

# Preliminary Results of the Gay Life Evaluation Project: The Castro Evaluation Study (CES)

A Research Collaboration Between the San Francisco AIDS Foundation and UCSF Center for AIDS Prevention Studies

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## KEY FINDINGS

A sample of high risk, middle-class men report:

- High levels of substance use.
- High number of problems related to alcohol and drugs.
- High levels of concomitant substance use and risky sex.
- Many do not feel part of a community yet feel it is important.
- Few are aware of the Gay Life Program, yet those who have participated have reported that it has had an effect on HIV sexual risk taking.

## BACKGROUND

Previous collaborative activities between SFAF and UCSF-CAPS included:

1. Formative data collection:
  - The San Francisco Qualitative Interview Study (QIS) 1996 (n=96)
  - The San Francisco Qualitative Interview Study II (QISII) 1997 (n=92)
2. The development of 2 new HIV prevention programs:
  - Gay Life Program
  - Black Brothers Esteem (BBE)
3. A 3-Tiered Evaluation Strategy:
  1. Process measures collected at each of the events.
  2. In-depth qualitative interviews among participant and non-participants.
  3. Penetration surveys to the target populations of Gay Life and BBE.

## OBJECTIVES

To present preliminary survey data evaluating the Gay Life Program: *The Castro Evaluation Study (CES)*

Specifically, we will describe:

- Demographic characteristics, connection to community, sexual practices, HIV risk taking, and substance use.
- The awareness and participation of the Gay Life program among middle-class gay/bisexual men.

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## Gay Life Program

- A multi-modal HIV prevention program.
- Targets ethnically diverse, middle class gay/bisexual men who socialize in the Castro and South of Market.
- Seeks to address the complex sexual issues facing these men.
- It includes Large Socials, Workshops, One-on-One Counseling, and Special Events.

## METHODS

- Convenience sample of gay/bisexual was collected in 1999 (n=282)

### Inclusion Criteria:

- 18+ years old
- 1/3 African American, 1/3 Latino, 1/3 Caucasian
- Middle-class [determined by combination of factors that include: income >20k, more than a High School Education, and Employment Status]
- Socialize in the Castro or South of Market in the past 6 months
- Anal sex in the past 6 months

### Survey Instrument:

- Developed by the collaborative team.
- Largely informed by the previous qualitative studies.
- Interviewer administered survey took approximately 75 minutes to complete.
- Participants received \$25.

## RESULTS

### Demographic Characteristics

Age		Education	%
Mean: 38 years old (range 21-69)		High school diploma/GED	8
		Some college/professional school	41
		College degree or more	50
Race/Ethnicity	%	Income	%
Caucasian	38	Less than \$10,000	11
Hispanic/Latino	29	\$10,000 - \$19,999	17
African American	27	\$20,000 - \$39,999	46
Other	6	\$40,000 and over	24
HIV Status (self-report)	%	Employment	%
Positive	41	Employed	69
Negative	58	Disability	19
		Unemployed	5
Primary Partner	%	Type of Residence	%
Yes	48	Rented apartment	75
No	52	SRO/Subsidized housing/rehab/family/friends	17
		Own home	8

### Connection to Community

How often do you feel part of a community?	%
All of the time	16
Most of the time	29
Sometimes	32
Less than half the time	15
Never	8*

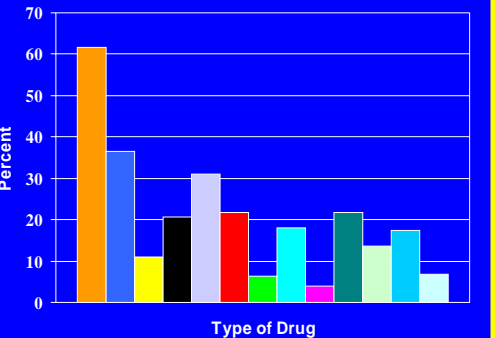
How important is it to you to be a part of a community?	%
Very important	43
Somewhat important	41
Not very important	12
Not at all important	3

*Why don't you feel part of a community?	%
Do not need community	7
Find it difficult to be close with a group of people	19
Prefer a small circle of friends	41
Fear not being accepted	7
No available community	7
Too much focus sex	4
None of the above	11

### Sexual Practices and HIV Risk Taking

Relationship with primary partner:	%	Any anal sex in the past 6 months (protected / unprotected)	%
Continue to have sex with each other:		With primary partner	88
- emotionally committed	75	With casual partners	75
- not emotionally committed	6	Unprotected anal sex (primary / casual)	%
Do not have sex with each other:		Any Unprotected	62
- emotionally committed	21	Unprotected with a partner of unknown or serodiscordant HIV status	43
- not emotionally committed	1	Sex partners in the past 6 months	
Do you or your partner have sex outside of the relationship?	%	Median number of different men	5
Yes	68	Median number of casual partners	4
Do you and your partner have an arrangement about having sex outside of your relationship?	%	Median number of one-night-stands	3
Yes	77	Unprotected anal sex in the past 6 months	
What type of arrangement do you have?	%	Mean number of casual partners	3
Mutual masturbation only	5	Mean number of times:	
Oral sex only	5	- Casual partners	4
Protected anal sex only	16	- Primary partners	13
Any kind of sex	45		
Other	22		

### Substance Use

Alcohol use (Quantity/Frequency)	%	Types of Drugs Used in the Past 6 Months	
Never	18		
Once per month	14		
2-3 times per month	20		
1-2 times per week	25		
3-4 times per week	11		
Nearly every day	6		
At least once per day	6		
3 or more alcohol related problems*	31		
Drug use	%		
Injected drugs in the past 6 months	10		
3 or more drug related problems*	37		
Alcohol, drugs and sex	%		
Engaged in anal sex "under the influence" of alcohol or drugs	64		
[* See Appendix 1 for individual items]			

### Gay Life Evaluation

Awareness of Gay Life	%
Yes	30
Attendance at Gay Life event	%
Workshop	20
% satisfied with workshop	81
Social event	18
% satisfied with social event	87
Individual counseling	5
% satisfied with Program staff	92
Did the Gay Life Program help you reduce your high risk behaviors?	%
Yes	55

## CONCLUSIONS

- **Demographics**
  - Ethnically diverse, high risk population.
  - Well educated with moderate incomes.
- **Community**
  - Many do not feel part of a community yet feel it is important.
- **Substance Use and Risky Sex**
  - High levels of:
    - substance use,
    - problems related to alcohol and drugs,
    - unprotected anal sex while under the influence of alcohol/drugs.
- **Gay Life**
  - A modest number of men said they heard of the Gay Life program.
  - A large number of men who participate in the Gay Life program reported it had an effect on reducing HIV sexual risk taking.

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