

Finding Answers

Disparities Research for Change

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HIV Prevention Interventions to Reduce Racial Disparities in the United States: A Systematic Review

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Background:

HIV and AIDS disproportionately affect racial and ethnic minorities in the United States despite advances in prevention interventions. According to a Centers for Disease Control and Prevention report, in 2008 the HIV diagnosis rate among blacks was 799 percent higher than for whites, and 205 percent higher among Latinos than whites. The disparities were even more pronounced among women.

Highlights of Findings:

Authors conducted a systematic review of the past 30 years of HIV prevention interventions addressing racial disparities. Of the 76 relevant articles, 87 percent were of randomized controlled trials and 83 percent included a majority of African American participants. Interventions studied were limited to those conducted directly within or linked to a clinical setting.

Findings included:

- Successful interventions targeting adolescents included skill-based instruction on both appropriate condom use and effective ways of negotiating condom use with a partner.
- The use of peers or lay health workers from the minority population of interest leads to increased acceptance of suggested behavioral changes.
- Only one study focused on African American men who have sex with men, a population which has had disproportionately high rates of HIV infection.
- No study was identified that sought specifically to reduce racial disparities in the sexual acquisition of HIV.

Conclusions:

- An intervention that includes skills-based instruction and is successfully tested in an adolescent population may be adapted for a variety of aims, as long as the core elements of skill-based content and appropriate cultural targeting remain. For example, one intervention that involved African American health professionals and peer educators discussing African American womanhood, condom use and social skills with African American adolescents, was later successfully expanded to include STI treatment vouchers for male sexual partners and telephone reminders to reinforce safe sex behaviors in female adolescents.

There is a serious lack of interventions designed to reduce disparities. Future work should seek to fill these gaps.



- Interactive interventions and interventions which incorporate the teaching of specific skills necessary to initiate and maintain behavioral change are more effective than interventions which depend on the passive acquisition of knowledge.
- Peer-based interventions seem to be more effective for adolescents than for other groups.
- There is a serious lack of interventions that target minority men who have sex with men, as well as interventions designed to reduce disparities. Future work should seek to fill these gaps.