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SEROEPIDEMIOLOGY OF HUMAN HERPESVIRUS 8 AMONG YOUNG MEN WHO HAVE SEX WITH MEN.

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BACKGROUND: We studied human herpes virus-8 (HHV-8) prevalence and risk factors among participants in the Young Men's Survey (YMS) in King County, Washington.

METHODS: YMS was a multi-site, cross-sectional HIV prevalence and behavioral risk survey of men aged 15-22 who attended public venues where men who have sex with men (MSM) congregated. Blood obtained for HIV testing was tested for HHV-8 using an immunofluorescence assay (IFA) at a 1:40 dilution.

RESULTS: Of 494 men, 74% were MSM and 26% reported sex with women only (MSW). HHV-8 prevalence was 6% among MSM and 5% among MSW. HHV-8-infected MSM were more likely than uninfected MSM to have a prior history of sexually transmitted disease (STD) (30% vs. 12%, $p=0.03$), a greater median number of lifetime male sex partners (40 vs. 7, $p<0.001$), use of injected amphetamines (35% vs. 8%, $p<0.001$), unprotected anal sex with men in the past 6 months (74% vs. 38%, $p<0.01$), and an HIV-infected partner in the past 6 months (26% vs. 7%, $p<0.01$). HHV-8 seropositives were also more likely to be seropositive for herpes simplex virus 2 (13% vs. 2%, $p=0.03$) and cytomegalovirus (CMV) (83% vs. 46%, $p<0.01$). In multivariate analysis, unprotected anal sex with a man in the past 6 months (OR 3.97, CI 1.46-10.77), CMV infection (OR 5.24, CI 1.67-16.44), and amphetamine injection (OR 6.70, CI 2.40 -18.69) were associated with HHV-8 seropositivity in MSM.

CONCLUSIONS: We found an HHV-8 seroprevalence of 6% among these young MSM, which was similar to the HHV-8 seroprevalence in young MSW, but lower than seroprevalence estimates in

earlier studies of older MSM. The association between HHV-8 infection and unprotected anal sex supports previous findings that HHV-8 is sexually transmitted in MSM; CMV infection and amphetamine injection likely are markers for unsafe sexual practices. While only 2 MSM in our study were co-infected with HIV and HHV-8, their presence suggests that Kaposi's sarcoma may continue to be a problem among MSM with AIDS.

Keywords: AEGIS, Herpesvirus 8, Human, Sex Behavior, Coitus, Sexually Transmitted Diseases, Sexual Partners, Sarcoma, Kaposi, HIV, Seroepidemiologic Studies, Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome, Safe Sex, Prevalence, Risk Factors, HIV Seronegativity, Washington, Human, Male, Female, immunology, AIDS

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