

# Sexual identity and condomless sex among Mexican MSM: the overlooked role of heterosexual-identified MSM

F. Macías-González<sup>1</sup>, H. Vermandere<sup>1</sup>, A. Piñeirúa-Menendez<sup>2</sup>, S. Bautista-Arredondo<sup>3</sup>

## Background

Condomless sex among men who have sex with men (MSM) drives HIV transmission in Mexico. Prevention mainly targets MSM who are part of the LGBTQ-community (GB-MSM), excluding self-identified heterosexual MSM (H-MSM). Understanding risk behaviors of each group is crucial to comprehensively address the drivers of the HIV epidemic.

## Methods

We identified MSM based on self-reported male partners in the 2021 Mexican National Survey on Sexual and Gender Diversity. Pearson's chi-squared tested differences between H-MSM and GB-MSM, while probit models assessed condomless sex likelihood, adjusting for socio-demographics, sexual behavior, violence, and stigma.

## Results

We identified 1,083 cisgender MSM, representing 5% of Mexican men. Among them, 54% identified as heterosexual. GB-MSM and H-MSM were significantly different: GB-MSM reported less condomless sex (58% vs. 78%), and were less often married (41% vs. 68%) or living with their partner (39% vs. 64%). A higher proportion of GB-MSM reported only male partners in the past year (77.3%); still 43.4% of H-MSM did as well. GB-MSM, versus H-MSM, were younger (31.5y vs. 39y), more educated (33.3% vs. 13.4%), reported higher socio-economic status (38.7% vs. 24.8%), and were less likely to have had a female partner during their first sexual experience (64.0% vs. 84.9%). GB-MSM were more likely to report experiencing sexual violence (7.2% vs. 3.9%), and to perceive stigma regarding public displays of affection, same-sex marriage, and adoption (74%, 74%, and 66%, respectively, vs. 49%, 57%, and 46% among H-MSM).

In the probit model, condomless sex was significantly less likely among GB-MSM (-10.8%), those whose first sexual partner was male (-10.1%), and those with both male and female partners in the last year (-12.9%; versus female only). However, older participants (0.4%/y), those living with partners or family/friends (26.2% and 13.0%, versus living alone), those who started sex at younger age (10.7%), and those who experienced sexual violence (13.4%) were more likely to report condomless sex.

## Conclusions

Mexican GB-MSM and H-MSM differ in socio-demographics and sexual health risks. While GB-MSM reported less condomless sex, they faced greater stigma and sexual violence. High rates of condomless sex among H-MSM, many with exclusively male partners, underscore the need for targeted HIV prevention.

		All	Sexual identity		
			Heterosexual	GB+	P - Value
Condomless sex		68.9	77.6	58.3	0.00
Demographics					
Age (mean)		35.6	39.0	31.5	0.00
	Basic or less than basic	52.2	63.7	38.5	
	Intermediate	25.4	22.9	28.2	0.00
Education	Advanced	22.4	13.4	33.3	
	Living alone	5.4	4.9	6.0	
	Living with partner	52.6	64.0	38.9	0.00
Cohabitation	Without partner, but not alone	42.0	31.1	55.1	
	Single	44.6	32.2	59.4	0.00
	Married / domestic partnership	55.4	67.8	40.6	
Marital status	Low	32.9	34.9	30.5	
	Medium	35.9	40.3	30.7	0.00
	High	31.2	24.8	38.7	
Sexual history					
Sexual partners	Female	30.6	48.3	9.3	
	Female & male	10.6	8.3	13.4	0.00
	Male	58.8	43.4	77.3	
Early sexual activity		26.4	27.5	25.2	0.53
Sex of first sexual partner (Women)		75.3	84.9	64.0	0.00
Sexual violence		5.4	3.9	7.2	0.05
Stigma					
Public display of affection		60.0	48.7	73.5	0.00
Same-sex marriage		65.2	57.4	74.4	0.00
Same-sex adoption		55.3	46.2	66.1	0.00

\* P-value for Pearson chi-squared statistic for categorical variables. P-value for F statistic for continual variables

		Average marginal effects (%)	p-value
Sexual identity			
Heterosexual		ref	
GB+		-34.3%	0.01
Demographics			
Age (mean)		1.4%	0.00
Education	Basic or less than basic		
	Intermediate	-24.4%	0.07
	Advanced	-8.5%	0.62
Cohabitation	Living alone		
	Living with partner	78.6%	0.00
	Without partner, but not alone	36.7%	0.03
Marital status	Single		
	Married / domestic partnership	Omitted	
Socioeconomic status	Low		
	Medium	-17.0%	0.20
	High	-12.1%	0.44
Sexual history			
Sexual partners	Female	40.8%	0.04
	Female & male		
	Male	22.5%	0.22
Early sexual activity		36.4%	0.00
Sex of first sexual partner (Women)		-34.7%	0.02
Sexual violence		49.0%	0.05
Stigma			
Public display of affection		13.4%	0.41
Same-sex marriage		-22.5%	0.21
Same-sex adoption		-14.1%	0.35
Constant		-0.15	0.70