



University
of Victoria

GRADUATE COLLOQUIUM

DEPARTMENT OF ANTHROPOLOGY

SERO-ADAPTIVE STRATEGIES OF VANCOUVER GAY AND BISEXUAL MEN IN A TREATMENT AS PREVENTION ENVIRONMENT

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Monday, November 28th, 2016
11:30 am – 12:50 pm
Cornett Building, Room A229



British Columbia's Treatment as Prevention (TasP) policy has provided free access to Highly Active Antiretroviral Therapy (HAART) to all HIV-positive provincial residents since 1997, resulting in significant reductions in new HIV diagnoses and HIV-related mortality. Another outcome is an increased proportion of HIV-positive gay and bisexual men (GBM) with suppressed viral loads. This last factor appears linked to changing sero-adaptive strategies, defined as sexual harm reduction behaviors based upon HIV sero-status. Examples include sero-sorting, strategic positioning, condom use, and withdrawal. Recent cross-sectional analysis of GBM enrolled in the Vancouver Momentum Health Study revealed a new strategy, with HIV-negative men perceiving condomless anal sex with HIV-positive men with suppressed viral loads as seroadaptive. Previously, such condomless sero-discordant dyads (HIV-negative x HIV-positive) represented high risk sexual behavior. To explore this new strategy in relation to other established sero-adaptations we analyzed longitudinal data from February, 2012 to July, 2015 for HIV-negative/unknown (n=556) and HIV-positive (n=218) GBM in Momentum. Bivariate analysis showed a positive trend for this new, "TasP strategy" for HIV-negative/unknown status GBM, while multivariable generalized estimating equation models revealed HIV-positive men significantly more likely to report this strategy. HIV-positive men also featured higher Treatment Optimism Scale scores, representing the belief that HAART makes HIV infection a treatable, rather than a fatal disease. Longitudinal analysis showed HIV status as a significant moderator for both the TasP strategy and HIV Treatment Optimism scores. Results are discussed in light of TasP policies and their effects on GBM sexual behavior.

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