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## **A THEORY-BASED, TAILORED, INTERACTIVE INTERVENTION DIRECTED AT MSM WHO MEET SEXUAL PARTNERS THROUGH INTERNET CHAT SITES: EFFECTIVE FOR MSM WHO PRACTICE UAI WITH CASUAL PARTNERS**

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**BACKGROUND:** Almost half the Dutch MSM use the Internet for chatting and dating. Current Internet interventions for HIV prevention are seldom linked to popular commercial chat sites, hardly ever make use of interactivity and are rarely theory based. We therefore developed and evaluated a theory-based tailored interactive intervention that was linked directly to Chatboy, the most popular Dutch gay chat site.

**METHODS:** Using the Intervention Mapping protocol, we developed the intervention "GAY CRUISE", tailoring it to age and sexual experience and focusing on psychosocial determinants. Participants registered with their e-mail address through Chatboy and were randomised to the intervention group or control group. Virtual agents guided participants through the intervention, giving personalised feedback. Follow-up was at three months.

**RESULTS:** The intervention group contained 2,886 respondents; the control group had 2,731. Response at follow-up was high: 39% (intervention group) and 44% (control group). The mean age was 33 years, 14% was of mixed or non-Dutch ethnicity, and 49% had a steady partner. 57% had met casual sex partners online in the previous three months. Of those, 66% had anal sex in that period, of whom 64% used condoms consistently. A comparison of the intervention group with the control group in the full sample shows no significant effects on condom use with casual sex partners. However, the intervention was effective for men who had been having unprotected anal intercourse (UAI) with casual partners at pre-test. The level of UAI at post-test was significantly lower in the intervention group than in the control group (45% versus 55%, respectively;  $p < 0.05$ ). 93% of the participants indicated they would appreciate having a tool within the chat programme that could indicate their wish to have safer sex.

**CONCLUSIONS:** Interactive tailored interventions linked to chat sites can be an effective instrument in HIV prevention for MSM who practice unprotected anal intercourse (UAI) with casual partners.

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