INTERACTING EPIDEMICS & INTERSECTING IDENTITIES: An intersectionality Informed syndemic analysis of Canadian gay and bisexual men

Olivier Ferlatte, Travis Salway Hottes, Terry Trussler, John Oliffe and Mark Gilbert

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Presenter Disclosure

• Presented: Olivier Ferlatte

• Relationships with Commercial interests: None
The aim of this study was to identify, using insights of intersectionality, which groups of Canadian gay and bisexual men are at increased risk of experiencing syndemics.
Intersectionality

Intersectionality is a research framework that investigates and interprets how multiple social locations (i.e. sexuality, gender, race/ethnicity, class) that are shaped by intersecting sociocultural forms of power and privilege (i.e. heterosexism, sexism, racism, classism) affects peoples, individuals and collective identities and experiences (Hankivsky, 2012).
“Once You've Blended the Cake, You Can't Take the Parts Back to the Main Ingredients” (Bowleg, 2013)
The appeal of intersectionality

• Challenges the idea that there is one unique experience of “being gay” and helps illuminate the diversity of experiences among gay men

• Brings attention to homophobia as well as other intersecting forms of power such as sexism, racism, classism, ableism, transphobia, and HIV stigma.

• As a result, intersectionality produces more accurate knowledge about a population by capturing the breath of individuals’ and populations’ experiences (Bowleg, 2012; Hankivsky, 2012).
Sex Now Survey 2012

• Online anonymous survey conducted between September 2011 and February 2012

• A total of 8382 Canadian men completed the survey (7715 HIV negative and untested men).

• Survey domains include: demographic, sexual behaviours, substance uses, health care access, mental health, community involvements, experiences of stigma.
Syndemics

Marginalization
- Harassment
- Physical violence
- Sexual Assault
- Career Discrimination
- Bullying

Development of Psychosocial issues
- Party Drugs
- Depression/anxiety
- Binge drinking
- Suicide behaviours

Snowballing of psychosocial issues into a syndemic

Emergence of sexual risks (UAI-US)

Adapted from Stall et al. 2008; Ferlatte et al. 2014
Analysis

TWO STEPS:

1. **Traditional approach**: Multivariate logistic regression analysis was performed to identify social locations associated with being affected by syndemics of 2 or more problems.

2. **Intersectional approach**: Stratified logistic regression by gay, bisexual and men partnered to woman (Married MSM).
Traditional public health approach

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Demographic Factors</th>
<th>Adjusted OR (95% CI)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gay</td>
<td>1.78 (1.44 – 2.21)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No University Degree</td>
<td>1.17 (1.01 – 1.36)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low Income</td>
<td>1.32 (1.12 – 1.55)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age 30-45 (ref over 45)</td>
<td>1.38 (1.17 – 1.63)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Under 30 (ref over 45)</td>
<td>1.49 (1.25 – 1.78)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aboriginality</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Intersectionality approach

 Syndemic of two or more issues

- Gay: 17.5%
- Bisexual: 11.5%
- Married to woman: 8.7%

Legend:
- Gay
- Bisexual
- Married to woman
## Intersectionality approach

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Demographic Factors</th>
<th>Adjusted OR (95% CI)</th>
<th>GAY MEN Adjusted OR (95% CI)</th>
<th>Bisexual MEN Adjusted OR (95% CI)</th>
<th>Men married to a woman Adjusted OR (95% CI)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gay</td>
<td>1.78 (1.44 – 2.21)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No University Degree</td>
<td>1.17 (1.01 – 1.36)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1.79 (1.02 – 3.14)</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low Income</td>
<td>1.32 (1.12 – 1.55)</td>
<td>1.39 (1.14 – 1.69)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age 30-45 (ref over 45)</td>
<td>1.38 (1.17 – 1.63)</td>
<td>1.36 (1.11 – 1.65)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Under 30</td>
<td>1.49 (1.25 – 1.78)</td>
<td>1.40 (1.14 – 1.72)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2.80 (1.65 – 4.74)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1.45 (1.23 – 1.72)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aboriginality</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1.78 (1.10 – 2.88)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1.52 (1.16 – 1.98)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Who is at risk of syndemics?

**Traditional**
Men are more at risk if they are:
- Gay
- Lower educated
- Low income
- Younger

**Intersectionality**
- Gay men are more at risk of syndemics than bisexuals and men married to women.
- Gay men are at increased risk if they have a low income, are Aboriginal, are younger, and live in urban settings.
- Single gay men are at increased risk compared to those partnered with a man.
- Bisexual men are at increased risk if they have a lower education.
- Younger men married to a woman have similar odds to experience syndemics than gay men.
Summarizing ideas & Limitations

• Syndemics are unevenly distributed among Canadian gay, bi and MSM. Our results suggest that HIV prevention and syndemic interventions could be strategically enhanced by attending to diversity and addressing issues of inequities within this population;

• Research is needed to better understand the role of power and oppression (beyond homophobia);

• The relationships between race/ethnicity and syndemics require more investigation – but we need better research!
Thank you

Olivier Ferlatte
olivier.ferlatte@ubc.ca