Abstract

Title: Risk Factor Love. Homosexuality, Sexual Interaction and HIV Prevention
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Author: Benny. Henriksson

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Distribution: Göteborg University, Department of Social Work, Box 720, SE-405 30 Göteborg
U.S. Distribution: Irene A Jillson, Ph D, Policy Research Incorporated, 4715 Cordell Avenue, Bethesda, Matyland 20814, USA, Phone: 301-654-0775, Fax: 301-652-4219, E-mail: Ireneann7@aol.com.

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The thesis consists of four articles and a summary. Two different contexts for risk behaviour are examined: on the one hand the causal sexual contacts homo- and bisexual men have at erotic oases: public toilets, parks, video clubs etc., and on the other hand the sexual experiences the men have in their relations.

The articles Sexual Negotiations. An Ethnographical Study of Men who Have Sex with Men and The Geography and Choreography of Desire: Erotic Oases in Post-Modern Cities, a Struggle over Urban Space, both focus on sex between men at different erotic oases. A brief social history of these places is presented as well as the meaning of these places for the men visiting them today. Patterns for contact seeking, signs for sexual preferences, appropriate and inappropriate behaviour are discussed. Besides providing places for sexual encounters, the erotic oases have also meant social contacts for generations of homo- and bisexual men.

In the articles Homosexual Men`s Families: The Relationship to and the Creation of Family among Homo-and Bisexual Men during this Century; and Risk Factor Love: The Symbolic Meaning of Sexuality and HIV Prevention, the interviewed men`s stories about their intimate and love relations, and their way of constructing, or choosing, their own social networks or families, are presented. Another important issue addressed in these articles is the symbolic meaning of sexuality.

Main findings: The data suggest that gay and bisexual men, nowadays, take larger risks in their love relations as compared with what they do when they visit different erotic oases. At erotic oases most of the men use safer sex techniques and some are very competent safer sex negotiators. The negotiation of safer sex becomes far more complicated in the context of the men`s intimate relations. It is stunning that the sexual technique, which involves most risks for HIV-infection, unprotected anal sex, is the sexual technique that is enclosed in the most symbolic meaning, and also, or because of this, often reserved by the men for love relations. For some of the interviewed men anal intercourse has an almost existentialistic meaning. For
some of the men, the cessation of the use of condoms with a love partner symbolises that the relation is for real. The men express how the giving and receiving of semen often symbolises trust and love. In this context of intimacy, condoms connote everything that is the opposite of these feelings.

Conclusions: The outreach work that mainly the gay organisations have carried out in the erotic oases must continue. Besides this, HIV-prevention must pay more attention to the men`s risk behaviour in intimate relations. The gay organisations are probably also the most suited for developing pedagogical methods to discuss these issues within the gay community, even if other institutions also have a responsibility, since there are many homo- and bisexual men who have no contact with gay organisations.

The summary also consists of a presentation of the theoretical debate concerning homosexual identity development. The aim of this presentation has been to find further clues to understand certain kinds of risk behaviour among some homo- and bisexual men.

Further the summary presents an extensive discussion of the methods used for this study: participant observations, life story interviews and informant interviews. The use of these qualitative methods in similar types of research is presented and ethical issues are discussed. Finally the political and mass media reactions to parts of the study are discussed as well as the author`s reflection about them.