

ORAL PRESENTATION ABSTRACTS

HIV Prevention and Aboriginal Youth Leadership: Examining Arts-Based Health Promotion

Ashley Heaslip (MA of Health Science Candidate, Dalla Lana School of Public Health, University of Toronto), Sarah Flicker, Claudia Mitchell, Randy Jackson, Jean Paul Restoule, Tracey Prentice, June Larkin, Jessica Yee, Christine Smilie, Melanie Rivers

“Taking Action: Using Arts-Based Approaches to Develop Aboriginal Youth Leadership in HIV Prevention” is a community-based research project examining how Aboriginal youth understand the links between individual HIV risk and structural inequalities (such as colonialism). The study offers findings relevant to health promotion through engagement of youth in the production of artistic pieces that represent their understandings of HIV. A participatory research design using arts-based approaches (e.g. theatre, painting, and hip hop, etc.) has taken place in two Canadian Aboriginal communities. Data were collected through the creation of artistic cultural productions during weekend-long workshops, intake surveys and in-depth follow-up interviews. Analyses have been conducted collaboratively. In October 2008, the first workshop was held in Toronto with urban Aboriginal youth (aged 13-17; n=8). In February 2009, the second workshop was held at the Kettle and Stony Point First Nation. Our findings support the notion that arts-based approaches to the development of HIV prevention knowledge and Aboriginal youth leadership are applicable to the field of health promotion. As an innovative tool that involves youth “where they are at,” it also embeds cultural understandings of health in by-youth-for-youth prevention and policy efforts. Arts-based approaches represent one way to assist with decolonizing the research process, moving forward the agenda of ownership, control, access and possession.

Why Some Women Engage in Unprotected Sex: How Interpersonal Rejection Moderates the Relationship between Attachment Anxiety and Condom Use

Leigh C. Turner & Tara K. MacDonald, Queen's University

Women high in attachment anxiety are more likely than those low in attachment anxiety to engage in unprotected sex (Feeney et al., 1999); however there is little research assessing the causal factors underlying this association. We hypothesized that anxious women may engage in unprotected sex to avoid partner rejection, and so we manipulated potential partner rejection to assess whether it moderates the relationship between attachment anxiety and condom use. Female university students who were prescreened on attachment (Brennan et al., 1998) read a vignette depicting a sexual encounter, during which intercourse was desired by both partners but condoms were unavailable. Participants were randomly assigned to read one of two vignettes: rejection or non-rejection. The rejection vignette concluded with the man suggesting that he might end the relationship if intercourse were refused. The non-rejection condition had no such indications. Subsequently, participants reported their intentions to engage in unprotected sex if in the same situation as that depicted in the vignette. An anxiety x rejection interaction significantly predicted intentions to have sex. In the non-rejection condition, anxiety negatively predicted intentions to have unprotected sex. In the rejection condition, anxiety positively predicted intentions to have unprotected sex. Furthermore, simple slopes analyses indicated that at high levels of anxiety, intentions did not differ between the two rejection conditions. However, at low levels of anxiety, participants in the rejection condition reported lower intentions to engage in unprotected sex than those in the non-rejection condition. Implications of attachment and rejection in promoting condom use are discussed.

Depressed with a Smile: The Intersectionality of Being a Filipino Gay Youth

Paul Pabello (M.Ed. student at Adult Education and Community Development, OISE)

Studies done in the US have shown that Filipino youth generally do well in school with high scores in Math and English. However, their scholastic ability conceals the fact that they also have the highest scores of clinical depression amongst US youth of colour (Black, Hispanic, Asian). Research has also shown that homosexual men have the highest suicide and depression rates among their youth counterparts. I will explore the specific intersectionality of being a Filipino and a gay male youth. This presentation uses literature from the US to demonstrate that Filipino gay male youth are at a heightened risk of depression, suicide, unsafe sex practices, and illicit drug use. This presentation also addresses the lack of Canadian research presented on this topic and make connections to build the groundwork for Canadian research in this field.

Can't Beat it Out of Me: Violence, Homelessness, and Resistance in LGBT Street Youth in Downtown Toronto
Angela MacNeil (MES Candidate, York University, Master of Environmental Studies)

For this project, "Can't Beat it Out of Me: Violence, Homelessness and Resistance in LGBT Street Youth", I am taking an ethnographic stance on exploring the issue of LGBT Street Youth. LGBT youth are at a heightened risk of violence at the hands of their own family members. Persistent negative stereotypes and discrimination against LGBT individuals, youth are often thrown out of their homes or cut off financially. Once on the streets, these youth are at an increased risk for rape, beatings, and sexually transmitted infections, including HIV. (Transitions. Volume 14, No. 4. June 2002). Aboriginal youth reflect a historical context of oppression and displacement endured by Canada's Aboriginal population. I want to join together the often tragic side of youth homelessness with contrasting research of "sex positive" spaces in downtown Toronto where youth gather in public spaces. Homelessness can be seen as a volatile environment. But for many youth it is both that and also a place of bearing witness in the face of defining "home and belonging" through a sex positive lens.



Adolescents Taking Exploratory Action to Transform their Sexual Health Education

Rosemarie Mangiardi, PhD Candidate
Secondary Education, Faculty of Education, University of Alberta
Oral Presentation

Within an educational hierarchy there are "discouraging subjects" who offer significant statements; and, others who are "mute objects" and mumble trivial accounts. I challenged this practice and perception by descending to the bottom of this hierarchy to the "mute" not only to listen to them, but to acknowledge what they say as meaningful. I adopted the methodology of qualitative participatory action research, premised on the belief that research is conducted *with* rather than *on* those immediately affected by the problem under study. I invited eight Grade 12 students to assume the role of co-researcher. To assist them with this endeavour, I provided guidance through the ethical research process, ensuring they possessed the requisite knowledge and skills to conduct semi-structured interviews with three peers. In total 22 interviews were transcribed for the student co-researchers to conduct a thematic analysis. Subsequently, the team used this analysis to design and development a sexual health education action plan which the students entitled, *Sex-E-cation*. This plan takes the form of a *PowerPoint* presentation to communicate, in part, potential transformations that educators can consider when modifying the curriculum. I, later, presented the plan to educators, positioned in various echelons of the system, so they could not only acknowledge, but also respond to students' sexual health educational perspectives. Even though students are typically at the bottom of the organizational structure, they offer substantive insights into their own education. This research underscores that educators must recognize, respect and, ultimately, respond to students' sexual health education perspectives.



Unpacking the Visual: Youth Narratives on HIV/AIDS

Sarah Switzer (MA Candidate, Curriculum, Teaching and Learning, OISE/University of Toronto)

Current studies on HIV/AIDS education and prevention have demonstrated that existing curriculum models are inadequate for addressing the HIV/AIDS epidemic. Innovative HIV/AIDS curriculum models are needed in order to provide alternatives to the present Canadian curriculum. Drawing on the emergence of arts-based curriculum and research methodologies for addressing youth experiences and knowledge of HIV/AIDS, this paper will outline methodological, ethical and conceptual issues in arts-based HIV/AIDS education. This paper will focus on my current research: the use of collage as a methodological and conceptual framework for re-thinking knowledge production in HIV/AIDS education with youth. Social science research has begun to document the ways in which HIV/AIDS education and prevention programs reproduce neo-liberal notions of the rational, autonomous individual. These arguments critique HIV/AIDS education and prevention programs that position youth as rational actors existing outside social contexts (i.e. outside their gendered, classed, raced positions) rather than viewing youth sexuality as bound up in a web of complicated and contradictory anxieties, fears, and expectations. As a non-linear, multi-vocal, contradictory and fragmented genre composed of circulating media materials, collage may function as a generative metaphor for re-theorizing youth sexuality and knowledge in HIV/AIDS education. Collage is also a useful method for learning about youth, visual representation and HIV/AIDS.

Youth collages, written narratives and selected interview and focus group excerpts will accompany the paper. Research data will illustrate how larger issues of voice, subjectivity, identity and representation merge with visual culture. At this point in the study, data will not be used to provide research outcomes.



“My Doctor Said I had to Pay a Fee...I’ll Never Go Back There Again”: Toronto Newcomer Youth and Sexual Health Services in the City

Roxana Salehi¹(Primary Presenter), June Larkin, Sarah Flicker, Robb Travers, Susan Flynn, Crystal Layne, Adrian Guta, Jason Pole, Adinne Schwartz, Kristin McIlroy ,Chase Lo, Alexis Kane Speer, Safiya Olivadoti, Dan Stadnicki (1PhD Candidate, York University, Toronto, Ontario)

The discourse on access to Canadian health services severely lacks the perspectives of young people, especially marginalized groups such as LGBTQ youth and youth new to Canada. In an innovative community-based survey, *Toronto Teen Survey (TTS)*, diverse groups of Toronto youth were asked to share their perspectives on the accessibility of sexual health services in the city. This paper is a sub-study of TTS that focuses only on the experiences of newcomer youth--those who have lived in Canada for three years of less. Using data from three focus groups with newcomer youth in Toronto, *this qualitative paper explores the factors that facilitate or hinder newcomer youth’s access to sexual health services*. Youth focus groups were tape recorded and transcribed. A coding framework was developed and a grounded theory approach was used to analyze the data. Some key factors that stop newcomer youth from accessing sexual health services were fear of finding out about a potential disease; fear of not being taken seriously; fear of their parents finding out; and not knowing how “things work”. Some key factors that youth said would help them access services were: being able to go to a place that offered a range of primary care services and was not “just for sexual health stuff”, and receiving services in their language, though some youth said that the presence of an interpreter could make them feel uncomfortable. Some youth did not see a need to access sexual health services due to personal and religious beliefs.



Best Practices for Inclusive Sexual Health Education

Ivian Tchakarova (Undergraduate Psychology/ Biology, University of Toronto Mississauga; UTM Sexual Education & Peer Counselling Centre)

As outlined by the Sex Information and Education Council of Canada (SIECCAN); access to effective, broadly based sexual health education plays an important role in the development of the health and well being of Canadian youth (2005). Implementation of effective and relevant sexual health education facilitates the development of well being of students by empowering youth within the classroom in their educational aspirations and in their self awareness. This is a particularly critical issue in relation to the health needs of sexual minorities (LGTBQ youth) in our heteronormative society; not only are they at risk of failing to have adequate knowledge surrounding their sexuality and well being but also being misunderstood by peers, teachers and society creating hostile learning environments. A compilation of information from journal articles, government resources and Ontario curriculum documents reviewing topics such as the history of sexual education in the educational system, heteronormativity embedded in the current curriculum, and the classroom environments relating to sexuality and sexual orientation of both students and teachers. Information was also gained from first hand experiences working with LGTBQ youth at the Triangle program, an alternative school for LGTBQ youth. The results of this review indicate that providing inclusive sexual health education does not require extensive training or special skills. Instead, educators should endeavour to foster a climate of awareness about the array of sexual orientations in order to better understand and meet the needs of all their students which ultimately should be reflected in the current curriculum.



The Impact of Sexualized Violence on Girls’ Sexual Self-Concepts

Leyna Lowe (Graduate Program in Women's Studies, York University)

Adolescence is recognized as an important period in which girls develop their concepts of selves as sexual beings. However, their developing self-concepts are in many ways contingent upon the array of sexual experiences to which they are exposed, which may, depending on the experiences in question, foster a positive or negative relationship with sex and sexuality. This paper explores sexualized violence in the lives of girls as a negative determinant in the development of their sexual self-concepts. My discussion is rooted in literary analysis, drawing upon the anthology *girlSpoken: from pen, brush, and tongue* to explore two non-fictional pieces of literature produced by girls who write about the effects of sexualized violence on their psychosocial well-being. The first prose piece produced by Deidra Cathcart and entitled “Bathroom Walls” considers how violent sexual labels can be used as a tool to silence and control female sexual desire, and in the second piece “Shadow of Me,” poet Sarah McLatchie explores the physical brutality as well as the erosion of self-worth that she experiences in a sexually abusive romantic relationship. My discussion concludes with an examination of how art can prove to be an effective means for girls to work through the painful consequences of sexualized violence and reconstruct their sense of themselves as sexual beings. Furthermore, I argue that their stories also have educative value for other girls because they help dispel the myth that sexualized violence is a personal and isolated “problem,” highlighting instead how it is both pervasive and systemic.



The Moderating Effect of Shame- and Guilt-Proneness on Condom Use Intentions and Behavior.

Sandra R. Marques¹, Tara K. MacDonald¹, & Michaela Hynie² (¹Queen's University, ²York University)

Research indicates that most young adults are aware of the benefits and consequences of using condoms (Hynie & MacDonald, 2004) however, many still refrain from using condoms every time they have sexual intercourse. To understand this inconsistency, researchers have tried to identify variables associated with condom use cognitions and behavior. In two studies, we examined whether individual differences in terms of shame- and guilt-proneness may affect individuals' condom use intentions and behavior, which were assessed using the Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991). Evidence suggests that guilt-proneness is adaptive, whereas shame-proneness is associated with poor adjustment (Tangney, 2003). Following problematic behaviors, guilt-prone individuals tend to focus on the behavior itself, which enables them to evaluate the behavior and develop strategies to avoid it in the future. In contrast, shame-prone individuals tend to focus on their personal shortcomings, instead of devoting attention to the behavior itself. In Study 1, guilt-proneness significantly predicted attitudes, subjective norms, and intentions over and above shame-proneness. Also, the relationship between perceived behavioral control (PBC) and actual behavior was significantly greater for the guilt-prone individuals. In Study 2, PBC was experimentally manipulated using advertisements and we found that making self-efficacy salient increased the association between PBC and intentions. Implications of these findings for promoting condom use intentions are discussed.

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HIV/AIDS & Aboriginal Youth: How One Group Of Youth In Toronto Are Creating Culturally Relevant, Youth Friendly Prevention Messages

Christine Smillie-Adjarkwa (Ph.D. Candidate, Adult Education & Community Development (Collaborative Program in Aboriginal Health) Ontario Institute for Studies In Education/ University of Toronto)

In this presentation I will present an innovative knowledge dissemination strategy used for research on HIV/AIDS and Aboriginal youth. HIV/AIDS is reaching epidemic proportions in some Aboriginal (First Nations, Metis and Inuit) communities in Canada. As young people are one of the most vulnerable groups to HIV infection, stopping the spread of HIV among Aboriginal communities must start with youth. While research can provide valuable information on HIV risk and prevention, this does not always transfer to HIV education. In addition, there is much evidence that conventional forms of education are not effective with youth. To address these limitations, we are working with youth from Native Child and Family Services in Toronto to turn the findings of our study with urban and on-reserve Aboriginal youth into creative youth led arts-based education. Data for the arts activities was obtained in a previous study in which trained peer facilitators conducted focus groups in Ontario and Quebec with 61 Aboriginal youth. With the assistance of Herbie Barnes, an Aboriginal actor, youth from Native Child and Family Services (The Youth Warriors, the name of the group) are turning data collected in the study into scripts and discussion questions for HIV/AIDS education. The knowledge dissemination strategy includes other arts pieces created by youth to complement their performance pieces. We will discuss the process of developing our arts-based education strategy and the value of this approach for HIV prevention education. The presentation will include samples of the youth performances and artistic productions.

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Building Youth Capacity in Sexual Health Peer Education Research

Denise Jaworsky^{1,2} (Primary Presenter), Lisa Campbell^{3,6}, Leah Erlich, Gobika Sriranganathan, Susan Flynn⁴, Sarah Flicker³, Jesse Janssen⁵, June Larkin⁶ (¹LetsStopAIDS, Canada; ²Faculty of Medicine, University of Toronto, Toronto, Canada; ³Faculty of Environmental Studies, York University, Toronto, Canada; ⁴Planned Parenthood Toronto, Toronto, Canada; ⁵Faculty of Medicine, University of British Columbia, Vancouver, Canada, ⁶Gendering Adolescent AIDS Prevention, Women and Gender Studies Institute, University of Toronto)

When working with groups such as youth, specific strategies need to be developed to ensure effective capacity building in research. This project's objectives were to train youth interested in the production of literature reviews. As part of a project entitled, "Building capacity to conduct community-based research on evaluating youth sexual health peer education," two youths (aged <18) were hired and trained to conduct two literature reviews. A postgraduate student was hired to supervise and train the youth. This training process was divided into four phases: 1) background reading; 2) workshops on developing research techniques and library search strategies; 3) visits to community organizations to enhance the youth's understanding of sexual health services; 4) critical analysis of the existing literature, additional searches based on identified gaps and the writing and revision of the reviews. The youth developed two literature reviews that examined: 1) sexual health education among Canadian youth and their attitudes concerning HIV and 2) sexual health peer education programs and evaluation methods. The reviews were written in language that is more accessible to community agencies working with youth and youth themselves. The youth involved in this project gained valuable skills including library search strategies, critical appraisal of research and academic writing, referencing techniques and working with community organizations. This project demonstrates that youth can be trained in research techniques and can contribute greatly to the research process, supporting the principle that age should not be a factor that excludes community members from meaningful participation in research.

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POSTER PRESENTATION ABSTRACTS

HIV Positive Adolescents' Sexual Health and Disclosure Concerns, A Mixed Methods Approach

Tamara Landry, MA, PhD Student (Health and Rehabilitation Sciences Graduate Program, The University of Western Ontario)

This poster will provide information concerning doctoral research to be conducted using qualitative and quantitative methods to: 1) explore sexual health and disclosure concerns (where appropriate) of perinatally-infected HIV+ adolescents, 14-17 years of age, and comparison groups of age-matched adolescents with Type 1 Diabetes, and age-matched adolescents without chronic illness, and 2) determine available and needed support services for the HIV+ adolescents. The purpose of the comparison groups is to determine which perceived concerns of HIV+ adolescents are similar to those of other chronically ill adolescents, or all adolescents in general, and which are distinctive to the group of HIV+ adolescents. Since minimal research has explored the sexual health needs of HIV+ adolescents in Canada, little is known about their sexual health and disclosure concerns. In this study, 20 HIV+ adolescents, 20 adolescents with Type 1 Diabetes, and 20 adolescents without a chronic illness, will be recruited to complete a questionnaire to determine available and needed support services, and participate in in-depth interviews to explore sexual health and disclosure concerns. This research is intended to advance knowledge to help create and implement education, support and prevention programs tailored specifically to sexual health and disclosure concerns of HIV+ adolescents, as well as minimize the risk of HIV transmission. Since there are no existing guidelines on how adolescents may disclose their HIV status, education programs designed with the assistance of HIV+ adolescents may provide a more comfortable atmosphere in which to discuss their health status with others.

GIS Analysis to Determine Youth Sexual Health Service Access

Peyun Kok (Faculty of Environmental Studies, York University)

This study uses data from the Toronto Teen Survey to determine where youth go to access sexual health services. The teen respondents to this survey were asked to give their Forward Sortation Area (FSA) of residence, as well as any sexual health clinics that they had ever visited within the City of Toronto. This data was entered into a Geographic Information System (GIS) and estimated distances travelled by each respondent to access sexual health services were computed. Results were analyzed to gain an understanding of how far youth travel to access sexual health services, and whether or not differences exist according to gender, immigrant status, or other variables that might suggest a need for special considerations in the planning and delivery of programs for particular groups. Results showed that while the average nearest distance of any one FSA to the nearest youth sexual health clinic in Toronto is 1.9 kilometres, the average distance that youth travelled to visit a sexual health clinic was 6.9 kilometres. It was also found that youth who have visited more than one clinic travelled significantly farther than those who had visited only one clinic, suggesting that teens may travel farther to find a new clinic if they are dissatisfied with the service they receive at the first clinic they visit. There were no significant differences in distances travelled according to gender, immigrant status or race, though certain groups tended to be less likely to access sexual health services at all.

Connectedness and Condom Use: The Effects a Sense of Community has on Sexual Health

Matt Eldridge (Psychology, York University)

Research suggests that despite years of HIV/AIDS interventions, there continues to be inconsistent condom use in all populations, including the population of men who have sex with men (MSM) (e.g. Siegel et al. 2008; Halkitis, Wilton, & Drescher, 2005). Low self-esteem and high social anxiety have been linked to this phenomenon (Diaz & Ayala, 2001; Hart & Heimberg, 2005). Interestingly, however, social connectedness has an effect on increasing self-esteem and decreasing social anxiety (McCoy, 1999) suggesting that the nature of one's community may influence safer sex. This study builds on past research, extending the findings on social connectedness to a psychological sense of community. Specifically, I will examine the effect that a psychological sense of community has on increasing condom use among MSM, through its effect on increasing self-esteem and decreasing social anxiety. Data for this on-line study is currently being collected from a range of locations around Toronto. The sole criterion for participation is to be a man who has sex with men. Since there are so many subcultures within the population of MSM, the sense of community variable relate to the gay community in general, and whichever community participants claim that they associate with most strongly. If, as we predict, sense of community is a strong predictor of condom use, it suggests the potential value of developing interventions that foster a sense of community for MSM, and potentially reduce the rate of unprotected anal intercourse.

ARTISTIC ABSTRACTS

Pushing Forth, Pushing Forward

Evvy Hareven (Undergraduate student at the Ontario College of Art & Design: BFA, Photography, 2nd Year)

Getting access to sexual health services and education shouldn't feel unattainable. The idea that these resources would be out of reach to many of today's youth and young adults is intolerable. Pushing Forth, Pushing Forward uses the vastness of our natural landscapes as metaphors representing both struggle and resistance - helplessness and hope. While resistance may sometimes seem futile, it is vital to build community to inspire and promote involvement and leadership, especially that of today's youth. To remain inspired and devoted is the first step in pushing forth for social change.

This photographic series draws the viewer into vast open spaces that emit feelings of both openness and intimidation. To stand before such a space reflects the hesitation that many feel when approached with the opportunity to use their voice. By encouraging youth involvement we commit ourselves to self-improvement and to the prosperity and growth of our communities.

Unpacking the Visual: Youth Narratives on HIV/AIDS

Sarah Switzer (MA Candidate Curriculum, Teaching and Learning, OISE/University of Toronto)

This exhibition will showcase 5-7 visual collages and accompanied narratives created by female undergraduate students at the University of Toronto (aged 18-23), as part of a study investigating the representation of youth narratives on HIV/AIDS. The exhibition follows the work of arts-based HIV/AIDS researchers who explore the arts as one particular methodological and pedagogical strategy for addressing HIV/AIDS with youth. Exhibited work will explore issues of youth sexuality, identity, voice, and representation, as well as local and global discourses on HIV/AIDS.

As a non-linear, fragmented and contradictory "artistic" method collage speaks well to the complicated terrain of youth sexuality. Found images (newspapers, magazines, etc) are removed from their original contexts, and pasted together to create one fragmented, and yet whole image or message. The reading of images within a collage's provided frame allows for an open interrogation of the visual constructions of gender, sex(uality), and race. Thus, the process of creating and viewing these collages allows us to ask the following questions: Through engaging in the process of making collages, what stories do youth tell about HIV/AIDS? What discourses or narratives are produced when collage and narrative are used as methodological tools to address youths concerns and/or experiences of HIV/AIDS? Last, by responding to their own collage texts, as well as the collage texts of others, how are issues of representation and identity addressed and interpreted?

At the request of participants, written narratives will be concealed so that audiences may engage freely with the collages, making links to their own lives where relevant.

They Were, S/He Was, I was, I will Be

Bryn A. Ludlow (Undergraduate student at the Ontario College of Art & Design, Integrated Media)

They Were/ She Was is an active response piece to the issue of social stigmatization of sexual assault. It is a mobile poster installation, moving through specific locations of the city of Toronto, where victim-survivor support services are provided. At each location, passers-by were invited to sign their names in the blank space of the poster as a way to identify the need to speak out and acknowledge that violence does occur, and in contemporary society, we cannot be silent. Overall, thirty people willingly signed the poster; some sharing their stories on camera, and others signing in- private. The poem, "The Journey We Take," weaves through the video, subliminally sharing the survivor story of the artist herself. As the poster moved from location to location, the word, "Rape," and all of its connotations and denotations were present for passers-by, creating curiosity, and possibly an urge to speak up. The project was created for the course, "Contemporary Issues," with Professor BH Yael, and is linked to the Canadian Artists Against Sexual Assault collective and the "Report to Prevent Campaign." It has been available on the poster activists' blog since November 24, 2007, and has been an excellent way to disseminate information about the project, to increase a dialogue about the issues at stake with sexual assault in Canada, and to keep the project alive, possibly to inspire others to act in a similar way.