

# HIV and Men who have Sex with Men in DC

The District of Columbia faces many problems associated with HIV/AIDS as well as its transmission. We know that at least 3% of the population over the age of 12 is living with HIV/AIDS<sup>1</sup>. Some estimates put that number as high as 5%.

## HIV and Men Who Have Sex with Men (MSM) in the District

MSM (Men Who Have Sex with Men) make up a large portion of the people living with HIV in DC. In 2008, 16,513 people in DC were living with HIV, and of those, 40% (6,722) were MSM<sup>2</sup>. Of two reports, an estimated 14%-19% of MSM in DC are living with HIV<sup>2</sup>. MSM over the age of 30 were more likely to be HIV-positive, and men of color were more likely overall to be HIV-positive<sup>2</sup>, with the highest instances being among MSM between the ages of 20 and 49<sup>1</sup>.

## HIV Testing Among MSM

More than 40% of MSM who tested positive for HIV were previously unaware of their status. MSM over the age of 29 were not likely to be offered an HIV test by health care providers, despite being the group more likely to be HIV-positive<sup>2</sup>. 70% of MSM had been tested for HIV in the past 12 months<sup>2</sup>. 71% of MSM under the age of 29 had been previously tested for HIV in the past 12 months, whereas only 62% of MSM over the age of 29 had been tested in the same period<sup>2</sup>.

## Behaviors of MSM

More than one-third of MSM did not know the HIV-status of their last partner<sup>2</sup>. Over 40% of MSM did not use condoms the last time they had sex<sup>2</sup>. MSM under the age of 29 who have receptive anal sex (“bottoms”) were less likely to use condoms<sup>2</sup>. MSM over the age of 29 who have assertive anal sex (“tops”) were less likely to use condoms<sup>2</sup>. Two-thirds of MSM had a partner previously that they defined as “casual”<sup>2</sup>. More than one-third of MSM had reported using the Internet to find a sex partner in the past three months. MSM that found a sex partner online were more likely to use a condom, compared to all partners<sup>2</sup>.

## African-American MSM

The majority of African-American MSM that are living with HIV are between the ages of 30 and 39. This is the largest group of MSM living with HIV<sup>1</sup>. 24.8% of African-American MSM that tested positive were under the age of 30, as compared to the 16.5% of their white counterparts<sup>1</sup>. Despite these statistics, men of color were 50% more likely to use a condom than white men<sup>2</sup>. African-American MSM in the District make up 58% of MSM living with HIV in the district, higher than the National average of 29%<sup>1</sup>.

## Young MSM

MSM between the ages of 13 and 29 made up 22.5% of MSM living with HIV in the District<sup>1</sup>.

## Senior MSM

MSM over the age of 50 made up 10.1% of MSM living with HIV in the District<sup>1</sup>.

## In Summary

HIV among MSM affects many sub-groups, including men of color, younger men, and even seniors. With the information provided by studies about HIV among MSM in the District of Columbia, we have the opportunity to help educate MSM to change their behaviors, and to help groups and health care providers reach the necessary demographics to get them tested or give them tools of prevention. Health care providers can be reminded to make sure that MSM over 30 that they see are offered regular HIV testing. MSM more likely to participate in unprotected sex can be reached and educated and provided with condoms, or with access to them.

1. District of Columbia HIV/AIDS Epidemiology Update 2008.  
[http://thedccenter.org/docs/2011/dc\\_hiv-aids\\_2008\\_updatereport.pdf](http://thedccenter.org/docs/2011/dc_hiv-aids_2008_updatereport.pdf)
2. HIV Behavior Study Series #2, HAHSTA, DC Department of Health  
[http://thedccenter.org/docs/2011/msm\\_in\\_dc\\_hahsta\\_behavior\\_study\\_2010.pdf](http://thedccenter.org/docs/2011/msm_in_dc_hahsta_behavior_study_2010.pdf)



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