

## A Qualitative Exploration of Gender Roles and Sexual Risk Among African American Adolescent Males Living in High-risk Communities

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**Project Description:** The aim of this study is to provide a first step toward increasing our understanding of the gender roles of inner-city African American adolescent males, the extent to which these young men demonstrate patterns that reflect “hypermasculinity”, and the relationship between gender roles, sexual risk behavior, and expectations about the future. The proposed one year study includes: 1) qualitative analyses of existing interviews with sexually experienced inner-city African American males, and 2) enlisting key informants in the community to provide feedback on the themes developed in this project (“member checking”). The existing interviews were collected for a prior study on a different topic; a purposive sampling design was used to obtain in-depth interviews from 13 African American adolescent males living in low-income areas of San Francisco. The qualitative analyses involve thematic, comparative, and initial model building approaches. The findings will provide preliminary data to support future larger scale studies of gender roles and HIV related sexual risk in African American males. The focus on adolescent males is well placed because their sense of emerging manhood provides a window of opportunity for intervention.

**Significance:** African American males who are sexually active are at disproportionately high risk for HIV and other sexually transmitted infections (STIs). Gender roles (i.e., beliefs, expectations and behavior of males/females) impact sexual behavior, but little is known about the cultural and social factors that influence the development and maintenance of gender roles during adolescence.

**Project End Date:** August 31, 2006