



## National HIV Prevention Conference

Atlanta, Georgia - Jun 12-15, 2005

### **[TITLE:] BINGE DRINKING AMONG HETEROSEXUAL MEN AND WOMEN RECRUITED FROM SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED DISEASE CLINICS IN TEN METROPOLITAN AREAS OF THE UNITED STATES, 2002**

*Natl HIV Prev Conf. 2005 Jun 12-15 (abstract no. M1-B0602)*

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**BACKGROUND:** Binge drinking results in acute impairment, including lowering of inhibitions that can lead to risky behavior. Reduction of binge drinking among adults is one of the leading health indicators in Healthy People 2010. In addition to other adverse health problems, binge drinking is associated with behaviors that can put a person at high risk for sexually transmitted diseases. The objective of this analysis is to describe binge drinking behaviors among heterosexuals at high risk for HIV infection.

**METHODS:** Data are from the 2002 HIV Testing Survey (HITS), an anonymous, cross-sectional interview survey conducted in populations at high risk for HIV in 10 large metropolitan areas. Men and women were eligible to participate in the survey if they were at least 18 years old, a resident of the state for at least 6 months, and gave informed consent. We analyzed data for heterosexual patients at STD clinics and calculated a Chi-Square test of significance for selected risky behaviors. For this analysis, binge drinking was defined as having five or more drinks on a single day.

**RESULTS:** Of the 1,232 eligible participants, 462 (38%) reported current binge drinking ( $\geq 5$  drinks per day at least once during the previous 30 days). Of these, 47% binged on  $\geq 3$  days of the previous month, 37% binged 4-14 days, and 16% binged on at least half of the days. Men were nearly twice as likely as women to binge drink (46% vs. 27%,  $p < 0.001$ ). Unprotected intercourse (UI), defined as not always using a condom while having sex, during the previous 12 months was high among all eligible participants (90%). However, UI was higher among binge drinkers than among non-binge drinkers (94% vs. 88%,  $p = 0.001$ ). During the previous 12 months, binge drinkers were also significantly more likely to report having sex with partners met through the Internet (4% vs. 2%,  $p = 0.04$ ),

$\geq 4$  sexual partners (36% vs. 19%,  $p < 0.001$ ), sex with non-primary partners (65% vs. 43%,  $p < 0.001$ ), and exchanging money or drugs for sex (12% vs. 6%,  $p = 0.002$ ).

**CONCLUSIONS:** Although risky sexual behaviors are to be expected among men and women attending STD clinics, the results of this analysis show that the risks are even higher among those who reported binge drinking. Screening for alcohol abuse and referring clients for evaluation and counseling could help reduce risky sexual behaviors among adults attending STD clinics.



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M1-B0602

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