

HIGH RISK BEHAVIOURS AMONG MEN HAVING SEX WITH OTHER MEN (MSM) WHO WERE BORN IN CANADA COMPARED TO THOSE WHO IMMIGRATED TO CANADA - WHAT SHOULD WE MEASURE?

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Objective: To identify key variables and assess sexual risk behaviour among those who were born in Canada or who lived a significant part of their life in Canada, compared to those who immigrated to Canada.

Methods: The Omega Cohort and the Vanguard project are longitudinal studies of MSM living in the Montreal and Vancouver, respectively. For this analysis, data for both studies were combined for men with information on place of birth. Sociodemographic, sexual and other key variables as suggested by the literature were analysed using contingency tables. Reported P values are two sided.

Results: Baseline data analyses were based on 1337 MSM between the ages of 15 and 30 years. New Canadians (n= 241 [18%]) were less likely to live in unstable housing (4.7% vs. 11.1% p= 0.008), to report a recent rupture in a relationship (3.1% vs. 6.6 % p =0.082); more likely to have a university degree (32.4% vs. 23.2% p=0.01), to have an income below 20K (67.7% vs. 61.9% p=0.1). For sensation seeking behaviours, New Canadians were less likely to be tattooed (11.8% vs. 21.9% p<0.001) or have body piercing (41.1% vs 49.0% p=0.03). Commercial sex work among New Canadians were less frequent compared to Canadian born men (18.1% vs. 28.7% p=0.001) as well as bisexuality (45.5% vs. 57.9% p=<0.001) and having sex with more than 20 female lifetime partners (12% vs. 17.1% p=0.002). However, they were more likely to have unprotected anal sex while travelling outside of their home provinces (28.5% vs. 15.9% p=0.001).

Conclusions: New Canadians show lower risk behaviours when we consider traditional risk markers. However, these men seem to reverse their safe sex behaviours while travelling outside of their home provinces. It is important for health educators to sensitize these men to the risk of unprotected sex, especially when travelling to endemic countries.