

UNDERSTANDING THE RELATIONSHIPS OF CHILDHOOD SEXUAL AND PHYSICAL VIOLENCE (CSPV) AND SUBSEQUENT ADULT SEQUELAE AMONG PERSONS WITH HIV DISEASE IN BC

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Background: Sexual violence in childhood has been linked with increased HIV vulnerability in adult life. Little is known about whether childhood physical violence relates to such risk.

Objective: To determine whether CSPV is associated with injection drug use, sex trade work, and institutional experience in adult life among HIV-positive male members of BCPWA.

Methods: Between May and September 2002, a total of 561 men completed self-administered questionnaires. Data collected include: demographic variables, social identity, CSPV (before age 17), injection drug use, sex trade work, and institutional experience. Participants were classified into one of four mutually exclusive categories of experience with childhood violence (no violence, physical abuse only, sexual abuse only, both sexual and physical abuse). We calculated odds ratios (95% CI) for adult sequelae of interest for each of these categories of childhood violence (CV) relative to men who did not experience violence.

Results: Mean age of respondents was 45 years (range: 21-79). Most men were born in Canada (85%), Caucasian (87%), and resided in BC for a median duration of 22 years. With respect to social identity, 42% of men identified themselves as gay, 36% as homosexual, and 12% as straight. Overall, 76 (14%) men did not experience any CV, 206 (37%) experienced physical abuse, 31 (6%) experienced sexual abuse, and 248 (44%) experienced both. Men who reported both sexual and physical violence in childhood were 3.9 times more likely to report injection drug use (95% CI: 1.8, 8.4), 4.0 times more likely to report involvement in the sex trade (95% CI: 2.1, 7.4), and 4.6 times more likely to report adult experience in institutions (95% CI: 2.3, 9.0).

Conclusions: Health care interventionists need to acknowledge the ramifications of child victimization in later life and its inherent social costs.