

ATTITUDES TOWARDS CONDOM USE MAY EXPLAIN WHY OLDER BLACK SOUTH AFRICAN MSM ENGAGE IN UNPROTECTED INSERTIVE ANAL SEX MORE FREQUENTLY

Farnaz Kaighobadi¹; Justin Knox^{1,2}; Vasu Reddy^{3,4}; Dawie Nel⁵; Theo Sandfort¹

¹HIV Center for Clinical and Behavioral Studies, New York State Psychiatric Institute and Columbia University, New York, NY, USA; ²Department of Epidemiology, Columbia University Mailman School of Public Health, New York, NY, USA; ³Human Sciences Research Council, Human and Social Development, Pretoria, South Africa; ⁴University of KwaZulu-Natal, Humanities and Social Sciences, Durban, South Africa; ⁵OUT LGBT Well-being, Pretoria, South Africa

KEY MESSAGES

- The relationship between age and sexual risk behaviors among South African MSM is unclear.
- Older Black South African MSM in this sample engaged in more frequent unprotected insertive anal intercourse (UIAI).
- Older Black MSM in this sample also showed more negative attitudes towards condom use.
- Older Black MSM who had negative attitudes towards condom use were more likely to engage in UIAI.
- HIV prevention interventions and efforts should consider the varying needs of different cohorts of men.

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INTRODUCTION

- Research investigating the relationship between age and sexual risk behaviors among men who have sex with men (MSM) in Africa has produced inconsistent findings.
- Primary goal of this study was to gain a better understanding of the relationship between age and sexual risk behaviors among South African MSM.
- Also to identify potential mechanisms that could explain any observed differences, including psychosocial mediators of the relationship.
- The Information-Motivation-Behavioral Skills (IMB) model was used as a framework for the mediation analysis, including HIV knowledge, attitudes towards condom use, social norms for safer sex, safer sex self-efficacy, and safer sex intentions.

METHODS

- All men (N = 193) completed computer-assisted self-interviewing in various settings in Tshwane/Pretoria.
- All men were Black/African and reported having had sex with at least one man in the preceding year; 79% resided in townships. Mean age 26.7 years (range 18-40).
- The primary outcomes of interest for the study were the reported frequency of UIAI and URAI in the past two months.
- All of the IMB constructs other than knowledge were measured on 5-point Likert scales.
- The effects of the constructs from the IMB model on the relationship between age and UIAI and URAI were tested using Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) regression models. The mediation analysis followed guidelines suggested by Baron and Kenny (1989).

RESULTS

Bivariate Correlations between the Main Variables of the Study

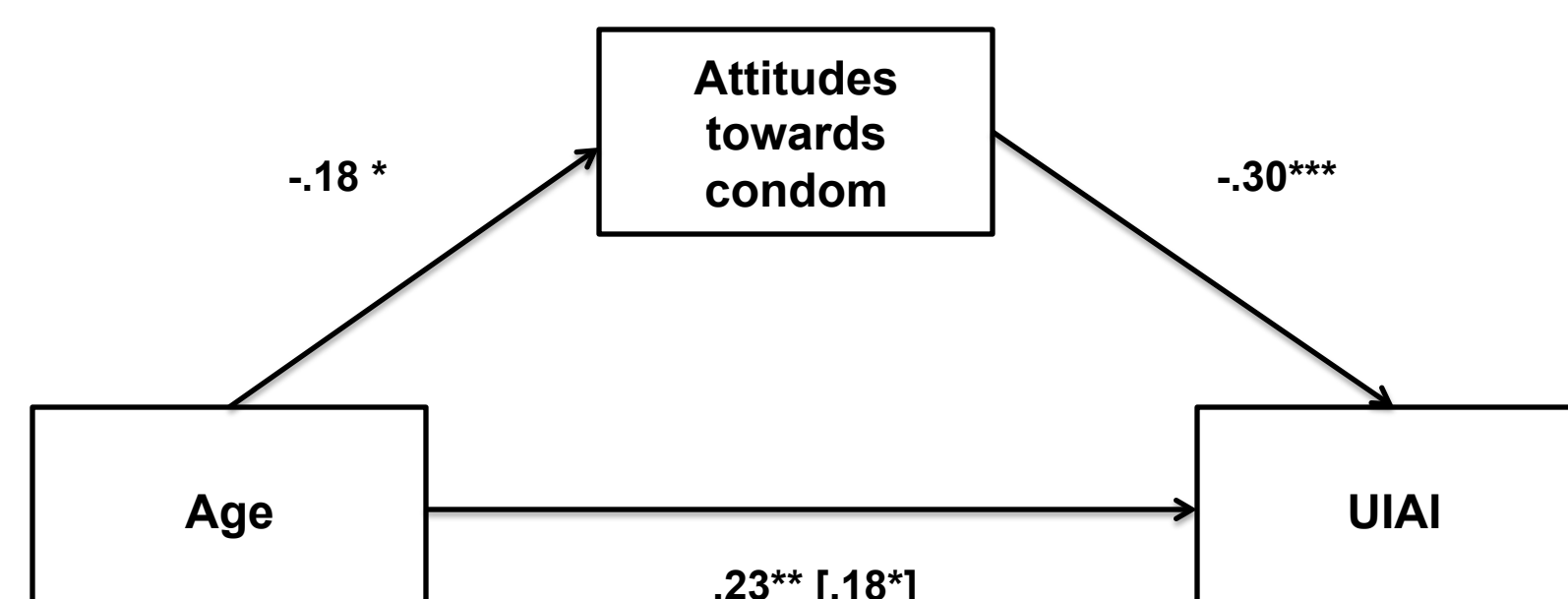
| Variables | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
|-----------------------|------|--------|--------|--------|--------|---------|---------|--------|--------|
| 1. Age | -.10 | -.18* | -.11 | -.08 | -.05 | .23** | .09 | .32*** | .15 |
| 2. HIV knowledge | - | .29*** | .28*** | .34*** | .19** | -.08 | -.03 | -.05 | -.07 |
| 3. Positive attitudes | | - | .48*** | .29*** | .49*** | -.34*** | -.14 | -.26** | -.22* |
| 4. Social norms | | | - | .23** | .20** | -.08 | -.13 | -.14 | -.13 |
| 5. Self-efficacy | | | | - | .26*** | -.15* | -.01 | -.18* | -.21 |
| 6. Intentions | | | | | - | -.36*** | -.37*** | -.12 | -.24** |
| 7. UIAI | | | | | | - | .46*** | .52*** | .22* |
| 8. URAI | | | | | | | - | .18* | .43*** |
| 9. IAI | | | | | | | | - | .34*** |
| 10. RAI | | | | | | | | | - |

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

The bivariate correlation analyses showed:

- A positive association between men's age and frequency of insertive anal intercourse (IAI)
- A positive association between men's age and frequency of UIAI in the past two months
- A negative association between men's age and attitudes towards condom use
- A negative association between attitudes towards condom use and UIAI

The Mediation Analyses



* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$
The numbers represent the standardized regression coefficients or β weights.

- Attitudes towards condom use was the only IMB construct that was significantly associated with age.
- Attitudes towards condom use partially mediated the relationship between age and UIAI.
- The Sobel-test showed that the mediation was significant ($z = 2.11$, $p < .05$).

CONCLUSIONS

Our study reports the following main findings:

1. Older men were likely to engage in more frequent UIAI.
2. Older men had less positive attitudes towards condom use.
3. Those men with less positive attitudes towards condom use were more likely to engage in UIAI.
4. Attitudes towards condom use partially explained why older men were more likely to engage in sexual risk behaviors.

We consider two possible explanations for these findings:

1. A psychosocial developmental trajectory such that as men age, their attitudes towards condom use become less positive and, as a result, they engage in risky sexual behavior more frequently.
2. The social & political shifts that took place over the past two decades in South Africa, including the end of Apartheid & the increase in HIV prevention efforts, may have created different age cohorts that have different perceptions of & attitudes towards risk.

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