**Community Violence Exposure and Sexual Risk Behaviors among Heterosexuals at High Risk for HIV Infection in New Orleans**

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**Objective:** To evaluate the association between community violence exposure and high-risk sexual behaviors among heterosexuals at high risk for HIV infection in New Orleans.

**Background:** Multiple sex partners, condom-less vaginal and anal sex, and sex in exchange for drugs and money are high-risk sexual behaviors for HIV transmission. Previous literature among adolescents has found an association between community violence exposure and high-risk sexual behaviors. This association has not been thoroughly evaluated in adults. Our hypothesis is that a higher exposure to community violence will be associated with higher prevalences of high-risk sexual behaviors among adults. **Methods:** Data from the CDC’s National HIV Surveillance System were analyzed. Using respondent-driven sampling, heterosexuals at high-risk for HIV infection were interviewed about their demographics, community violence exposure and their sexual risk behaviors. Log-linked Poisson models with generalized estimating equations were used to estimate the prevalence ratios and 95% confidence intervals for the associations between community violence exposure and high-risk sexual behaviors.

**Results:** Among the 463 respondents, 83.7% were Black, 86.3% lived below the poverty level, and 21.1% reported high community violence exposure. After adjusting for potential confounders, community violence exposure (high vs. low) was found to be associated with multiple sex partners (aPR: 1.23, 95% CI: 1.03-1.47), any unprotected vaginal sex (aPR: 1.12., 95% CI 1.04-1.20), any unprotected anal sex (aPR: 1.67, 95% CI:1.17-2.39) and exchange sex for drugs or money (aPR: 1.80, 95% CI: 1.14-2.82). **Discussion:** We found that higher levels of community violence exposure was associated with a higher prevalence of high-risk sexual behaviors among heterosexual adults at high risk for HIV infections. **Implications:** Our study shows the relationship between community violence exposure and high-risk sexual behaviors may extend into adulthood. Future longitudinal studies are warranted to establish temporality and to examine potential mediators and moderators in this relationship.