“Current Research on Syndemics and the HIV Care Continuum”

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Syndemic:

- (n.) a cluster of epidemics that act additively to predict other epidemics
- (adj.) of or pertaining to such a cluster*

[www.cdc.gov/syndemetics]
Syndemics: An Introduction

- Syndemics theory holds that distinct psychosocial epidemics cluster in marginalized populations at higher rates than in the general population and interact to raise risk for other diseases such as HIV/AIDS.
**Intertwining Epidemics among Urban MSM** (Significant OR estimates, controlling for age, education, race, income, HIV status and sexual risk)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Childhood Sex Abuse</th>
<th>Partner Violence</th>
<th>Depression</th>
<th>Substance Abuse</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Childhood Sex Abuse</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partner Violence</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Depression</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Substance Abuse</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>--------</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From Stall et al., AJPH 2003 93:939-42
Intertwining Epidemics Predict HIV Prevalence and High Risk Sexual Behavior

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No. of Psychosocial Health Problems</th>
<th>0 ((n = 1,392))</th>
<th>1 ((n = 812))</th>
<th>2 ((n = 341))</th>
<th>3 or 4 ((n = 129))</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Recent high risk sex</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HIV prevalence</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All associations have p's < 0.001. All p values are two-tailed.

From Stall et al., AJPH 2003 93:939-42
Basic finding that a syndemic of psychosocial health conditions that are related to HIV risk has been replicated many times among MSM.

Two studies (one in the Thailand, the other in the US) have used the syndemics analysis to predict HIV seroconversion among MSM.
Implications of Syndemics Research

- Syndemics research raises the possibility by that working to resolve multiple life-threatening psychosocial health disparities within a marginalized population we can at the same time lower risk for HIV transmission in that same population.
Moving the field forward

- Most of the research conducted on syndemics has focused on risk for HIV
- Less work has been conducted on syndemics and the care continuum
- *This is the first session to report findings on the relationships between syndemic processes and the care continuum.*
Talks to be presented at this Session

- **Mack Friedman**, et al. *Someone to count on: the moderating influence of social support on the relationship between syndemics and viral load*

- **Steve Kurtz**, et al., *Co-Occurring psychosocial health disparities and ARV medication adherence among Indigent Drug Users*

- **Frances Cowan**, *Syndemics HIV and the care cascade in southern African: Preliminary data from Zimbabwe*

- **Matthew Mimiaga**, et al., *Multiple syndemic psychosocial factors are associated with reduced engagement in HIV care in an online sample of HIV-infected MSM in Latin America*