

# Economic Dependence and HIV Risk among young, black men who have sex with men

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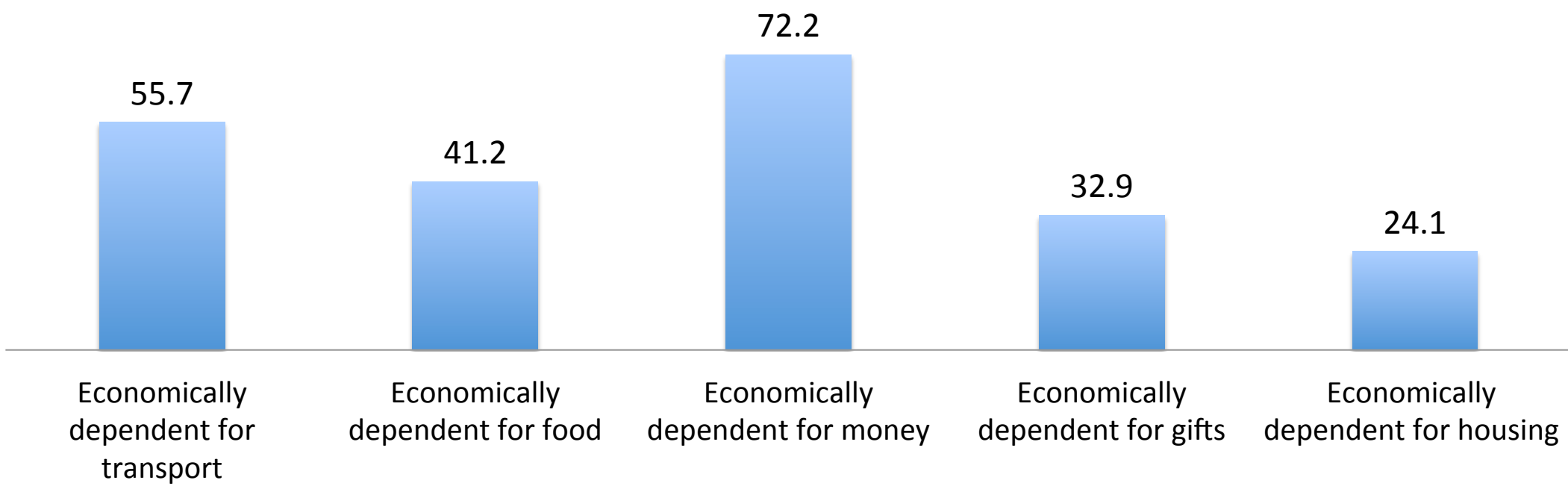
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## Background

- Youth in the Southern United States, particularly young black men who have sex with men (YBMSM) experience disproportionately high HIV incidence.<sup>1</sup>
- YBMSM living in the Southern US experience multiple-interacting forms of discrimination and marginalization, which may increase their need to seek financial stability and housing.<sup>2</sup>
- In HIV endemic settings, there is a growing body of literature which has explored the role of financial dependence, reduced sexual agency and increased HIV and other STI risk among women.<sup>3,4</sup>
- To our knowledge this has not been explored among YBMSM living within high HIV incidence settings in the US.

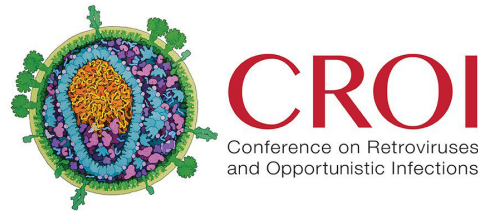
## Methods

- Cross-sectional data from a brief sex-positive intervention among YBMSM in Jackson, Mississippi was used to measure the association between eleven sexual health outcomes and economic dependence (for transportation, food, money, drugs, gifts, or housing) on a sexual partner.



**Figure 1:** Proportion of economic dependency reporting by type of economic dependency among YBMSM reporting any economic dependency (n=79)

- Bivariate associations between economic dependence and selected outcomes were assessed using chi-squared tests
- Multivariable models examined the association between economic dependence on a sexual partner and twelve sexual health outcomes, adjusting for employment, education (**high school** or less vs. more **than high school** education), and HIV status.
- Sexual health outcomes included: urethral, rectal, and oral chlamydia and gonorrhea, the number of anal sex (insertive and receptive) partners in the last 90 days, and for each position:
  - How many times condoms were used subtracted from the frequency of anal sex in the last 90 days.



## Results

- 589 YBMSM** were included in this analysis (median age=22 years).
- Among the total sample of YBMSM included in our study, 29.9% were living with HIV, 45.8% had an income of less than 1,000USD per month, 40.1% reported having a high school education or less, 41.8% were unemployed, and 13.4% (n=79) reported economic dependence on their sexual partners.
- Of YBMSM who reported economic dependence on a sexual partner (n=79), the majority (72.2%) reported being dependent on sexual partners for money (**Figure 1**).
- YBMSM reporting economic dependence were significantly more likely to be living with HIV (40.5% versus 28.5%, p=0.03), have a high school education or less (57.0% vs. 37.5%, p=0.001), and be unemployed (62.0% vs. 38.6%, p<0.01), compared compared to those not reporting economic dependence.

**Table 1-** Bivariate associations between economic dependence and select outcomes among Young Black Men who have Sex with Men (YBMSM) (n=589)

Outcomes	Economically Dependent n/total responded (%)	Not economically dependent n/total responded (%)	P-value
HIV-Infected	32/79 (40.5%)	144/506 (28.5%)	<b>0.030</b>
Education			<b>0.001</b>
High school or less	45/79 (57.0%)	191/510 (37.5%)	
More than high school	34/79 (43.0%)	319/510 (62.5%)	
Employment			<b>&lt;.001</b>
Employed	30/79 (38.0%)	313/510 (61.4%)	
Unemployed	49/79 (62.0%)	197/510 (38.6%)	
<i>In the last 90 days...</i>			
Condomless insertive sex	19/67 (28.4%)	123/463 (26.6%)	0.757
Condomless receptive sex	31/64 (48.4%)	119/362 (32.9%)	<b>0.016</b>
≥3 sex partners as a top	26/79 (32.9%)	101/502 (20.1%)	<b>0.011</b>
≥3 sex partners as a bottom	31/79 (39.2%)	116/510 (22.7%)	<b>0.002</b>
≥3 times anal sex as a top	34/79 (43.0%)	169/510 (33.1%)	0.085
≥3 times anal sex as a bottom	46/64 (71.9%)	195/362 (53.9%)	<b>0.007</b>
<i>STI Prevalence at baseline</i>			
Oral Gonorrhea	13/70 (18.6%)	42/449 (9.4%)	<b>0.020</b>
Rectal Gonorrhea	10/69 (14.5%)	55/439 (12.5%)	0.650
Urethral Gonorrhea	3/72 (4.2%)	28/470 (6.0%)	0.785
Oral Chlamydia	6/70 (8.6%)	22/449 (4.9%)	0.248
Rectal Chlamydia	12/69 (17.4%)	83/440 (18.9%)	0.869
Urethral Chlamydia	5/72 (6.9%)	30/470 (6.4%)	0.798

Note: All items in **bold** are significant



## Results Continued

**Table 2-** Adjusted Odds Ratios and 95% CIs for five sexual health outcomes adjusting for employment, education and HIV status

	Economically Dependent on sexual partner
Characteristic	Adjusted Odds Ratio (95%CI)
Any condomless anal receptive sex	2.19 (1.25-3.83)
Three or more sex partners as a top	1.99 (1.17-3.40)
Three or more sex partners as a bottom	2.07 (1.24-3.45)
Three or more anal sex acts as a bottom	2.10 (1.16-3.82)
Tested positive for oral gonorrhea	2.39 (1.18-4.83)

- In multivariable models economic dependence on a sexual partner was significantly associated with condomless anal receptive sex, three or more partners as a top, three or more sex partners as a bottom, three or more sex acts as a bottom and testing positive for oral gonorrhoea after controlling for HIV status, employment and education

## Discussion

- Our findings suggest that YBMSM living with HIV may be more likely to be economically dependent on their sexual partners.
- Regardless of HIV status, employment and **education**, YBMSM reporting economic dependence were more likely to have had condomless anal receptive sex, more sexual partners, **engage** in more frequent sex as a receptive partner, and **higher prevalence** of oral gonorrhea.
- Economic dependence may be an important factor in HIV risk behaviours and sexual health outcomes for YBMSM in the Southern **United States**.
- Future research should aim to explore the relationship between economic dependence, notions of power, **seropositioning**, sexual agency and HIV risk among YBMSM **disproportionately impacted** by the HIV epidemic.

### Acknowledgement

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