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The growing HIV/AIDS epidemic in America's paradise: Examining HIV risk

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Abstract

The U.S. Virgin Islands (USVI) has a total population of approximately 109,750. By the end of 2007, the USVI had an estimated rate of 641.3 adults and adolescents per capita (100,000 population) living with a diagnosis of HIV, making it the second highest HIV rate per capita in the nation (for states with reported rates) (CDC, 2008). It is also considered a "geographic hot spot", according to President Obama's National HIV/AIDS Strategic plan. Data from CDC Behavioral Risk Surveillance System (BRFSS) 2009 and 2005 Annual Surveys were analyzed using PASW 18.0 software. Descriptive statistics were used to determine the sociodemographics of the population and frequency of HIV testing and HIV risk behavior for 2005 and 2009. Chi-square tests examined associations between age, gender, race/ethnicity and high-risk HIV behavior and logistic regression examined predictors of high risk HIV behavior, using 2005 data. Only data for the U.S. Virgin Islands were included in the analyses. Significance was set at 5% alpha.

Biography:

Safiya George Dalmida is an assistant Professor at Emory University School of Nursing in Atlanta, GA. She is a graduate of Emory University's Ph.D. in Nursing program and completed a postdoctoral fellowship in research on religion and health from Duke University in Durham, NC. Her research focuses on intersections between stress and coping, including religious coping, and relationship to mental health, immune function and health-related quality of life among people living with HIV/AIDS, particularly among women and minorities. Her work also focuses on the examination of sexual decision making of African American adolescents and their risk for HIV and other sexually transmitted infections. She is particularly interested in the role of social factors, including religious and cultural factors, and cognitive function in HIV/STI-associated sexual risk behavior of minority adolescents.