

Memo 2002-2



Partner Notification

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C.H.A.I.N. Report

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KEY FINDINGS

- On June 1, 2001, New York State implemented an amendment to the Public Health Law requiring physicians and laboratories to report to the state health department the names of individuals testing positive for HIV antibodies or whose test results indicated CD4 lymphocyte counts below 500. This law applies equally to newly diagnosed individuals and those people who have been diagnosed previously. In addition to the HIV reporting, providers are required to speak with patients about notifying sexual and drug-using partners. Patients may refuse to divulge any information about their contacts, but providers are required to discuss partner notification. This report explores the implementation of the policy among a previously-diagnosed cohort of HIV-positive adults in New York City. These preliminary data are drawn from the NYC CHAIN cohort, a representative sample of HIV-positive adults in the city's health and social services care system. These data were collected at the 8th wave of interviewing, between April 2001 and May 2002.
- CHAIN respondents were asked if, in the past 6 months, a doctor or other medical provider asked them for the names of their sexual or needle-sharing partners. They were further asked if their doctor explained why s/he was asking these questions, whether they provided the names of contacts (and if not, why not), and how long the discussion lasted.
- Of the 388 respondents in the 8th wave, 373 reported having a current medical provider. Among these 373 individuals, 352 (94%) answered the questions about partner notification. Overall, only 26 people (7%) reported that their doctor or medical provider had asked for the names of sexual or needle-sharing partners. Most reported discussing sexual partners (25 of 26) rather than needle-sharing partners (6 of 26). Forty-four percent of the 26 individuals provided a contact name to their doctor.
- Since there were so few individuals who reported these partner notification discussions with their doctors, the subgroup analyses yielded numbers too small to reveal differences among groups. There were no statistical differences evident when respondents were classified by gender, race/ethnicity, educational level, or year of HIV diagnosis.

Table 1. CHAIN Client Characteristics Associated with Partner Notification (NYC CHAIN Data, 2001-2002; row percentages)

Client Characteristics	Total	In past 6 months, has a doctor or other medical provider asked you for the names of sexual partners or needle-sharing contacts?		Among those who discussed partner notification with a doctor or medical provider, number who discussed...		Among those who discussed partner notification with a doctor or medical provider, did client provide a contact name?	
		Yes	% of Total	Sexual partners	Needle sharing contacts	Yes	% of those who discussed notification
TOTAL SAMPLE	352	26	7%	25	6	11	44%
GENDER							
<i>Male</i>	187	14	7%	14	2	7	50%
<i>Female</i>	165	12	7%	11	4	4	36%
RACE/ETHNICITY							
<i>Black, non-Hispanic</i>	217	16	7%	15	5	6	40%
<i>White, non-Hispanic</i>	40	2	5%	2	0	1	50%
<i>Hispanic</i>	92	8	9%	8	1	4	50%
EDUCATIONAL LEVEL							
<i>Less than high school education</i>	168	12	7%	11	4	6	55%
<i>High school graduate</i>	184	14	8%	14	2	5	36%
YEAR OF HIV DIAGNOSIS							
<i>1980-1990</i>	107	6	6%	5	2	2	33%
<i>1991-1995</i>	179	16	9%	16	4	8	50%
<i>1996-1998</i>	66	4	6%	4	0	1	33%

Note: Data are restricted to individuals who reported having a medical provider in the prior 6 months. None of the subgroup differences noted above are statistically significant.