

COMING OUT OF THE NKUTA: DISCLOSURE OF SEXUAL ORIENTATION ASSOCIATED WITH REDUCED RISK BEHAVIOR AMONG MSM IN CAMEROON

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Background

In Cameroon, high proportions of sexual risk practices have been documented among Men who have Sex with Men (MSM). The criminalization and social rejection of same-sex relationships emphasize the importance of researching sexual orientation disclosure. A greater understanding of factors associated with disclosure could help public health actors better respond to basic needs of MSM, including health issues.

Methods

Data on sexual orientation disclosure was collected on a convenience sample of 168 MSM in Douala, in 2008. Study participants were administered an 85-item questionnaire during face-to-face interviews with trained community-based organization members. To complement quantitative data, qualitative interviews were performed on a subsample of 29 participants to explore the complexity of individual situations.

Disclosure was defined as sharing information about sexual orientation with a third party.

Results

Seventy-four respondents (46%) declared that their sexual orientation was known by at least one relative or social circle member (close friends, colleagues, neighbors).

Multivariate analysis of factors associated with disclosure of sexual orientation

Explanatory variables	Modality	aOR [95%CI]	pvalue
Meeting sexual MSM partners in snacks/bar/night club	no (ref)	1	
	yes	3.51 [1.64 - 8.40]	0.005
UAI with a male partner during the previous six months	no (ref)	1	
	yes	0.39 [0.17 - 0.87]	0.02
Living with	alone (ref)	1	
	with a woman	0.28 [0.06 - 1.23]	0.09
	with a man	0.40 [0.08 - 1.99]	0.26
	with father and/or mother	0.85 [0.29 - 2.46]	0.76
	with other family members	0.17 [0.05 - 0.57]	0.005
	with friends	1.08 [0.20 - 5.81]	0.93
Identifies with the term "homosexual"	no (ref)	1	
	yes	2.55 [1.01 - 6.48]	0.05

AOR : adjusted odds ratio; CI : confidence interval; MSM : men who have sex with men; UAI : Unprotected Anal Intercourse

Conclusions

In situations where disclosing one's sexual orientation is still problematic in terms of related stigma, discrimination and even violence, the lack of priority afforded HIV prevention is understandable. Further research is necessary to better understand both the sexual orientation disclosure process in the MSM population and the role played by disclosure in helping them take better care of themselves from a health perspective. Expertise from LGBT and sexuality researchers is necessary.

To read the related article: *Archives of Sexual Behavior*. Volume 41, Issue 3, pp. 525-527. 2012-06-01.

Acknowledgments



Coalition PLUS is an international union of 10 NGOs fighting the AIDS pandemic in their respective country (Ecuador, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Canada, France, Mali, Morocco, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Romania, Switzerland). They decided to join forces to promote together community-based approach in the fight against HIV through advocacy, research and technical support programs.

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