



## Kaiser Daily HIV/AIDS Report

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### **MMWR Looks At Increase in HIV Cases, Risk Factors Among Black MSM in Jackson, Miss.**

A survey of 29 black men who have sex with men in Jackson, Miss., identified some common behaviors that place them at a risk of contracting HIV, according to a study published Friday in *CDC's Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*, *Reuters Health* reports. The risk factors include unprotected anal intercourse, sex with men who were older, and not seeking annual HIV tests. According to *Reuters*, CDC released the report to coincide with [National Black HIV/AIDS Awareness Day](#), which will take place Feb. 7 (*Reuters Health*, 2/5).

The impetus for the report originated in November 2007, when the [Mississippi State Department of Health](#) reported to CDC an increase in the number of HIV cases reported among young black MSM at a clinic in Jackson (*Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*, 2/6). The department and CDC then surveyed all black men ages 16 to 25 who received an HIV diagnosis between January 2006 and April 2008 in the Jackson area. The agencies identified 86 potential participants, interviewed 40 people and selected 29 self-reported MSM served as the focus of the study (*Reuters Health*, 2/5). According to the study's findings, 20 of the 29 participants, or 69%, reported engaging in unprotected anal intercourse in the year before they were diagnosed with HIV. However, only three participants, or 10%, reported believing that they likely would contract HIV in their lifetimes (*Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*, 2/6). The report also found that 55% of participants reported having sex with men age 26 or older in the year before diagnosis. In addition, 21% of participants reported taking no HIV tests during the two years prior to diagnosis, and 17% reported taking only one test. None of the participants reported injection drug use during the prior 12 month period (*Reuters Health*, 2/5). The authors note that "additional investigations are needed to determine whether this sample is illustrative of other groups of black MSM at high risk for HIV infection, especially in the South" (*Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*, 2/6).

According to the report's authors, black MSM "account for a disproportionate number" of new HIV/AIDS cases in the U.S. They note that between 2001 and 2006, the number of HIV/AIDS cases among black MSM ages 13 to 24 in 33 states increased by 93%. In order to reverse this trend, stakeholders should use "a combination of strategies, including culturally specific behavioral interventions, expanded testing programs and comprehensive campaigns to combat stigma," the authors write (*Reuters Health*, 2/5). They add that a CDC initiative, called [Heightened National Response to the HIV/AIDS Crisis Among African Americans](#), aims to reduce HIV among this population by expanding access to diagnosis, prevention and treatment services; developing new interventions; and promoting greater community involvement (*Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*, 2/6).

 The study is available [online](#).