

Research Snapshot



cira

Center for Interdisciplinary Research on AIDS
at Yale University

Evidence Based Mental Health Interventions for Young Gay and Bisexual Men

Principal Investigator: John Pachankis

What is the research about?

Gay and bisexual men are about twice as likely as heterosexual men to experience major depressive disorder and anxiety disorders, likely because of their exposure to stigma-related stressors across the lifespan. We created a mental health intervention to help them cope with the psychological pathways of stigma-related stress in order to reduce their risk for mental health disorders.

Why is this important for HIV prevention and treatment?

Depression and anxiety are associated with health-risk behaviors like drug and alcohol abuse and sexually compulsive behaviors, and can increase risk for HIV infection among gay and bisexual men, who are 40 times more likely to become infected with HIV than heterosexual men.

What did the researchers do?

We consulted community mental health providers and at-risk gay and

bi-sexual men to create a cognitive-behavioral intervention to teach men skills to counteract the harmful effects of stigma-related stress.

What did the researchers find?

The treatment led to significant reductions in depression, alcohol use problems, drug use, sexual compulsivity, and condomless anal sex compared to men placed on a waiting list for the treatment. Receiving the treatment was also associated with significant reductions in internalized homophobia, expectations of rejection, rumination, social isolation, and unassertiveness.

How can you use this research?

Gay and bisexual men can improve their mental health and reduce HIV risk by learning to cope with early and ongoing stigma-related stress. Comparing the efficacy and cost-effectiveness of this stigma coping treatment against standard mental health and HIV prevention programs

represents an important next step before implementing this treatment within community-based practice.

Original Research Article:

Pachankis, J. E., Hatzenbuehler, M. L., Rendina, H. J., Safren, S. A., & Parsons, J. T. (2015). *LGB-affirmative cognitive behavioral therapy for young adult gay and bisexual men: A randomized controlled trial of a transdiagnostic minority stress approach*. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology, 83*, 875-889. [PubMed](#)

Other References:

Pachankis, J. E. (2015). *A transdiagnostic minority stress pathways approach for treating psychosocial syndemic conditions among gay and bisexual men*. *Archives of Sexual Behavior, 44*, 1843-1860. [PubMed](#)

Pachankis, J. E. (2014). *Uncovering clinical principles and techniques to address minority stress, mental health, and related health risks among gay and bisexual men*. *Clinical Psychology: Science and Practice, 21*, 313-330. [PubMed](#)

This research was supported by a grant from the National Institute of Mental Health (R34-MH096607; John E. Pachankis, Principal Investigator). The content is solely the responsibility of the author and does not necessarily represent the official views of the National Institutes of Health.

The CIRA *Research Snapshot* series features one page summaries of completed, peer reviewed and published studies conducted by CIRA affiliated scientists. Published by the Center for Interdisciplinary Research on AIDS (CIRA). CIRA is supported by National Institute of Mental Health Grant No. P30MH062294. Paul D. Cleary, Ph.D., Principal Investigator.