Do you have something to say about sex and drug use that may put men at risk of getting hepatitis or HIV?
Developing a Tailored Individual-Level HIV Prevention Intervention for Men Recently Released from Prison

Craig Hutchinson
Center for AIDS Prevention Studies
University of California, San Francisco
Team Members
Janet Myers, PhD, MPH &
Olga Grinstead, PhD, MPH
University of California, San Francisco

Barry Zack, MPH
Centerforce
Today…

- Overview of the project
- Results from formative research
  - HIV risk inside prison
  - HIV risk outside prison
  - Risk reduction outside prison
- Asking for advice
- How the results were used to tailor the intervention
- Discussion
Project Objectives

**Formative Phase:** Engage men of color who have sex with men (MSM) who do not identify as gay when they are released from prison and their potential service providers to understand their experiences, needs and community.

**Intervention Phase:** Tailor an intervention for men being released from prison to address their HIV prevention needs. Implement and evaluate the effectiveness.
Background

Estimates of the prevalence of homosexual behavior in prison vary widely.

Wooden and Parker (1982) found that while 78% of 200 randomly sampled California inmates identified as heterosexual.

65% reported taking part in one or more homosexual acts while incarcerated.

It’s important to understand the context of risk:

- **Sex:** Consensual versus coerced
- **Identity:** Gay sex acts, but “I’m not gay”
- **Drugs**
Formative Phase

**Men:** Completed in-depth, qualitative interviews - two serial interviews with 28 men recently released.

**Service Providers:** Universe of providers in intervention target area.
Recruiting Men

Recruited at the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) mandated Police and Corrections Team (PACT) meeting in Oakland

Men come from all over California, but are coming home to Alameda County
Criteria

- Over 18 years of age
- Male
- First interview, released within the past 2 weeks; willing to provided contact info for second interview
- Unknown HIV status (defined as never tested OR negative test more than 60 days prior
- Willing to discuss sex and drug risk on the inside
- Able to provide informed consent in accordance with UCSF guidelines.
Data Analysis

- Data was analyzed with a research consultant with the University of Louisville.
- Data were analyzed by four investigators, individually and then validated through group process.
- Interpretation validated by Centerforce Staff.
Summary of HIV Risk Inside Prison

According to these men, there is risk inside, but not as much as people think.

Only one man was willing to talk openly about his MSM experience.

Yet all men said that it happened to others.

Talking about risk is complicated by secrecy, identity and definitions of sex.
Description of Sample

- 27 African American and 1 Mexican American
- Broad spectrum of age (range: 20 to 62)
- Mix of “levels”; all released on parole included drug-related charges, rape, theft, murder, outstanding warrants and parole violations.
- Released from a wide range of California facilities.
- Released to diverse living arrangements (common-law wives, treatment centers, half-way houses, on the street, etc.)
Factors influencing behavior

**Environmental factors:** Violence, prison structure, “fight, kill or fuck”

**Social networks:** Gang membership (or not, i.e. “civilians”), cell mates, friends/acquaintances

**Individual factors:** Race, age, physical size, substance use, appearance, educational
Environmental Factors

Prison restricts movement, facilitates certain interactions and reduces choices
Environmental Factors

It’s kind of dangerous because...we have a guy doing four months, and he doesn’t have violence in his records, staying in a cell with a lifer, that, you know, took a life and don’t have not too much more to lose ‘cause he’s gonna be there for the rest of his life...It’s a little scary.
Coping with prison

You just slide right on through with that attitude. Don’t worry about me, worry about you, you feel me. I worry about mine and do what you want with yours, you feel me. That’s straight up. That’s the attitude you keep and, you know, don’t mess with nothin’. Just be who you is and ride it on out. You landed there you gotta knock it on out and come on back home.
Gladiator School

They used to call it gladiator school. I think it’s still, it’s kind of the same, you always have to be on guard. It’s a place where sometimes you can just...it’s dangerous, I just wanna say, prison is a dangerous place, you know what I mean.
Social Network Factors

Who a man hangs out with influences risk (protection from risk or facilitation)
Social Network Factors

It’s different. You can get assaulted in there in any kind of way. Physically, sexually, it’s different. You have to be aware of your surroundings. You have to keep your back to the wall and you talk as less as possible. If you don’t know the person you don’t talk to them. You don’t buddy hustle them; you don’t share. You share with your click only, your people only. You don’t go outside that.
Gang affiliation vs. Civilian

Because here at San Quentin blacks run San Quentin so you’ve got to just deal with it. It’s according to how you protect yourself. If you live the little gang-banging life it’s the mentality you’ve got to have.
Individual Factors

Race, age, sexual orientation

Individual

Social Networks

Environment
Individual Factors

When I got in, they say things like, “Hey, you got some good pussy. You gonna be my best bitch.” This, that... Then, my cellie was a old man. He said, “You have to cut your hair.” I said, “Why?” He said, “They might try to rape you.”
Leveraging respect via age

Some of ‘em will respect you. And some of ‘em you would have to make respect you. A lot guys will walk up to you … “Hey, man, move your old ass out of the way,” “Old ass, mother-fucker?!” I say, “Hey man, you disrespecting me like that, don’t let this old fool ya’, ……, okay.” But I have to show him strength and they would say “this guy crazy.”
Findings:
HIV and other
Risk Outside
Factors influencing behavior upon release

- **Environmental factors:** Neighborhood, economic environment
- **Social networks:** Women – wives, girlfriends, grandmothers, sisters, aunts; kids.
- **Individual factors:** Education, race, age, addiction/drug use
Environmental Factors

- Going back to the same neighborhood is a problem.
- Very, very little economic opportunity.
- Social context (but not much practice) of religion.
- The police/parole limit movement and opportunity.
“It’s scary because you wants to make a change and stay out of prison, but it’s hard because, for the last few years, you used to makin’ fast money...knowing that if you do the same thing, you are going to get the same result.”
“The block is exciting. Anything can go on these blocks. There ain’t no telling what’s gonna happen on the block.”
Community Factors

- Oakland is a difficult place to live.
- “Fifth yard”
- Men talked about wanting to move, get their kids out.
Social Network Factors

Women

– Some women are sex partners.
– Some are relatives who provide a place to live and other resources.

In either case, little discussion about life inside or risk.
Men really care about their kids and care about health because of their kids.

My son’s getting older and I’m way out there and can’t do nothin’ for him. I felt like a real asshole for even puttin’ myself in that position to even be away from my son like that.
MY DAD
JUST GOT OUT OF PRISON...

He will need my help and yours too.
With a job, a place to live and healthcare,
he will make it.

Ex-prisoners are family too!

Centerforce
Individual Factors

- Being a Black man.
- Many had high school education, but it wasn’t enough.
- Very few job skills.
- Having a record...means few had any income...etc.
- Surviving is the priority.
“I’m not thinkin’ about sex right now. I ain’t got no money. So right now, I need money, I need a place to stay. I need to get around some kind of way, and that’s all I can think about right now.”
Multi-level Factors

- Masculinity
- Identity inside versus outside – sexual identity, but others too.
- “Down-low” – behavior or an identity?
- It doesn’t always apply to non-gay identified MSM
“If you’re on the street, you’re a certain kind of person, then you in there and you end up getting raped and you’re like, ‘Man, wait a minute, I can’t let anybody know about this.’”
What we thought about for intervention development

...there's enough gays that go to the pen... they don't have to do that homeboy...don't have to turn nobody out, there's enough in there already turned out...gays rob and commit crimes too...you know what I'm sayin...its not the kinda of thing where it has to be forced upon anyone because there's a lot of gays in there already.
What we thought about for intervention development

See my problem is readjusting from the prison community to the street community; there is a big difference. In there you’re dealing with your brother every day. You see them every day. You talk you walk and so forth. But here everybody is trying to feed their self and pay bills. So the readjustment comes and I guess it’s hard for some than others but for me I just have to find the right community and direction I want to go in.
**Summary of Risk Inside**

There is risk inside, but not as much as people think.

Most risk occurs among men who are less often released, so reaching all released men is critical.

Our results support Hammett (2006):

“[T]here is uncertainty about the extent of transmission, and hyperbolic descriptions of its extent may further stigmatize inmates and elicit punitive responses.”
What does this all mean?

Possible Intervention Ideas

Community-level intervention to reduce shame and stigma

After release from prison, providing counseling services and referral that lets men talk about their experiences

Intervention must include families:

(At a parole officer) I asked, “Can you help me and my family?” “Well, your wife needs to do this and you should do that and then you guys come together on your own. I don’t like that, you know.”
Key findings regarding services from formative phase for intervention

- Health concerns compete with survival concerns.
- Men said they would take advantage of testing if it was available.
- Men want more information and practical support/tools for dealing with risk.
- Language is important.
- May need to be introduced in a ‘down low’ way.
What are your thoughts?

- Convicted felons
  - Can not apply for financial aid
- Prison culture is a revolving door
  - Chaotic lives, personal and/or family history of crime, drug-related activities, and violence.
- Risk factors on the inside are the same on the outside
- Little support for recently released prisoners
- What makes this different
The HOLLTA Intervention
Tailoring our Intervention

**Our Intervention:** Based on NIH’s *Health Living* and CDC’s *Comprehensive Risk Counseling and Services (CRCS)*

**Aim:** To help recently released men reduce risk behavior and address the psychosocial and medical needs that contribute to risk behavior and poor health outcomes.
Why Healthy Living?

- Proven effective for people with chaotic lives
- Focuses on stress and coping and risk reduction
- Uses role-plays, problem solving, and goal setting techniques
- Highly individualized
- One-on-one sessions
Why CRCS?

- Effective with high risk clients
- Intensive risk assessment
- Individualized prevention plan
- Individual HIV risk reduction counseling
- Focuses on coordination with other services in the community
Remember...

- Risk occurs among men who are in for longer periods of time, use and need drugs, are gay, are victims of sexual assault
- Men are reluctant to disclose
- Survival needs compete
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Finding</th>
<th>Result</th>
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<tr>
<td>Chaotic life</td>
<td>Risk reduction through stress and coping</td>
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<tr>
<td>Stigma and secrecy</td>
<td>One-on-one intervention, confidentiality is paramount</td>
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<td>Movement is limited (Parole does not mean free)</td>
<td>Intervention in the community</td>
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<td>Retention is difficult</td>
<td>5 sessions</td>
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<td>Competing life demands</td>
<td>Centerforce resources</td>
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Intervention Tailoring

Recruitment is as important as the intervention.

Strategies include:

- Visible marketing campaign; “branding”
- Education materials in a welcome home “kit”
- Passive technique (they call us)
- The right intervention provider

Absolute confidentiality
Evaluation

Pre-, post- evaluation contains questions asking about risk behavior, testing, disclosure/discussion with partners and other services received.

Done on the phone

Participants receive $25 for each assessment.

Also a qualitative component.
Currently Enrolling...

- Centerforce staff distribute recruitment materials at PACT meetings in Oakland and Richmond weekly.
- Men call UCSF to enroll and complete baseline risk assessment.
- Target N: 100
- Caseload, 10 men per month
- So far, n=5
Centerforce and UCSF are looking for men to participate in a new program that could help your health and your state of mind...

Participants receive...

► 5 free counseling sessions with a Centerforce case manager:
  Sessions cover stress and ways to cope, how to talk with your loved ones about your concerns, life planning, health care issues and HIV prevention.

► $75 for completing three telephone surveys

You may be eligible if...

► You are a man over 18 years old
► You were released within the past 2 weeks
► You had sex with another man while you were inside

For more information contact us at 510 921 8467 between 8am and 8pm.

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Contact Information

Craig Hutchinson
Center for AIDS Prevention Studies
University of California, San Francisco
50 Beale Street, Suite 1300
San Francisco, CA 94105
Telephone: (415) 597-9258
Email: Craig.Hutchinson@ucsf.edu