

PUBLIC HEALTH RESPONSES TO HIV AND SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED AND BLOOD-BORNE INFECTION (STBBI) PREVENTION AMONG BLACK QUEER MEN IN ONTARIO



Introduction:

- This poster draws on data from the *Skin-to-Skin Study*, a qualitative study examining the sexual practices of Black queer men (BQM) in Ontario.
- The findings of the study will support public health in addressing anti-Black racism and homophobia

BACKGROUND:

- Little is known about the desires and decision-making that inform Black queer intimate practices (Bailey, 2016).
- Public health practices that attempt to regulate the sexual practices of BQM through the promotion of condoms and pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) are not enough to improve sexual health outcomes amongst BQM.

OBJECTIVES:

- Ascertain what forms of touch BQM consider important for their physical, sexual, and mental well-being.
- Explore barriers to physical contact, including the impact of COVID-19 prevention strategies on BQM’s ability to access positive touch (e.g., sex, hugs, handholding, cuddling).
- Examine the extent to which anti-Black racism and homophobia impact BQM’s access and response to skin-to-skin contact.

METHODS:

Data collection is ongoing.
As of July 2024, there have been 14 BQM interviewed

Ages:
21-57

36%
Living with HIV

63%
HIV- men on PrEP

PRELIMINARY CONCLUSIONS & FUTURE CONSIDERATIONS:

- There is a significant gap in sexual health education and services that address the specific needs of Black gay, bisexual, and queer men
- There is a particular desire for resources that focus on pleasure during sexual encounters

RESULTS:

Participant 6, 36, Toronto:

“I think **public health should have an LGBTQ section** that has to do with men that have sex with men [...] to make people more comfortable [...] And also I believe there should be more men’s centers[...]. Because most of the clinics we have, they’re all downtown here in Toronto. **They should have (clinics) in other suburbs too** [...]”

Participant 3, 37, Toronto:

“**I don’t feel like there is any kind of sexual health [education]** that teaches you about the things that [the study is] asking. Like physical touch among queer folks, [...] arousal, and creating these libidinal economies in a **healthy way**. [...] I don’t see those communities. **I don’t see those resources available to me**. And I’ve been searching for the last few weeks and I’ve come up to nothing.”

REFERENCES:

Bailey, Marlon M. 2016. ‘Black Gay (Raw) Sex’. In *No Tea, No Shade: New Writings in Black Queer Studies*, edited by E. Patrick Johnson, 239–61. Durham: Duke University Press.

