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HIV Risk Behaviors among Abused African American Women and Perceptions of Male Perpetrators' Role: A Concurrent Mixed Methods Study

Presentation at the ANAC 2012 Conference

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Introduction and Background (1)

- Approximately 1.1 million people are living with HIV in the US (CDC, 2011a)
- In 2009, African Americans (AA) in the US comprise 14% of the population yet 44% of those living with HIV are AA (CDC, 2011a)
- HIV infection is 8 times higher among AA and 15 times higher among AA women than their Caucasian counterparts (CDC, 2011a)
- HIV is the third leading cause of death among AAs women with a shorter life span compared to their White counterparts (CDC 2011a)

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Introduction and Background (2)

- Contextual factors and vulnerabilities such as gender inequity, resource inequality, and IPV place AA women at greater risk for HIV acquisition (Gielen et al., 2007; Sareen, Pagura, & Grant, 2009)
- These inequities consequently lead to power imbalances that are strongly associated with an inability to negotiate safe sex (Wingood & DiClemente, 2000; Tillerson, 2008; Wu et al., 2003)
- The CDC defines IPV as “physical, sexual, or psychological harm by a current or former partner or spouse” (CDC, 2011b)
- A population-based study demonstrated that 40 -52% women were physically abused & similarly sexually coerced by intimate partners

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Introduction and Background (3)

- Men's perceptions of their role in IPV are important to understand women's risks and vulnerabilities
- No study was found that simultaneously investigated HIV-positive women's violence experiences and perceptions of male perpetrator's role to determine women's risks for HIV acquisition
- This study was needed to gain greater understanding of the relationship dynamic for effective and sustainable prevention interventions thus reducing HIV-related disparities
- HIV-related disparities is one of the 3 NHAS goals developed and implemented by President Obama (NHAS, 2010)

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Study Purposes

The purposes of this mixed methods study were twofold:

1. To examine the personal, cognitive, and psychosocial factors of HIV risk behaviors among AA women experiencing violence.
2. To explore the perceptions of male perpetrators' role in contributing to abuse against AA females.

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Methods (1)

Sample

- 15 AA male and 15 AA female participants
- Both male and female participants completed the in-depth interviews and survey instruments

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Methods (2)

Inclusion Criteria

- Female participants were: (a) 18 years & older; (b) living in Baltimore; (c) medically diagnosed with HIV (self-reported and validated using medical records); (d) experiencing IPV physical or sexual violence, or threat of physical or sexual violence in the previous 12 months
- Male participants were: (a) not HIV-positive; (b) living in Baltimore; (c) reported perpetrating violence against current or previous female partners

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Methods (3)

Setting and Procedure

- Female participants were recruited from a comprehensive HIV/AIDS clinic
- Male participants were recruited from a behavioral rehabilitation program
- Both sites are located in Baltimore, MD

IRB and Data Collection

- IRB approval was obtained from the Johns Hopkins University prior to collecting data
- Data collection began April 6 and ended July 14, 2010

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Methods (4)

Qualitative - Interview guide

- Items on the survey instruments were used to develop interview questions to ensure consistency
- Questions included related to:
 - HIV/AIDS knowledge, attitudes, & beliefs
 - Relationship pattern related to power and dominance
 - Intimate partner abuse experiences
 - Substance use
 - Child abuse experiences

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Methods (5)

Quantitative - Instrumentation

- Personal Data Form
- Sexual Relationship Power Scale ($\alpha = .84$) (Pulerwitz et al., 2000)
- HIV/AIDS questionnaire ($\alpha = .94$) (Njie-Carr, 2005)
- Condon Self-efficacy ($\alpha = .85$) Scale (Hanna, 1999)
- Abusive Behavior Inventory ($\alpha = .80 - .92$) (Shepard & Campbell, 1992)
- HIV Intentions ($\alpha = .75 - .81$) Scale (Melendez et al., 2003)
- Perceived HIV Risk ($\alpha = .77$) Scale (Harlow, 1989)
- HIV Risk Behavior Inventory (KR-20 = .74) (Gerbert et al., 1998)

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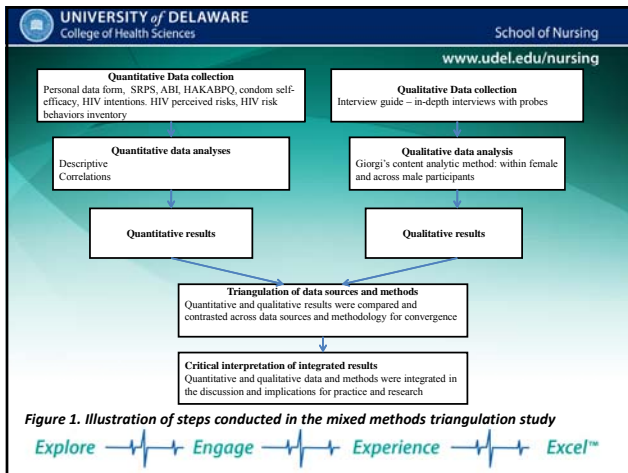
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Methods (6)

Study Design

- An integrated mixed methods, concurrent study was used
- The goal was to adequately capture the multiple dimensions of male and female participant experiences to increase validity and complement findings by triangulation method
- This helps to comprehensively explain and provide clearer understanding of women's experiences and men's perception of their role in propagating violence
- Data were collected and analyzed in three steps (Figure 1)

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Results (1)

Internal Consistency and Mean Results of the Instruments (N=30)

Instrument (# of items)	Alpha	Female (n = 15)		Male (n = 15)	
		M (SD)	Alpha	M (SD)	Alpha
Total Relationship Power Scale		45.3 (12.3)		55.6 (5.9)	
Relationship Control Sub-scale (15)	.92	31.8 (9.6)	.72	39.8 (5.5)	
Decision-Making Dominance (8)	.89	13.5 (4.5)	.21	15.8 (1.9)	
HIV/AIDS Questionnaire					
Attitudes (14)	.93	40.9 (5.6)	.83	39 (5.1)	
Knowledge (12)	.91	46.9 (6.7)	.66	4.9 (3.8)	
Social Beliefs (10)	.84	29.8 (5.3)	.85	29.9 (4.4)	
Spiritual Beliefs (12)	.93	43.2 (4.8)	.96	41.5 (7.3)	
Cultural Beliefs (12)	.77	38 (4.3)	.83	38.9 (4.1)	
Condon Self-efficacy Scale (14)	.87	58.1 (9.1)	.84	54.7 (8.9)	
Abusive Behavior Inventory					
Psychological Abuse (18)	.94	29.5 (18.5)	.90	18 (13.7)	
Physical Abuse (11)	.89	17.7 (11.5)	.85	5.7 (5.9)	
HIV Intentions Scale (9)	.80	37.5 (10.1)	.73	22.9 (7.0)	

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Results (2)

Descriptive Results on Demographic Data (N = 30)

Demographic	Female (n = 15)	Male (n = 15)
Age - (years)	46.2	38.9
More than high school education - % (N)	26% (4)	6.7% (1)
Employment - % (N)	6.7% (1)	40% (6)
Income - Mean (SD)	\$136.67 (\$98.51)	\$281.33 (\$186.16)

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Results (3)

Substance Use

Women: n = 15

77% Past, 23% Current

Men: n = 15

60% Past, 40% Current

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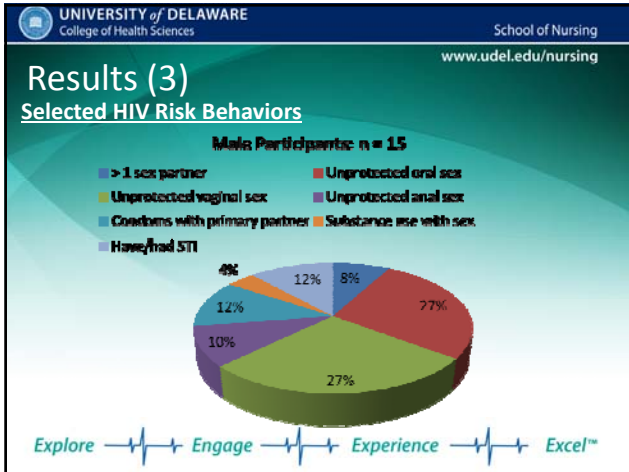
Results (3)

Selected HIV Risk Behaviors

Female participants: n = 15

33% Condoms with Primary partner, 16% Substance use with sex, 23% Unprotected vaginal sex, 10% Unprotected oral sex, 5% > 1 partner, 13% Have/Had STI

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Results (3)

Comparison of Select HIV Risk Behaviors

Risk Behavior	Female (n=15)	Male (n=15)
Had sex with > 1 partner	2 (13.3%)	4 (26.7%)
Unprotected sex (includes primary and secondary partner)		
Oral	4 (26.7%)	14 (93.3%)
Vaginal	5 (33.3%)	14 (93.3%)
Anal	0	5 (33.3%)
Condoms with primary partner	13 (86.7%)	6 (40%)
Use of alcohol and drugs with sex	6 (40%)	2 (13.3%)
Have/had an sexual transmitted infection	9 (60%)	6 (40%)

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- ### Results (4)
- #### Triangulation of Female and Male Data Sources
- 11 themes were identified from the female and 9 themes from the male interviews
 - 5 themes are reported in this presentation to illustrate triangulation
 - Data convergence was noted in both qualitative & quantitative results
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Results (5)

Integration of Themes with Related Exemplars

Female Themes	Female Exemplars	Male Themes	Male Exemplars
Male dominant role and power dynamics in the relationship	"... does everything he says, go where he wants." (Patricia, 43yrs)	Need to control and institute power	"In my family, women had their roles and men had their roles... (Harold, 47yrs) "... I had the power to make the decision. I am the man... I believe when you are in a relation the man is supposed to be the man..." (David, 38 yrs)
Childhood sexual abuse experiences	"... and pulled me by the back of my head, and pulled down my pants and he just started touching me – up and down with his ___ on my behind. ... he was like don't you yell ... don't you scream ... (Ann, 39 yrs)	Childhood sexual abuse experiences	"I never had a childhood. I watched my father beat up my mother... My mother was running away from my father most of my childhood. Child abuse is crazy, it makes you do crazy things and makes you into a crazy person, if you let it. No matter how old you get or how much you grow up, you will never forget it at least for me – I don't. (David, 38 yrs)

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Results (6)

Integration of Themes with Related Exemplars

Female Themes	Female Exemplars	Male Themes	Male Exemplars
Multiple abuse experiences in the relationship	"... If I wasn't in the mood he would take the sex ... it was bad. It got to the point if I didn't agree, he would threaten my mum to me. ... He would say what he would do to my family because he was connected with some high drug dealers. ... he [would say] you can't hide, I will kill you before you leave me." (Michelle, 41 yrs)	Abusive behaviors against female partner	"I should just shoot you in your face ..." (Sylvester, 29yrs) "I would hit her, I would basically grab her and wrestle her. I do it on purpose because I am stronger than her. ... I started smacking her ... (James, 23 yrs)

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Results (7)

Integration of Themes with Related Exemplars

Female Themes	Female Exemplars	Male Themes	Male Exemplars
Perceived reasons for abuse by partners	"... his level of education, his inability to deal with stressful situations. I think the drugs played a part, I think he can't express himself any other way and that's why he lashes out." (Ellen, 53 years)	Perceived motive for abusing partner	"... that caused my anger is that I'm trying to do so much to survive and it seems like nothing good is happening in my life right now." (Andrew, 23 years) "pretty small things – like the house out of order, company coming over too much, staying out too late. ... (James, 23 years)
Perceived strategies to have prevented abuse experiences	"So I'll just listen and maybe if I would've spoken up ... I feel as though sometimes it was my fault. ..." (Ann, 39 years) "... I could have called the police. ... I do not think there was anything I would have done. He needed to seek help ... That was on him." (Cynthia, 54 years)	Strategies to prevent abusive behaviors	"If I was a better listener and we communicated more, I think that would have helped the situation a lot." (Gabriel, 45 years) "I learned a lot to a point where communication is key. Even if I ignore my partner, I'm still wrong but nonetheless, I need to hear her." (Edward, 41 years)

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Results (8)

Triangulation of Qualitative & Quantitative Research Methods

Female Participants

- A negative relationship was found between psychological abuse and relationship control ($r = -.750, p < .001$)
- A positive relationship between psychological abuse & physical abuse ($r = .845, p < .001$)
- Knowledge was positively correlated with attitudes, ($r = .875, p < .001$)
- Social support was highly correlated with psychological abuse ($r = .718, p = .003$)

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Results (9)

Triangulation of Qualitative & Quantitative Research Methods

Male participants

- Significant positive relationships between age and relationship control, ($r = .769, p = .001$)
- Knowledge and attitudes were significant and positively correlated ($r = .731, p = .002$)

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Implications for Research/Practice (1)

- The study contributes to nursing science by helping to gain better understanding of the IPV relationship dynamic between male perpetrators & women survivors
- Further research identifying contextual and structural causal pathways are needed to clarify critical variables that substantially contribute to HIV acquisition in the context of IPV
- Research could focus on feasibility studies integrating these findings in an HIV/IPV prevention intervention dyad or community-level study

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Implications for Research/Practice (2)

- Because of exposure to child abuse, it is critical that prevention efforts start early in the child's life to help curb exposure to risk factors in adulthood
- Female participants reported reluctance to obtain medical treatment as a result of health providers' attitudes, so informational sessions are warranted to educate providers on sensitive and effective approaches to care for abused women

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Conclusions

- This is the first known study triangulating gender data sources and methodological approaches that underscore the importance of variables included in this study
- The variables and themes were cross-validated using the two data sources and two methodological approaches
- These results suggest important variables that should be integrated in HIV/IPV prevention research and clinical practice to help reduce HIV-related disparities

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