



National HIV Prevention Conference

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[TITLE:] HIV PREVENTION WITH MEXICAN/LATINO MIGRANT WORKERS: REVIEW, CRITIQUE AND RECOMMENDATIONS

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Organista, KC

School of Social Welfare; University of California, Berkeley, Berkeley, CA

ISSUE: Mexican/Latino migrant laborers, who live and work in the United States for extended periods of time, are at risk for HIV for numerous reasons related to both the nature of migratory labor in the U.S. as well as their own background characteristics: Work comprised primarily of young adult men far from home, of low SES backgrounds, limited English, frequently undocumented, and experiencing loneliness and isolation in addition to frequent dangerous working conditions, exploitation, harassment, and low access to health and human services. Consequences of this experience include increased number of sexual partners in the U.S., including sex between men and with female sex workers, excessive drinking, risk taking under stress, etc. Sex between men continues to be the major risk factor among Latinos in general, immigrants, and most likely migrants. Heterosexual HIV transmission in the U.S. is also a significant risk factor, with consequent risk to wives and females partners back in Mexico/country of origin.

SETTING: Multiple transnational locations ranging from Mexican/Latin American sending, and U.S. receiving, communities, including migrant farmworker streams, day labor cites, and various other work-related locations in the vast service sector.

PROJECT: This talk is based on a review of the literature about what we know about HIV prevention outcome research with Mexican migrant laborers, and research on other relevant populations, offering both critique and recommendations for future research and service directions. The review was commissioned by the University of California, Office of the President's California-Mexico AIDS Initiative, University wide AIDS Research Project, California Program on Access to Care, and California Policy Research Project. The review was published in a special supplemental issue of JAIDS (November 2004) dedicated to the topic area and including other reviews in the area of epidemiology, treatment, policy, and situation in Mexico.

RESULTS: Too little research exists in this specialized topic area of HIV prevention, and the little that does exist reflects and overly-individualistic behavioral science approach with too little regard for structural-environmental and social-cultural factors that pattern and influence HIV risk. There continues to be a compelling need for theoretical frameworks to better understand how environmental, social, cultural, and migration-related processes influence sexual behaviors and sexual cultures among Mexican/Latino migrant laborers.

LESSONS LEARNED: The following prevention intervention strategies appear to be either successful or promising in reducing HIV risk in Mexican/ Latino migrant laborers: HIV/AIDS-related knowledge can be improved via community-based efforts that utilize Spanish-language media and festivals; sexual risk taking can be reduced by addressing risk factors within their social and cultural contexts (e.g., increased condom use with female sex workers on the part of farmworkers; decreased risk sex on the part of migrant day laborers) and by utilizing Mexican/Latino-based entertainment media to spark discussion and problem-solving around HIV risk and its reduction.



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