
PURPOSE: We examined sexual risk behaviors and unrecognized HIV infection among heterosexually active African-American and Hispanic women.

METHODS: Women not previously diagnosed with HIV infection were recruited in rural counties in North Carolina (African American) and Alabama (African American), and an urban county in southern Florida (Hispanic) using multiple methods. They completed a computer-administered questionnaire and were tested for HIV infection.

RESULTS: Between October 2008 and September 2009, 1,527 women (1,013 African American and 514 Hispanic) enrolled in the study. Median age was 35 years (range, 18-59), 33% were married or living as married, 50% had an annual household income of $12,000 or less, and 56% were employed full or part time. Two women (0.13%) tested positive for HIV. In the past 12 months, 19% had been diagnosed with a sexually transmitted infection (other than HIV), 87% engaged in unprotected vaginal intercourse (UVI), and 26% engaged in unprotected anal intercourse (UAI). In multivariate analysis, UAI was significantly (p < .05) more likely among those who reported ever being pregnant, binge drinking in the past 30 days, ever exchanging sex
for things needed or wanted, engaging in UVI, or being of Hispanic ethnicity. UAI was also more likely to occur with partners with whom women had a current or past relationship as opposed to casual partners.

**CONCLUSION:** A high percentage of our sample of heterosexually active women of color had recently engaged in sexual risk behaviors, particularly UAI. More research is needed to elucidate the interpersonal dynamics that may promote this high-risk behavior. Educational messages that explicitly address the risks of heterosexual anal intercourse need to be developed for heterosexually active women and their male partners.

DOI 10.1016/j.whi.2011.06.002
Alternate Journal Womens Health Issues
PubMed ID 21784659
Grant List PS05-197 / PS / NCHHSTP CDC HHS / United States