Background

Young Black MSM and the HIV Epidemic
- Blacks continue to experience increasing HIV incidence rates and Young Black MSM (YBMSM), 13-24 years, experience the greatest rate of HIV infections.1,2

Internet Dating and Sex Behaviors
- Internet dating has shown to be popular for youth due to its accessibility, affordability, anonymity, and customization.3
- Higher frequency of using the internet to find sex partners has been correlated with more risky sex behaviors and higher risk of HIV transmission.4,5

Dating Phone Apps and Behavioral Implications
- Dating phone apps are also becoming increasingly popular.
- Current research findings have concluded that:
  - Most MSM who use dating phone apps use them to "hook up" or seek sex
  - Meet recent sex partners on dating phone apps
  - Did not always ask sex partners about their HIV status
  - Reported believing that it was unlikely or very unlikely that they were going to contract HIV.6,7,8

The impact of these apps on decision-making around sex behaviors is understood.

Purpose and Significance

Gain an understanding of the dating experiences and sex behaviors of a group of both HIV positive and negative Young Black MSM who use dating phone apps.

The importance of these dating phone apps to YBMSM paired with the increasing rates of HIV for YBMSM, suggest a need for qualitative research that will give context to their dating and sex behaviors when using dating phone apps.

There is a paucity of research addressing the emerging technological contexts in which YBMSM seek sexual partners and engage in protective or risky sex behaviors.

The information gained from this research has the potential to lead to a better understanding of the context of these young men’s dating and sex experiences and aid in the development of successful interventions aimed at preventing HIV transmission in this high-risk group.

Results

Dating app phone apps and dating experiences revolved around the following four themes:

1. App Description
- Most participants had more than one dating phone app
- They described similarities and differences between apps, app preferences, and expectations

2. Dating Phone App Use
(Fig 1.)
Users’ dating phone app criteria depended on usability, target population, reputations in the “Black gay community”, and perceived success rates in meeting attractive men using the apps.

3. Information Disclosure
- All participants were concerned about considered confidentiality
- Most participants believed that protecting one’s identity was important
- HIV positive and negative participants had different concerns about disclosing sex-related information, HIV status, and identifiable information

4. Communicating, Dating, and Hooking Up (Fig. 2)
- All participants wanted to communicate with guys before meeting them in person
- The length of time varied (hours vs. months) and the method of communication varied (text, video chat, etc.) across participants.

Method

We conducted 20 semi-structured in-depth interviews with both HIV- negative and positive YBMSM, aged 18-24, who reported regular use of dating phone apps.

We recruited participants from community organizations and HIV clinics in Atlanta, Georgia

We used the Integrated Behavior Model to frame our investigation of the potential influences of dating phone apps.

All interviews were transcribed verbatim. We conducted a thematic analysis of codes identified in transcripts, summaries, and memos. A modified grounded theory approach was used to guide our inductive and deductive qualitative analysis.

Participant Demographics

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<th>Variable</th>
<th>%</th>
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<tr>
<td>109 respondents</td>
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<td>25 eligible*</td>
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<td>20 enrolled (10 HIV+/10 HIV- )</td>
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<td>Average age: 23.05 (SD=1.54)</td>
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<td>At least high school diploma or GED: 85.0% (n=17)</td>
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<td>Average number of sex partners in the past year 8.35 (SD=10.11)</td>
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References


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