Disclosure rates of potential HIV transmission risks to physicians and dentists by U.S. Black gay and bisexual men

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Objective: U.S. research on sexual orientation disclosure to health care providers suggests that many homosexually sexually active White males seek and receive medical care without revealing same-sex sexual behavior to their provider. Findings from a study of Black lesbians suggest that Blacks may also be reluctant to provide such information. However, knowledge of a high risk individual's HIV status may be relevant to both physicians and dentists in order to diagnose health complaints.

Methods: Questionnaires were completed by 844 homosexually active Black men (84% self-identified as gay, 15% bisexual) recruited nationally. Included were questions about disclosure of sexual orientation, recent health care utilization, questions about HIV infection and physician diagnosis of HIV disease.

Results: Approximately 74% reported talking to their physician about gay-related health problems. Nearly 63% indicated that their physician knew of their same-sex activities. In contrast, only 27% reported that their dentist knew, \( X^2 (1) = 98.40, p < .001 \). Men who had never been tested for HIV antibodies or who did not consider themselves to be gay were significantly least likely to inform their physicians or dentists.

Conclusion: Disclosure of HIV-related sexual risk history is more likely if the target is a physician rather than a dentist and the disclosure is a self-identified gay man who has taken an HIV antibody test regardless of the outcome of the test.