



Culturally Competent HIV Prevention With Mexican/Chicano Farmworkers

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this paper is to provide sociodemographic and HIV risk profiles for Mexican/Chicano farmworkers. Data are drawn from both qualitative and quantitative survey research. The author found that at least four major HIV exposure categories increase farmworkers vulnerability to infection: prostitution use, sex between men, needle sharing, and gender-related obstacles. Although Mexican migrant laborers have high knowledge about the major modes of HIV transmission, they also hold many misconceptions about contracting HIV, including mosquito bites, public bathrooms, kissing on the mouth, being coughed on, and giving blood. Mexican migrants used condoms far more often with secondary or occasional sex partners as compared to primary sex partners. The reasons for not using condoms with intimate regular sex partners include: suspicion of infidelity, female partner already using birth control, and couple's desire to have children. Predictors of condom use include: condom-related social norms, attitudes, and efficacy. Condom efficacy appears to be the central factor in condom use with occasional sex partners. The study recommends to increase proper and consistent condom use with secondary sex partners; communicate basic HIV/AIDS information to Mexican farmworkers in Spanish; develop and deliver focused, single-session interventions given the transient nature of farm work; and deliver intervention messages separately for men and women. The author concludes that culturally competent HIV prevention research and direct services are urgently needed to prevent the high probability of an AIDS epidemic among the Mexican/ Chicano farmworkers.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Kurt C. Organista, PH.D., is an Associate Professor of Social Welfare at the University of California, Berkeley, and a clinical psychologist. He conducts research in the areas of HIV prevention with Mexican farmworkers and culturally competent applications of cognitive behavioral therapy to depressed Latinos. Organista teaches courses such as the following: psychopathology, stress and coping, race relations, ethnic minority mental health, and social work with Latinos.