

# **HIV Infection Among Young Men Who Have Sex With Men**

## ***Preliminary Results*** **Dallas Young Men's Survey**

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## Background

- In the late 1980's the HIV epidemic among MSM appeared to have peaked.
- In the early 1990's small studies suggested higher incidence and risk behavior among MSM under 30.
- Measuring HIV infection among young MSM is difficult outside of settings such as STD clinics.

## Background

- CDC and 7 cities across the country developed a cross-sectional, venue-based survey.
- The objectives were to assess HIV prevalence and risk behaviors among MSM ages 15 to 29.
- In addition YMS explored potential antecedents to risk-taking.
- Sampling occurred in two phases; ages 15-22 (1994-1995) and ages 23-29 (1998-2000).

## Methods

- We ethnographically “mapped” the community for public venues frequented by young MSM.
- Venues included bookstores, bars, dance clubs, bathhouses, parks, street locations, social and student organizations, etc.
- Monthly, we randomly selected venues, days and time-periods to construct a sampling frame.

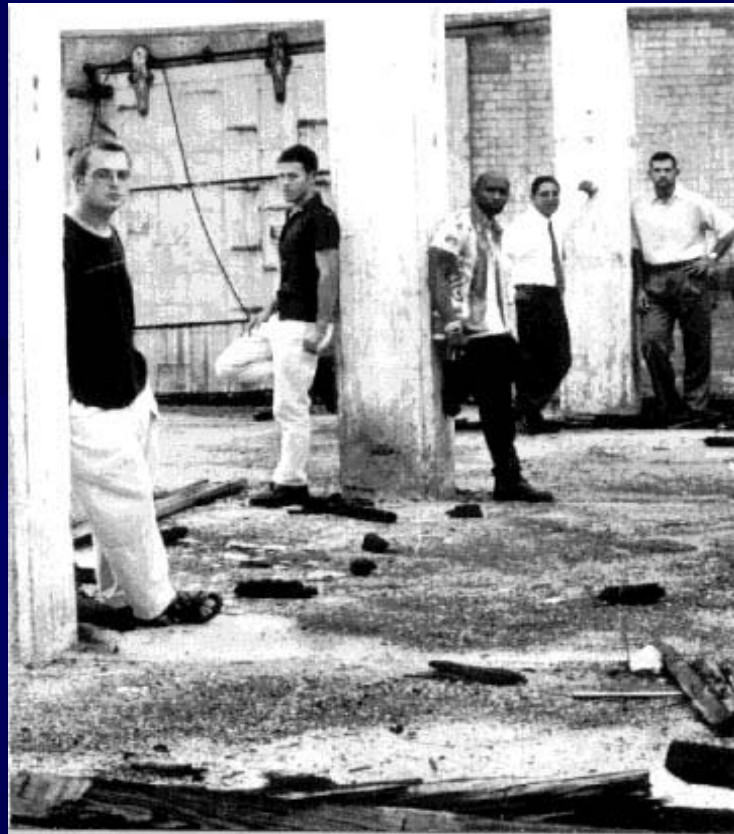
## Methods

- We intercepted men who appeared eligible.
- Offered participation to men who met the age and residence requirements and who had not previously participated.
- We interviewed on-site in a specially equipped recreational vehicle or during an “other day appointment”.

## Methods

- Obtained informed consent
- Drew blood for HIV, HBV, syphilis testing
- Standardized CDC instrument:
  - sociodemographics, sex & drug use behaviors, health history, and psychosocial factors
- Participants received condoms, risk reduction information, and a monetary incentive
- Test results were available to the participants.

# THE YMS TEAM



## Results - Enrollment

- 521 sampling events
- ~35 public venues
- 7,520 potentially eligible men intercepted
- 1,950 young men were eligible
- 1,154 were enrolled
- 1,045 were sexually active MSM

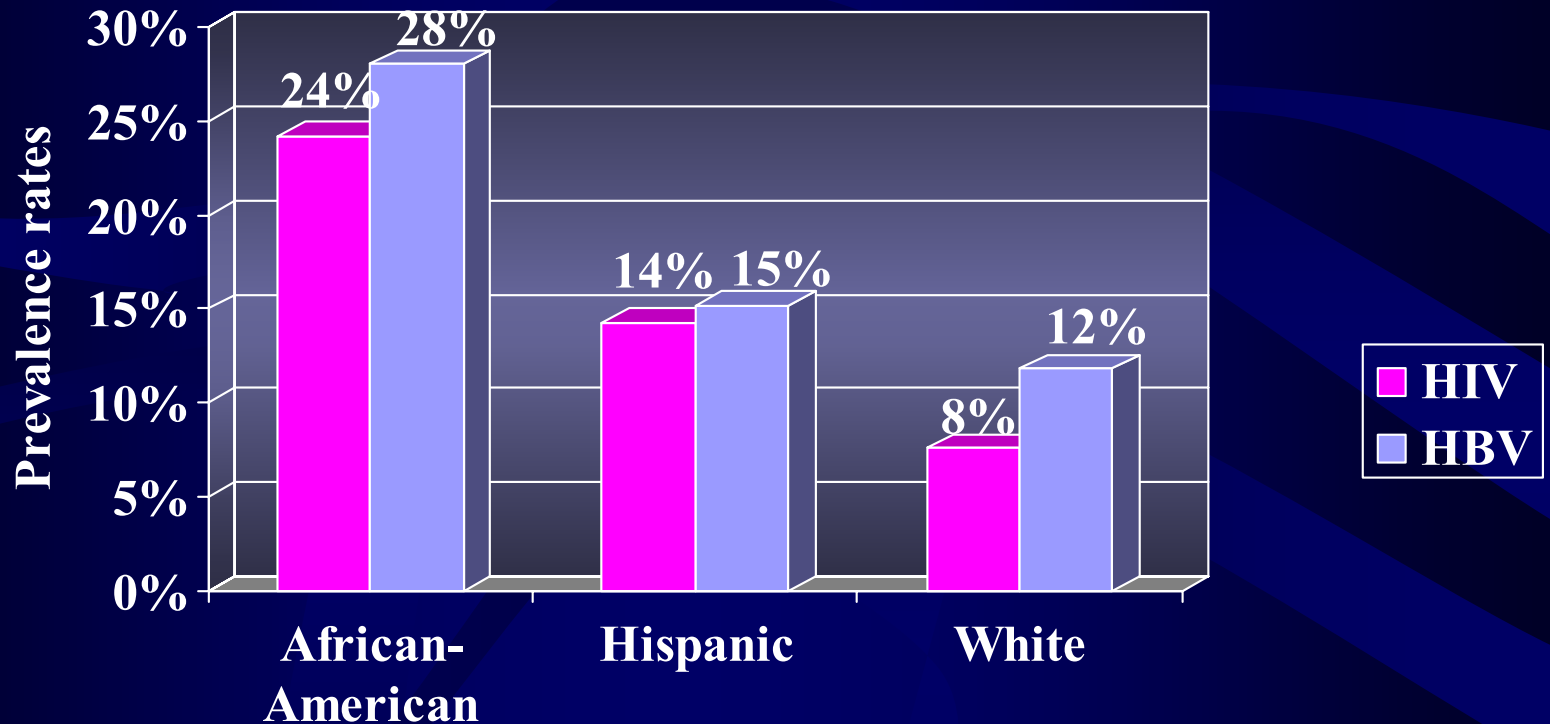
## Results - Enrollment

- Participant Race/Ethnicity
  - White/Anglo 55%
  - Hispanic/Latino 21%
  - African American 18%
  - Other 6%
- The majority of participants were employed and had a high school education or more.

# Results - Seroprevalence

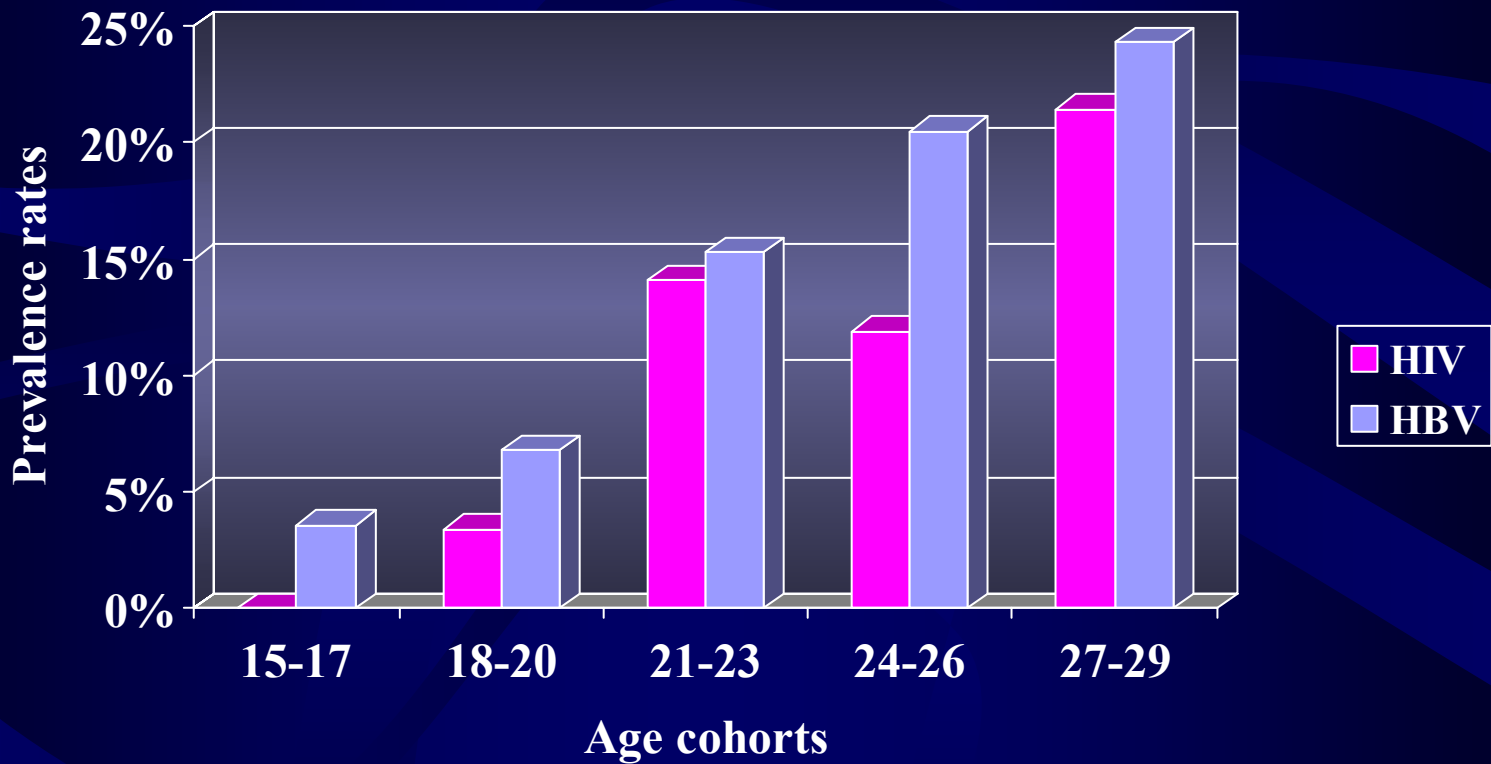
- **HIV** 12%
- **Hepatitis B** 16%
- **Syphilis** 2%

# HIV/ HBV Prevalence by Ethnicity



All participants age 15-29 (N=1,045)

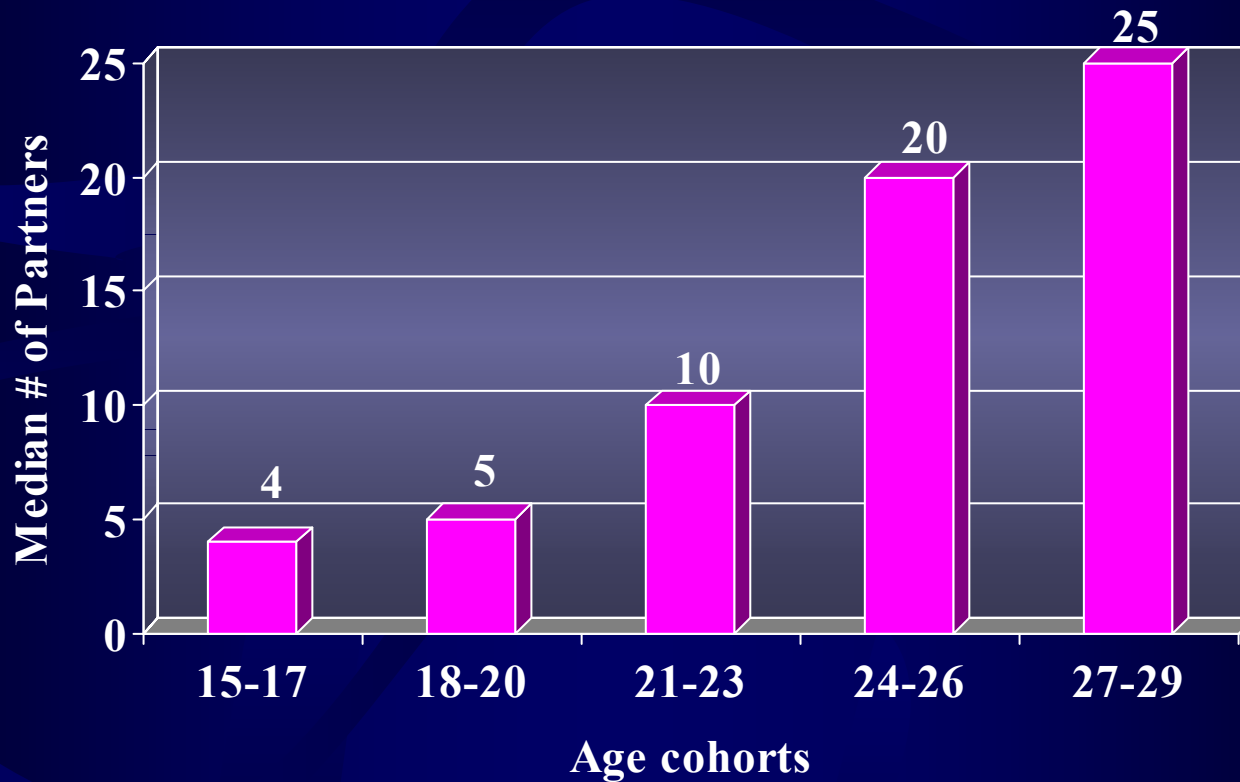
# HIV/ HBV Prevalence Among Dallas Area Young MSM



# Results - Behavioral

- **43% reported unprotected anal sex in the past six months**
- **6% reported injecting drugs**
- **Average age of first oral sex -- 15 years**
- **Average age of first anal sex -- 17 years**
- **22% reported being bisexual**
  - 59% reported sex with a female (ever)**
  - 16% reported vaginal sex in the past 6 months**

# Median # of Lifetime Sex Partners



# Results - Behavioral

- HISTORY OF AN STD:

-Total	-	18%
-Hispanic	-	20%
-White	-	17%
-Af. Amer.	-	19%

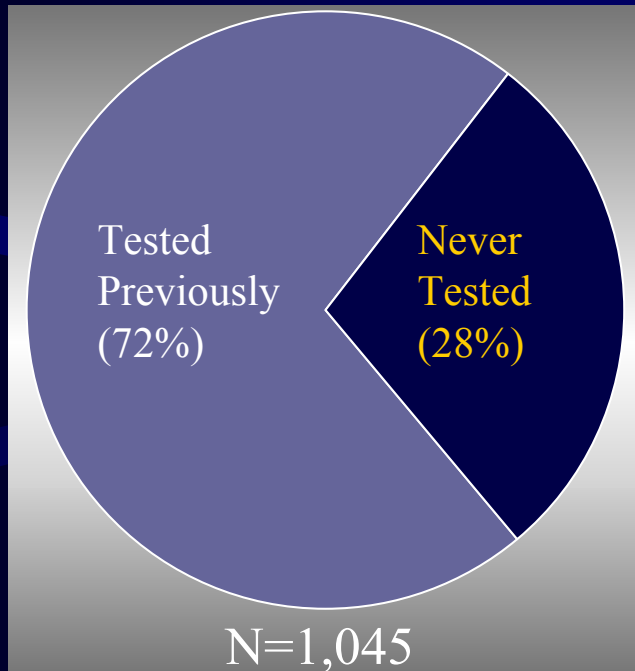
- HISTORY OF FORCED SEX:

-Total	-	35%
-Hispanic	-	41%
-White	-	34%
-Af. Amer.-	-	31%

# Results - Behavioral

- Drug use (ever):
  - Alcohol 96%
  - Marijuana 61%
  - Cocaine 36%
  - Ecstasy 33%
  - Nitrates 29%
  - LSD 28%
  - Speed 24%

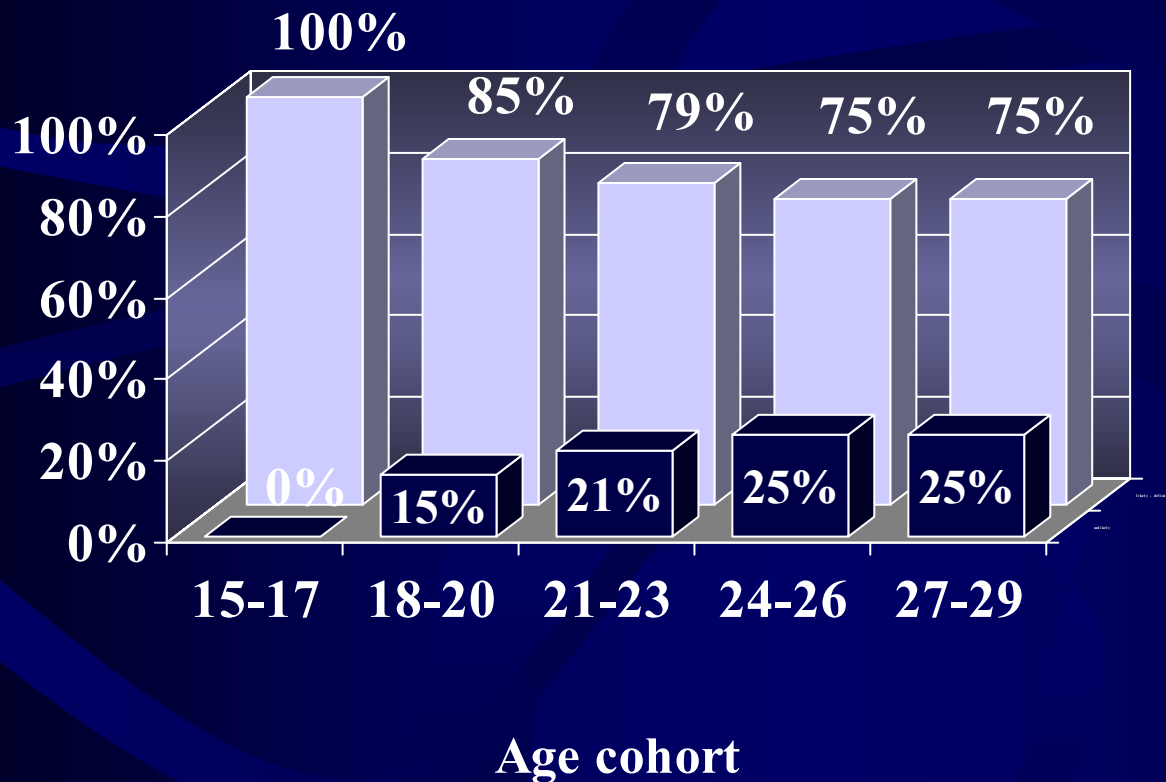
# HIV Testing History



## Why Never Tested?

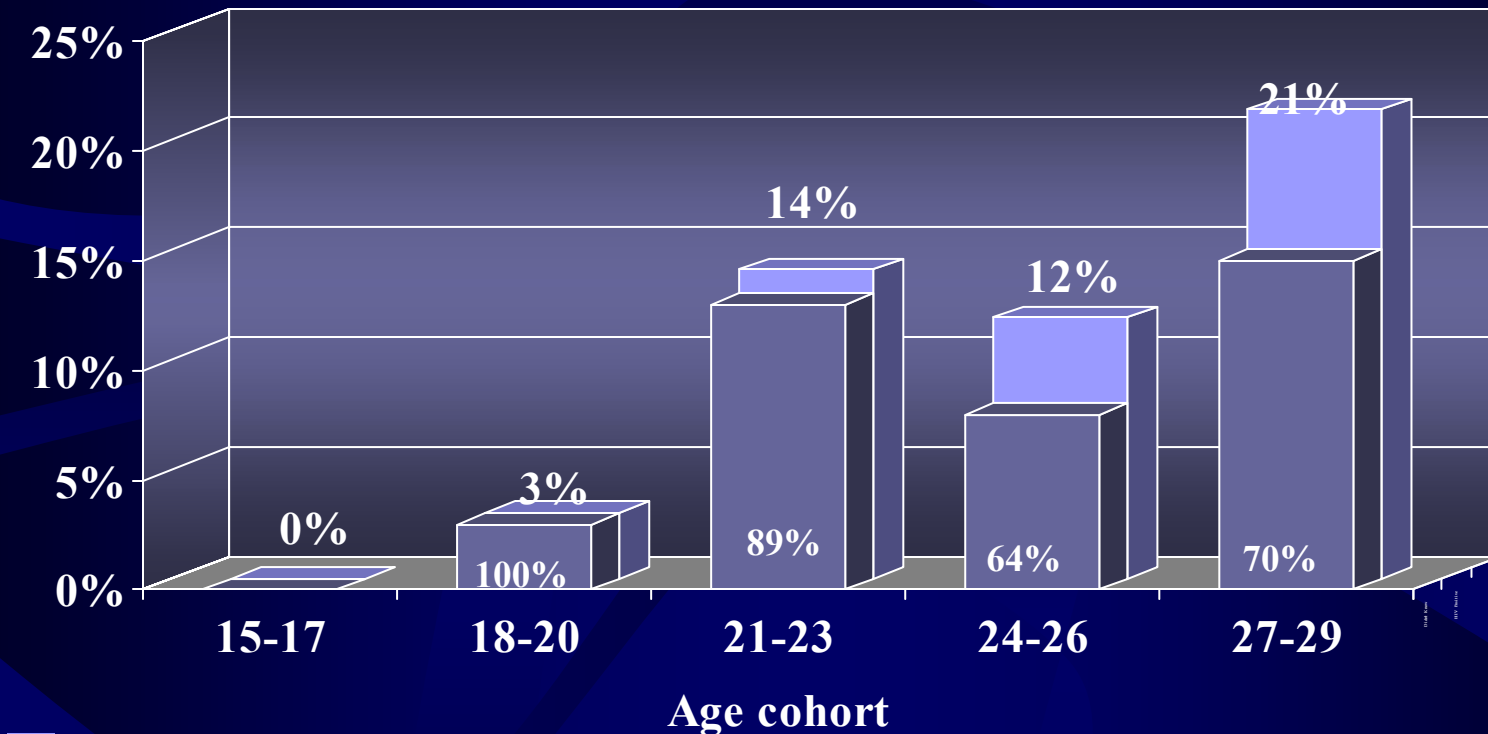
1. I'm at low-risk (46%)
2. Afraid to Learn Results (41%)
3. Afraid of needles (15%)
4. Other:
  - Don't care/ don't worry about HIV
  - Afraid of being reported to the government

# Perception of Self Risk



- How likely is it that you are HIV infected today?
- Unlikely-Very unlikely Infected
- Possibly-Likely-Definitely Infected

# Positives and Positives Who Didn't Know



■ Seropositive

■ The Proportion that Didn't Know

# Discussion

- Infection rates for HIV and HBV were high.
- The extremely high rates among African-Americans indicate a need for aggressive risk-reduction planning tailored to this group.
- There was no flattening in the curve of infection rates across age groups.

# Discussion

- Youth ages 15-17 may represent a crucial “window” of opportunity for innovative risk-reduction programs.
- While this group of young men were clearly at increased risk for HIV, personal perception of risk was low.
- While most of this group had previously tested for HIV, the majority of YMS positives did not know they were currently infected.

# Discussion

- These young men had a high degree of understanding about safer sex practices, but this knowledge did not consistently translate into safer behaviors.
- Drug and alcohol use was generally high, as was sex under the influence of drugs and alcohol.
- Life circumstances such as sexual abuse or runaway behavior may place some young men at increased risk.

# Prevention within Research

- More than 70,000 condoms were distributed in “pocket-packs”.
- Special prevention materials were developed for younger age groups.
- Participants received risk-reduction counseling.
- Phase 2 participants were offered free Hepatitis A and B vaccinations.
- Follow-up testing and limited peer counseling was available.