% of the variance in Communications with Partners and 8% of the variance in Safer Sex Behaviors.

The findings provide some implications for HIV/STI interventions for young adults:

- The model is a good fit for sexual behaviors for African American young adults.
- Safer sex knowledge is essential to safer sex interventions, but not sufficient. HIV/STI education programs need to include elements that enhance self-efficacy and modify perceptions of peer normative behaviors.
- Improving partner communication skills centered around safer sexuality may be an effective way to increase adoption of healthier sex behaviors.
- Practical applications such as role playing may be more effective in increasing the adoption of healthy sex behaviors.

References


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