

GEORGIA HIV BEHAVIORAL SURVEILLANCE REPORT

MEN WHO HAVE SEX WITH MEN, ATLANTA MSA, DECEMBER 2003 - OCTOBER 2004



Table of Contents

Acknowledgements 2

Introduction 3

Methodology 3

Demographics 3

Sexual Behaviors 5

Drug Use 8

Injection Drug Use 9

Testing and Vaccination History 9

 HIV 9

 Hepatitis and STDs 11

HIV Prevention Programs 12

High Risk Behaviors 14

 Exchange sex 15

 Unprotected anal intercourse 16

 Unprotected receptive anal intercourse 17

 Using drugs during sex 18

Acknowledgements

Georgia Department of Human Resources / Division of Public Health

Author: Linda Beer, PhD

Principal Investigator: Luke Shouse, MD, MPH

Emory University Team

Principal Investigator: Richard Crosby, PhD

Project Coordinator: Ben Haddock

Interviewers: Joseph Clark, Jeff Todd, Nicole Pitts, Damian Denson

Introduction

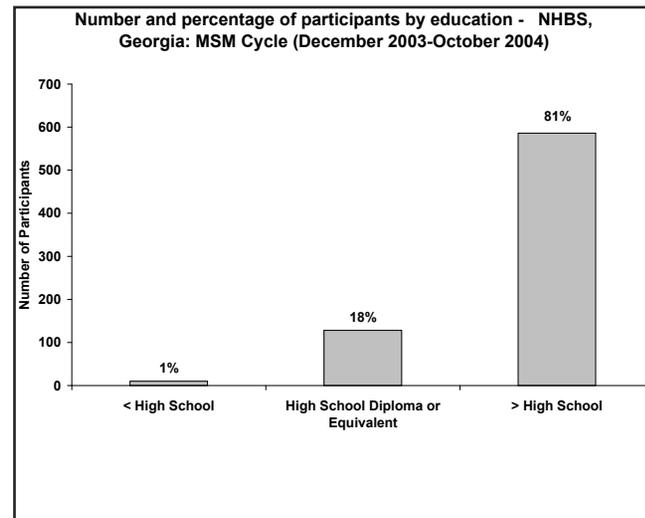
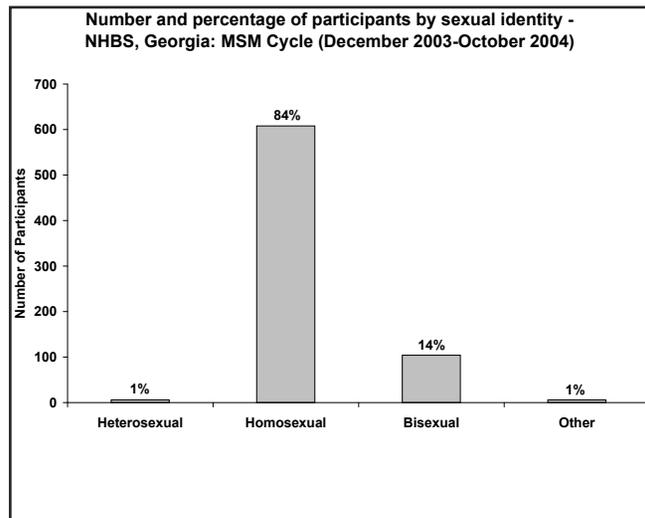
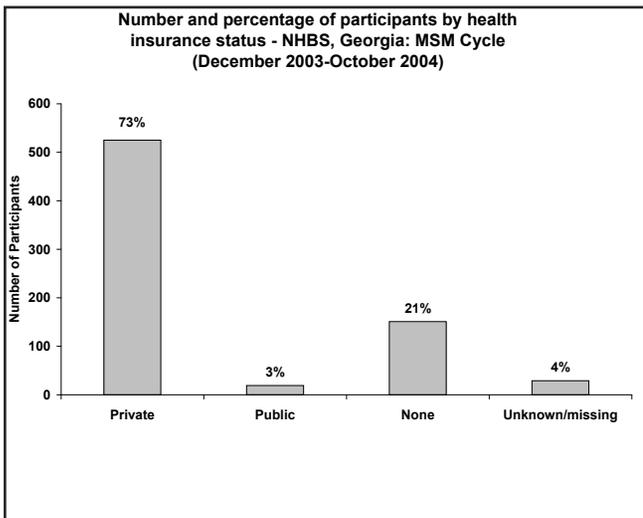
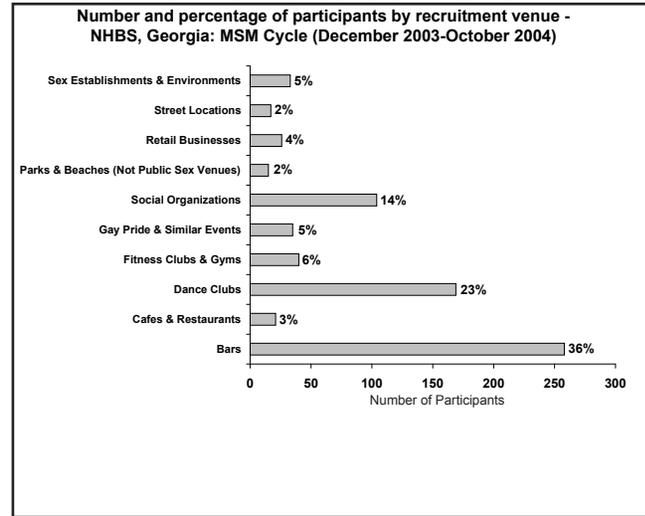
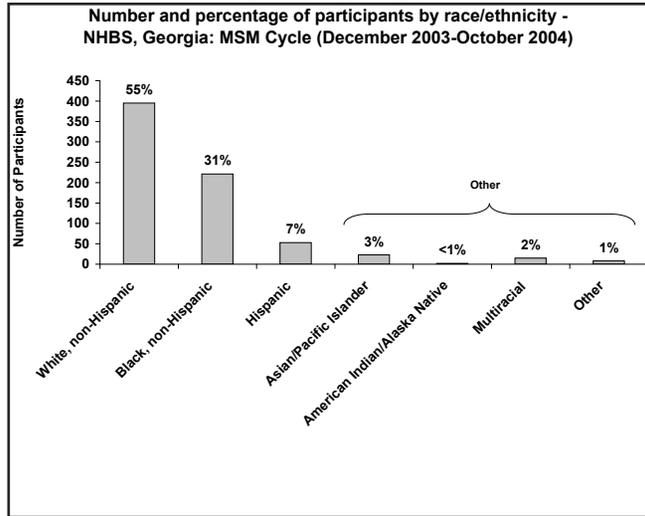
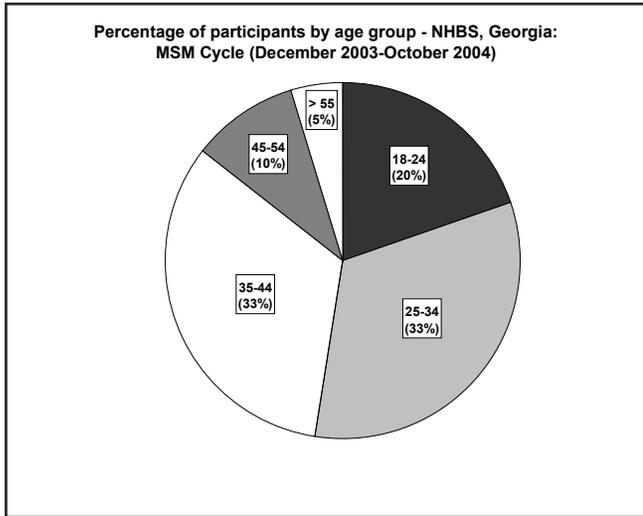
As part of a comprehensive HIV/AIDS Surveillance system, the Georgia Division of Public Health conducts National HIV Behavioral Surveillance (NHBS). NHBS is an ongoing, systematic surveillance system designed to collect information on the prevalence of HIV risk behavior and the use of HIV prevention services among groups who are at the highest risk for infection, specifically men who have sex with men (MSM), injection drug users (IDUs), and high-risk heterosexuals. This surveillance activity is conducted in rotating cycles, each year shifting the population of focus to one of these three groups. The information collected is used to develop national and local prevention programs and services, to involve community-based organizations (CBOs) in surveillance and questionnaire design, to work with HIV/AIDS prevention programs to determine exposure to and use of local HIV prevention programs, and to present data on high-risk populations for state and local prevention and treatment services planning and evaluation. This report presents information from the Atlanta MSM cycle of NHBS.

Methodology

Information was collected using a time-space sampling method. First, local staff identified venues frequented by MSM in the Atlanta Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA). Then, the days of the week and the times of day to reach MSM at these venues were determined. Each month, venues were randomly selected from the venue list followed by randomly selecting day/time periods at the selected venues. During sampling events, men entering a pre-defined boundary were systematically approached for recruitment by a local team of interviewers. Interviews were conducted face-to-face in a private area and administered using hand-held computers. Participants gave informed consent and received a \$25 incentive. Interviews were conducted from December 2003 through October 2004.

Demographics

This report presents information for 724 participants who met the eligibility criteria for the MSM cycle of NHBS. Eligible participants were male, 18 years or older, living in the Atlanta MSA and reported having had sex with another male in the year prior to the interview. Most identified as homosexual or gay (84%). Most participants were between the ages of 25 and 44 (66%). The majority of those interviewed were non-Hispanic Whites (55%). Most participants had some post-secondary education (81%). Many were privately insured (73%), although a little over 1/5 had no health insurance (21%). The largest group of participants were recruited at bars (36%), followed by dance clubs (23%).

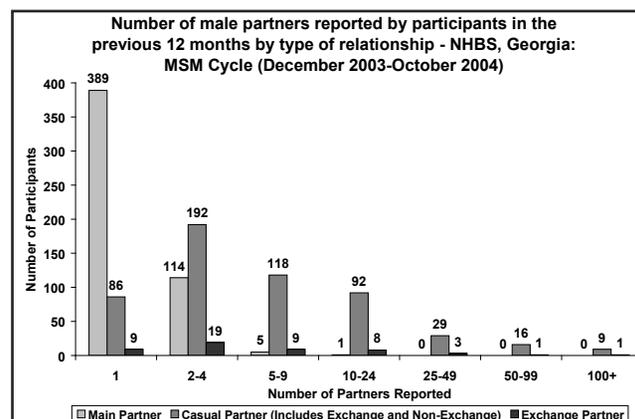
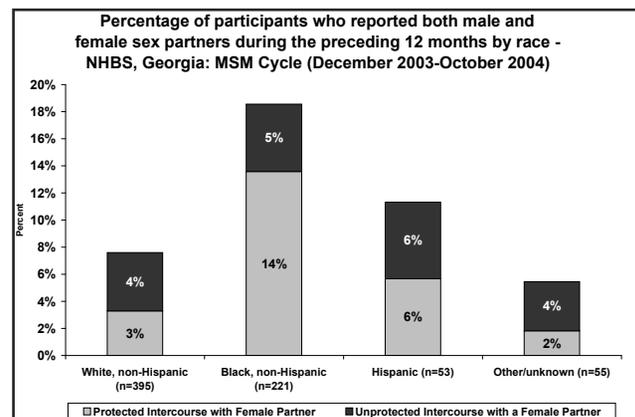


Sexual Behaviors

All participants reported sex with a male during the past 12 months, with an average of 10 male partners (range 1-500). Eighty-eight participants (12%) reported also having a female sex partner during this time. Within this group the average number of reported female sex partners was 3 (range 1-50). African Americans and Hispanics more often reported anal or vaginal intercourse with their female partner. However, of those reporting intercourse with a female partner, 27% of African Americans reported unprotected intercourse, compared with 57% of Whites and 50% of Hispanics. The number of MSM reporting these behaviors is relatively small, so the results presented here should be interpreted with caution.

Respondents were also asked how many of their male partners were main partners and how many were casual partners. Main partners were those with whom the respondent had sex and to whom he felt most committed (e.g. boyfriend, spouse, significant other or life partner). Casual partners were those with whom the respondent had sex but who was not considered a main partner. Respondents were also asked how many of their casual partners were exchange partners. Exchange partners were those with whom the respondent had sex in exchange for things like money, drugs, food, shelter or transportation.

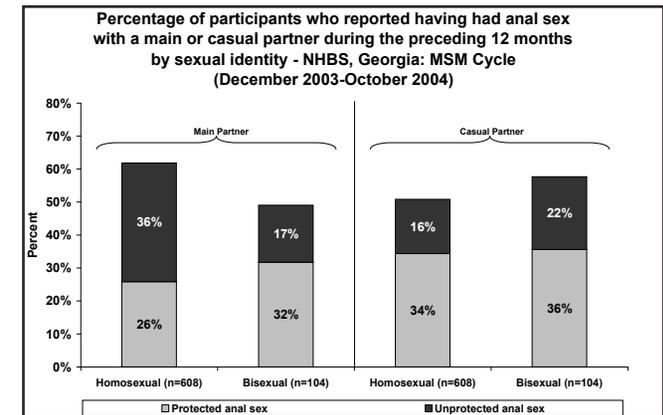
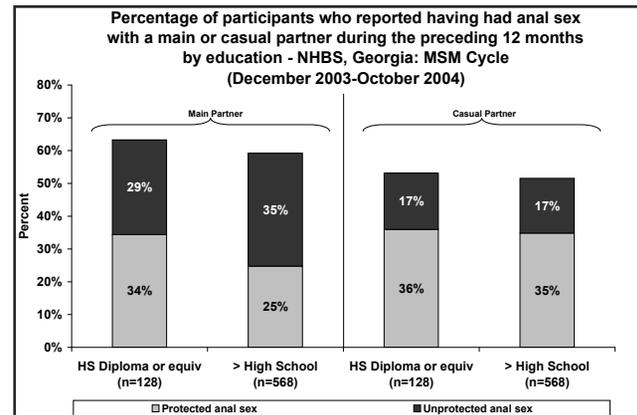
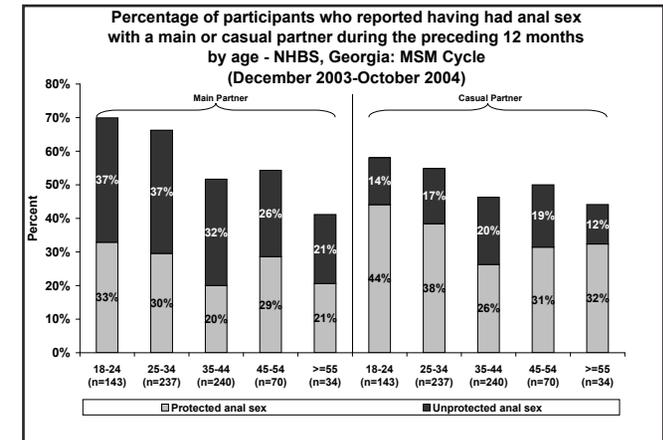
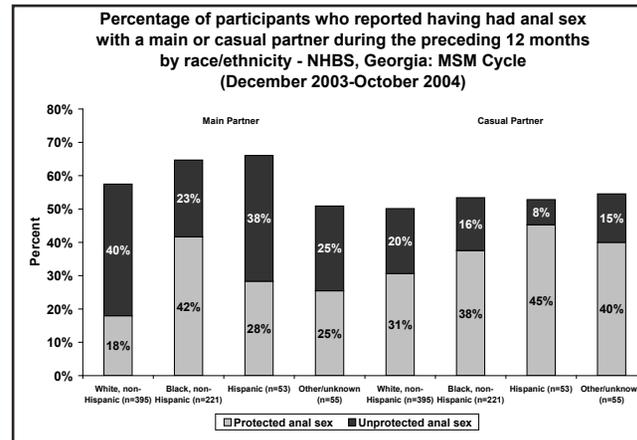
Seventy percent of participants reported having a main male partner in the 12 months prior to interview. The number of main male partners



reported by participants ranged from 1 to 10, with an average of 1 main male partner. Three quarters of participants reported having a casual male partner in the previous year, with an average of 12 casual partners (range 1-497). Nine percent of those with casual male partners reported having engaged in exchange sex with at least one of those partners. These individuals reported an average of 10 exchange male partners, ranging from 1 to 125 partners.

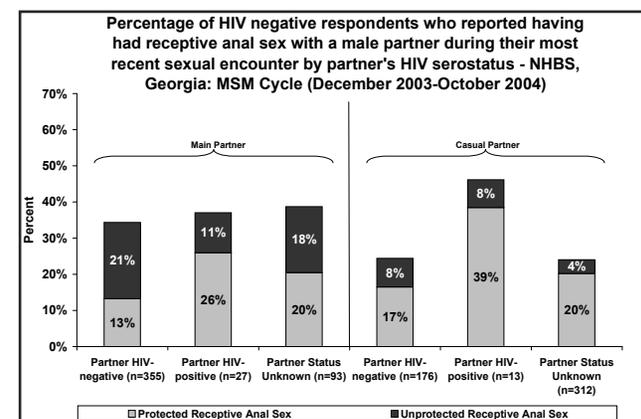
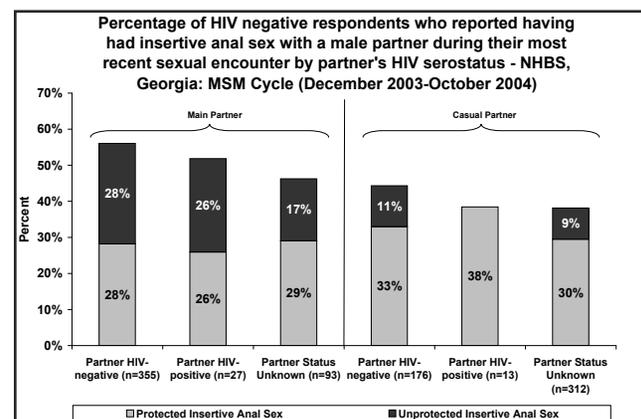
Participants were asked whether they had engaged in anal sex with a male in the 12 months prior to the interview. Those who answered yes were asked if any of their anal sex partners were main partners and if any were casual partners. Respondents were also asked whether they had engaged in unprotected sex with any of their male anal sex partners.

The majority of respondents (86%) reported engaging in anal sex with a male during the year prior to the interview. This behavior was more frequently reported with a main partner, and these individuals also reported a higher rate of unprotected anal sex than those reporting anal sex with a casual partner. Overall 60% of participants reported anal sex with a main partner, with 56% of these individuals reporting unprotected anal sex with their main partner(s). Fifty-two percent of participants reported anal sex with a casual partner, and 33% of these respondents reported unprotected sex with a casual partner.



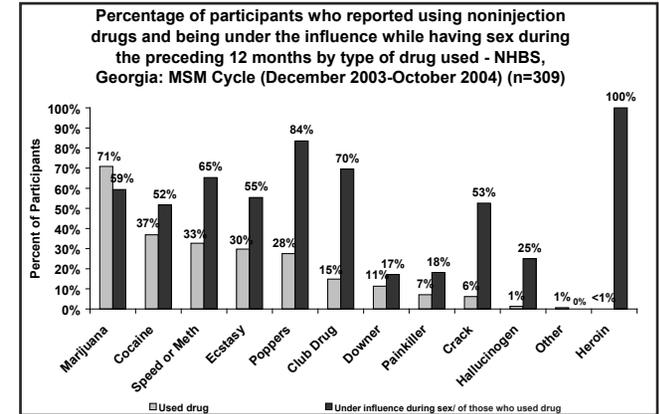
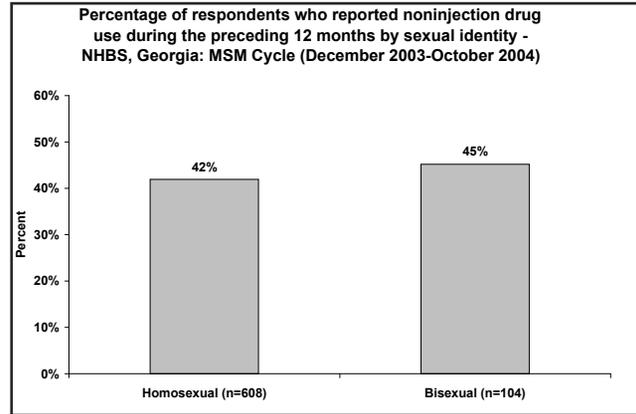
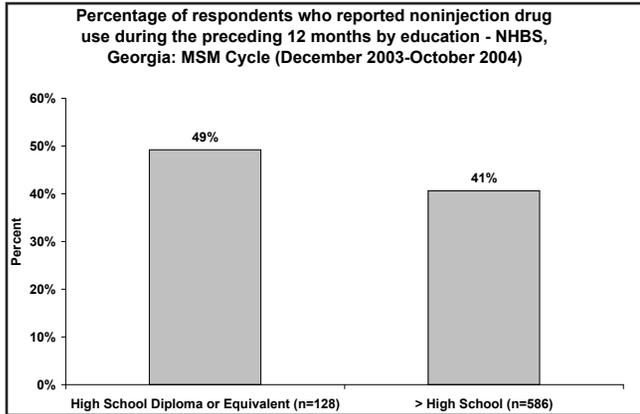
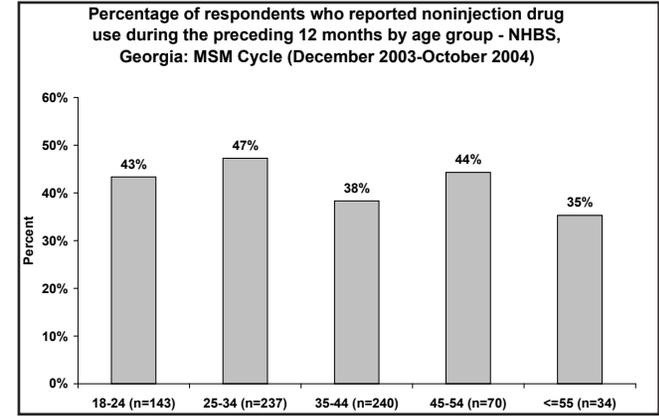
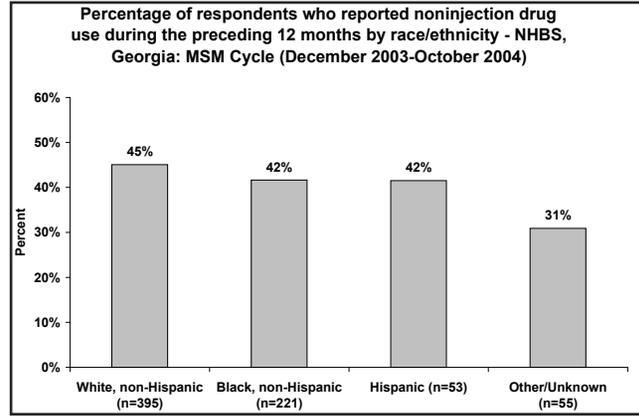
Respondents were also asked about the type of sex they engaged in during their most recent sexual encounter. Further, they were asked whether that person was a main or casual partner and about this person's HIV status. Of HIV negative males who reported last having sex with a main male partner, 54% reported insertive anal sex, with 48% of this group reporting unprotected insertive anal sex. These behaviors were less frequently reported when the most recent sexual encounter was with a casual partner. In this case, 40% reported insertive anal sex, and 23% of these reported unprotected insertive anal sex.

Receptive anal sex was less frequently reported than insertive anal sex. Of HIV negative males who reported last having sex with a main male partner, 35% reported receptive anal sex, with 57% of this group reporting unprotected receptive anal sex. As was the case for insertive anal sex, these behaviors were less frequently reported with a casual partner. Twenty-five percent reported receptive anal sex with a casual partner, and 22% of these reported unprotected receptive anal sex. Respondents more often reported unprotected receptive anal sex with both main and casual partners when their partner was HIV negative.



Drug Use

Overall, 43% of respondents reported using noninjection drugs during the preceding 12 months. The most commonly reported drug used was marijuana, followed by cocaine, speed or meth, and ecstasy. The drugs most often used during sex were poppers and club drugs.



Injection Drug Use

Thirty-eight respondents (5%) reported having ever injected drugs for nonmedical purposes. Of these, 13 (34%) had injected in the twelve months prior to interview. Three of these individuals (23%) had shared needles, syringes, or other drug-injection or preparation equipment during the preceding 12 months, and all three (100%) had a history of participating in a drug or alcohol treatment program.

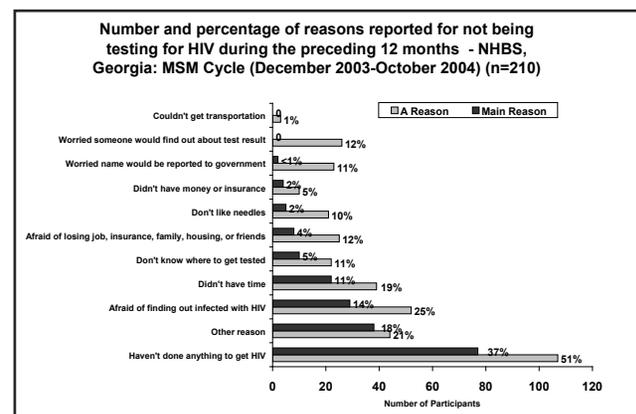
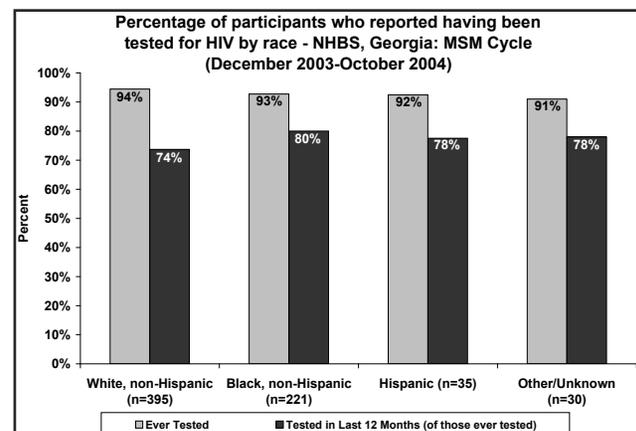
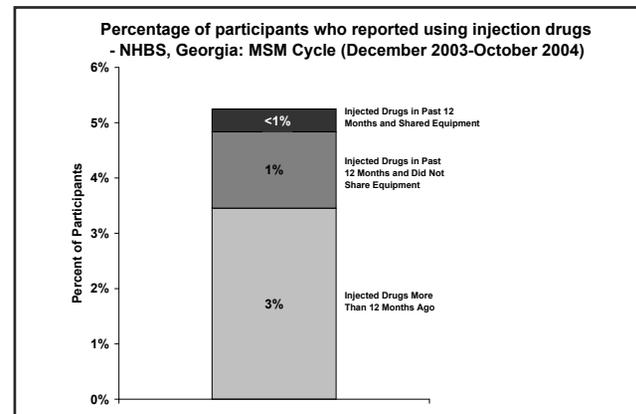
Testing and Vaccination History

HIV

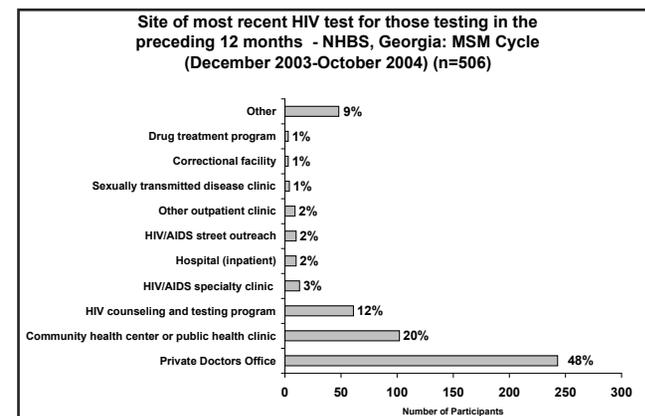
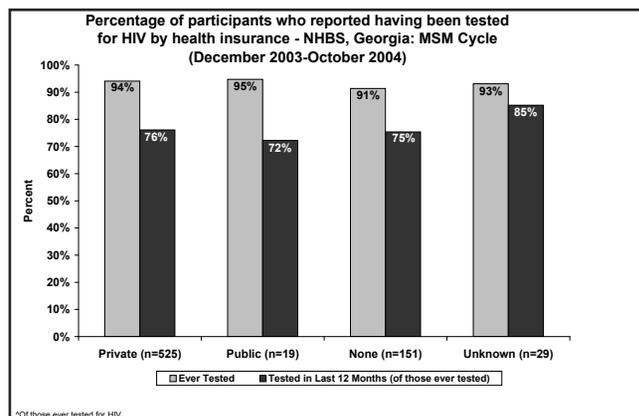
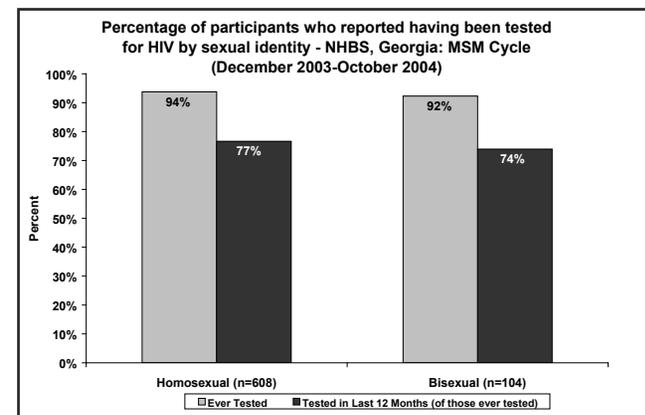
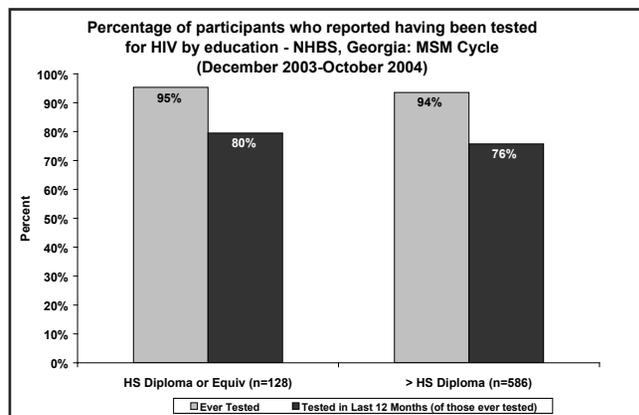
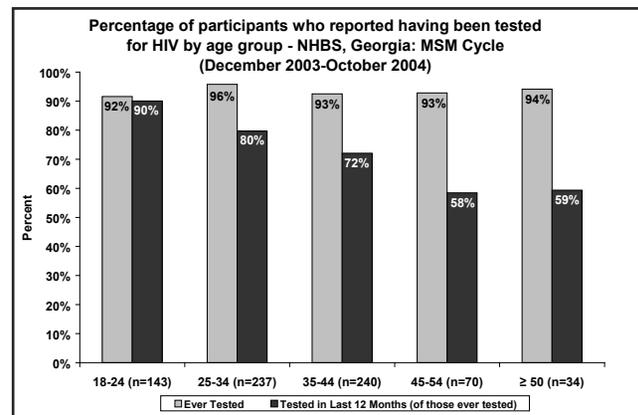
Most respondents reported having been tested for HIV (94%). Seventy-six percent of individuals ever tested for HIV had been tested in the preceding 12 months. Testing patterns do not appear to differ substantially by race/ethnicity, education, sexual identity or health insurance status. Younger respondents more frequently reported testing in the past year compared to respondents over the age of 45. For those testing in the previous 12 months, the most common recent place of HIV testing was a private doctor's office (48%), followed by a community health center or public clinic (20%).

Twenty-nine percent of all respondents had not been tested for HIV in the preceding 12 months. Participants were asked to indicate whether each reason had contributed to not being tested for HIV. Participants could report more than one reason. Participants were also asked to indicate which reason was the most important. The most common reason given for not having an HIV test was that they had not done anything to get HIV (51%). Other reasons cited were fears of testing positive (25%) and lack of time for testing (19%).

The 107 participants who had not been tested for HIV in the preceding 12 months and felt that they had not done anything to get HIV did report engaging in HIV risk behaviors. Forty-eight of these individuals reported engaging in unprotected anal intercourse, 16 of whom reported unprotected receptive anal intercourse (7% and 2% of the total NHBS sample, respectively).



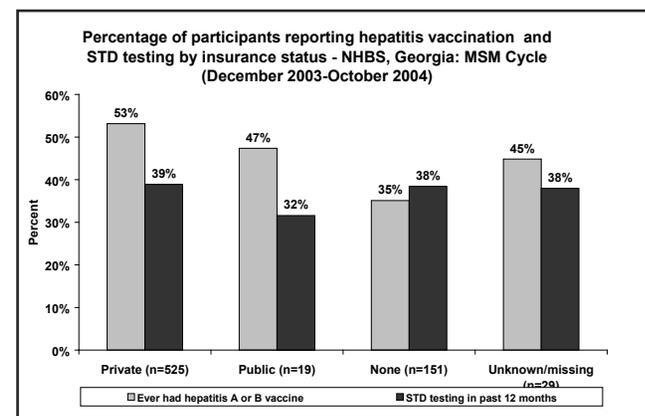
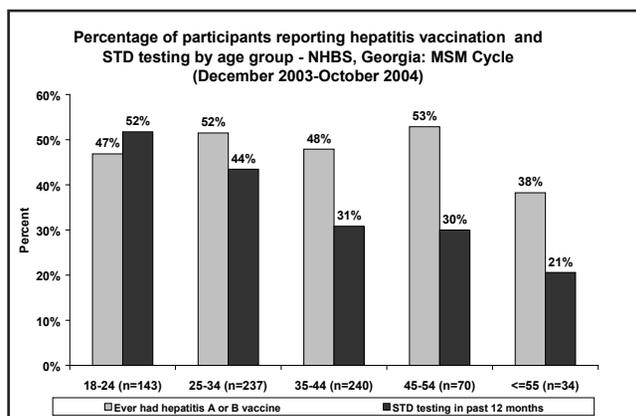
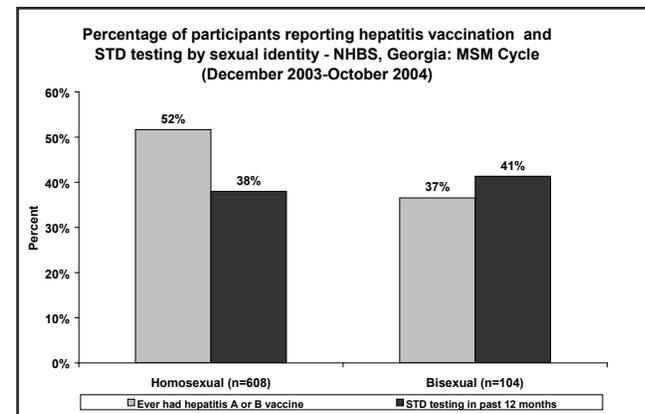
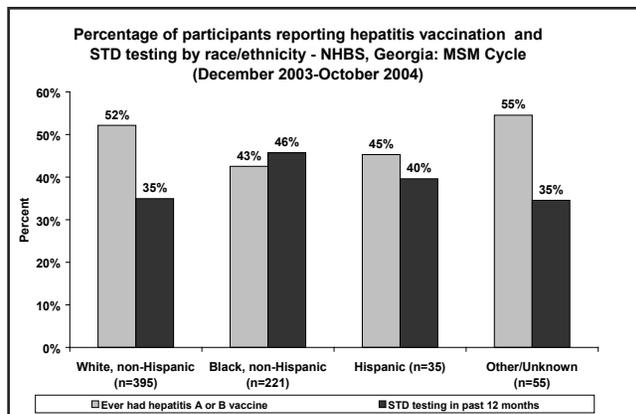
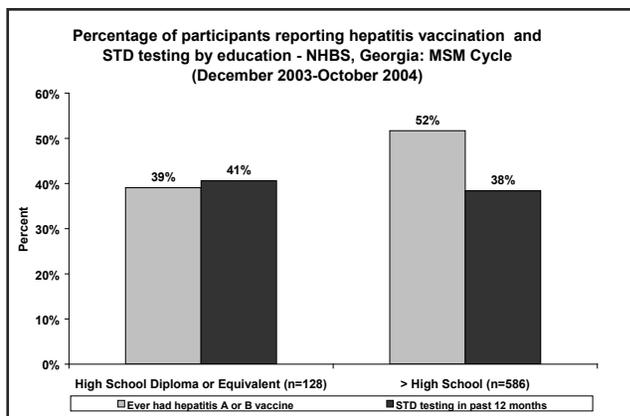
Twenty-five of the 107 participants who had not been tested for HIV in the preceding 12 months and felt that they had not done anything to get HIV reported using drugs during sex (3%) and 8 had sex with a partner in exchange for drugs or money (1%). These individuals may be in particular need of targeted prevention programs. While 67 did report using an HIV prevention program during the preceding 12 months (63% of all those with no HIV test and low perceived risk), only 9 participated in individual or group-level interventions.



*Of those ever tested for HIV.

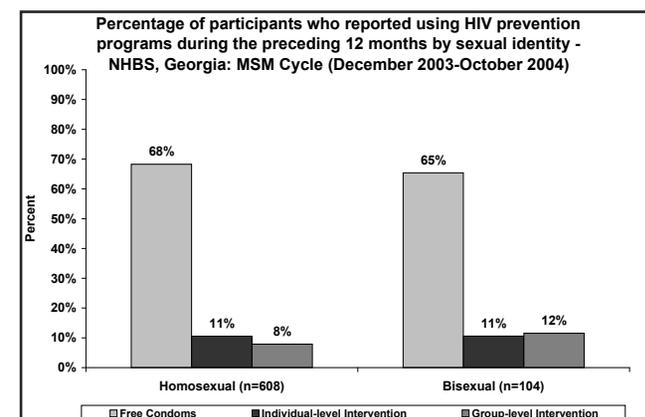
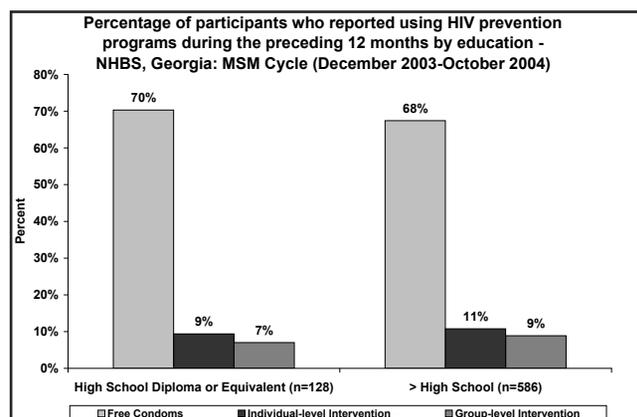
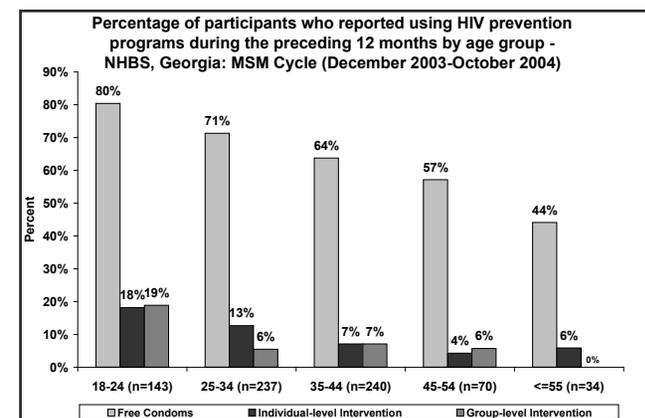
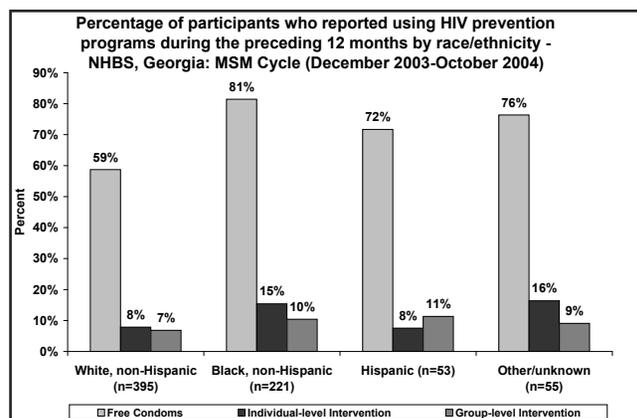
Hepatitis and STDs

Almost half of the men interviewed reported at least one vaccination for hepatitis A or B. A lower number reported having been tested for syphilis, gonorrhea or another sexually transmitted disease (STD) in the 12 months prior to interview (39%). Men over the age of 35 reported STD testing at lower rates than men under 35.

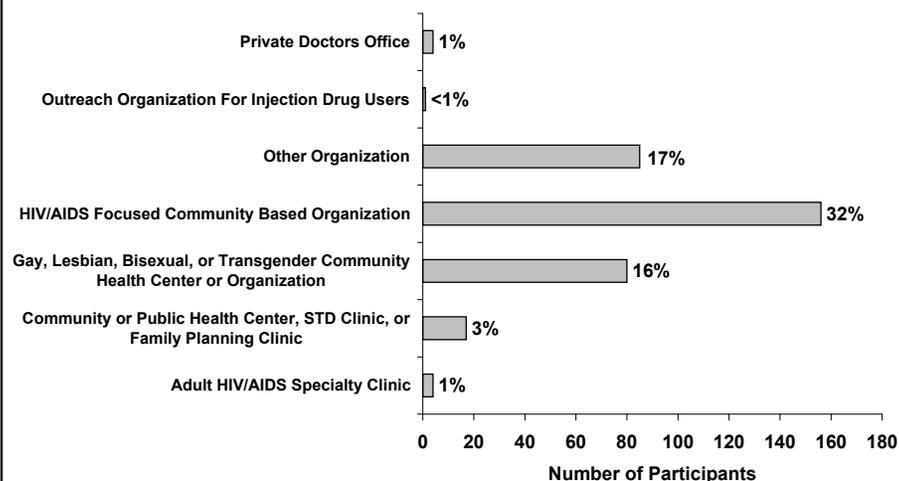


HIV Prevention Programs

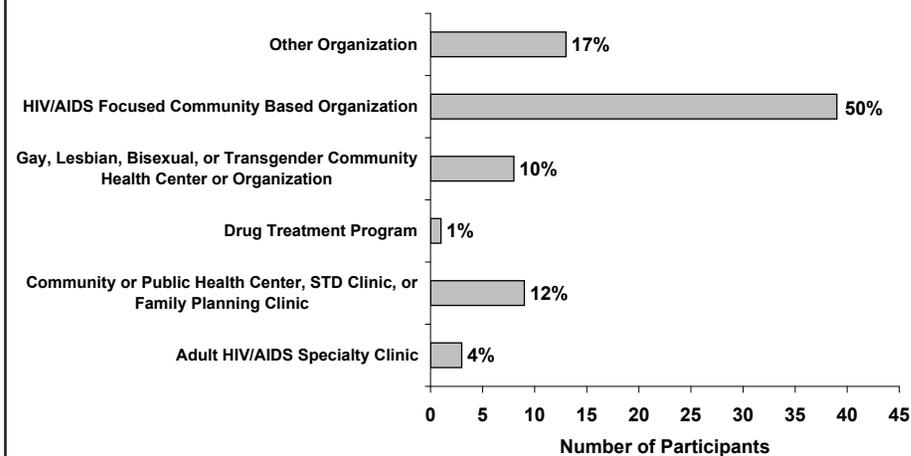
Seventy percent of those interviewed reported participating in some type of HIV prevention service or program during the preceding 12 months (n=509). The majority reported receiving free condoms (68%). Eleven percent of respondents reported participating in individual-level intervention programs and eight percent participated in group-level intervention programs. Individual-level interventions consist of one-on-one conversations with an outreach worker, a counselor, or a prevention program worker about ways to protect against HIV or other sexually transmitted diseases. Group-level interventions are small-group discussions about ways to protect against HIV or other sexually transmitted diseases. HIV/AIDS Community Based Organizations (CBOs) were the most commonly cited providers of free condoms and individual-level interventions (32% and 50% respectively). Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual or Transgender Community Health Centers/Organizations were the most commonly reported provider of group-level interventions (38%), followed closely by HIV/AIDS CBOs (36%).



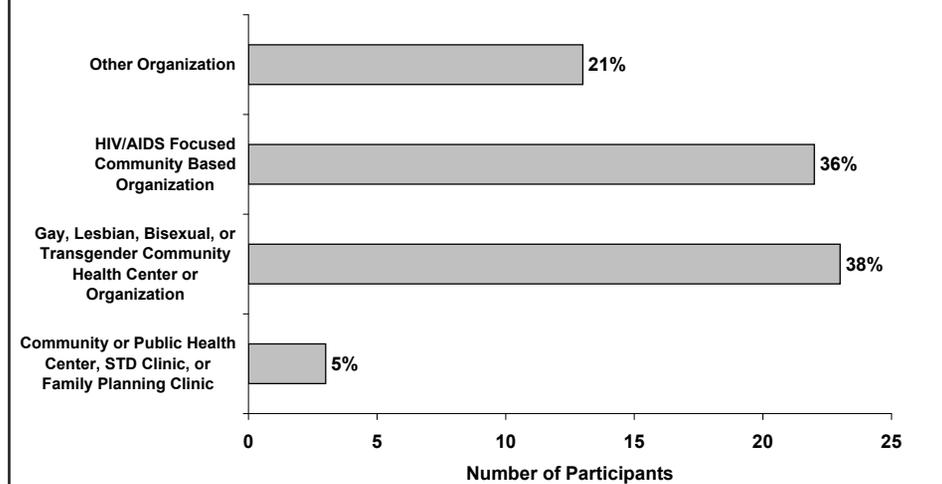
Percentage of participants who reported using free condoms during the preceding 12 months by type of provider - NHBS, Georgia: MSM Cycle (December 2003-October 2004) (n=492)



Percentage of participants who reported using individual-level interventions during the preceding 12 months by type of provider - NHBS, Georgia: MSM Cycle (December 2003- October 2004) (n=78)

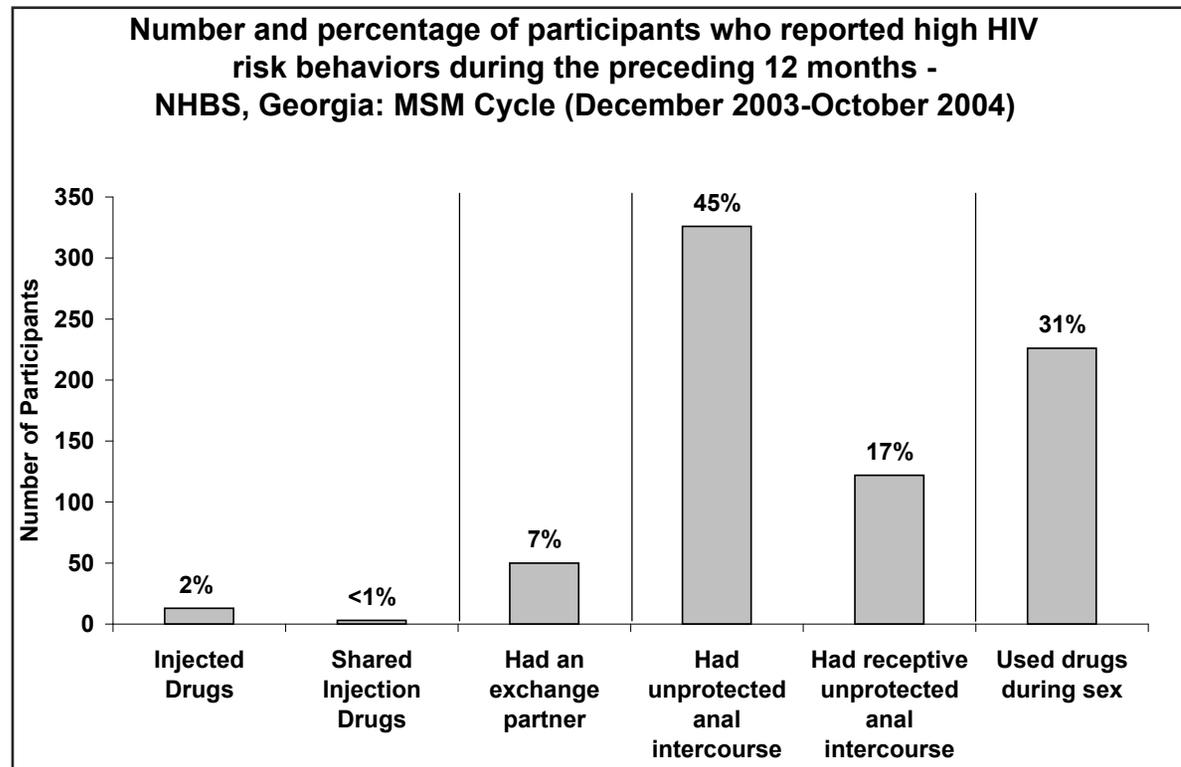


Percentage of participants who reported using group-level interventions during the preceding 12 months by type of provider - NHBS, Georgia: MSM Cycle (December 2003-October 2004) (n=61)

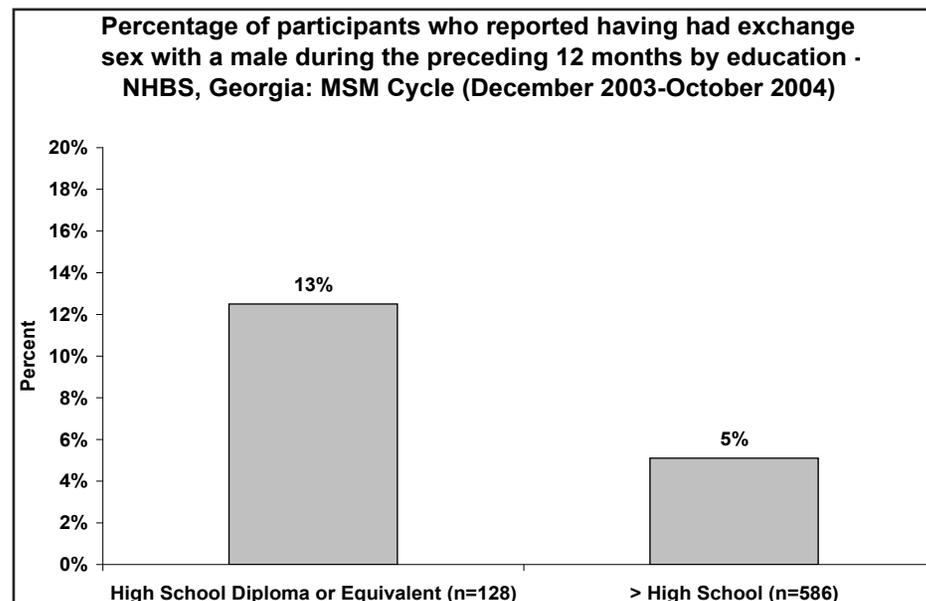
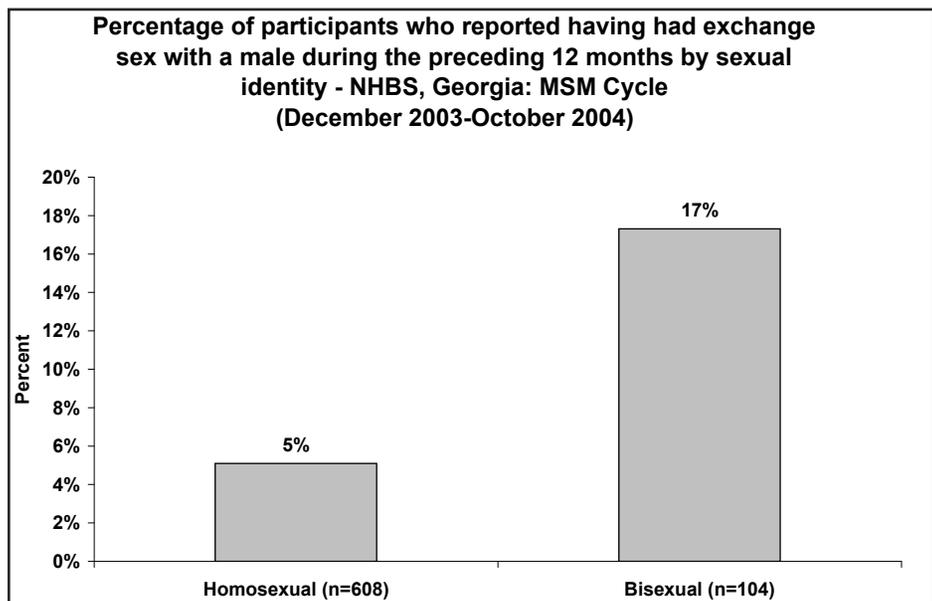
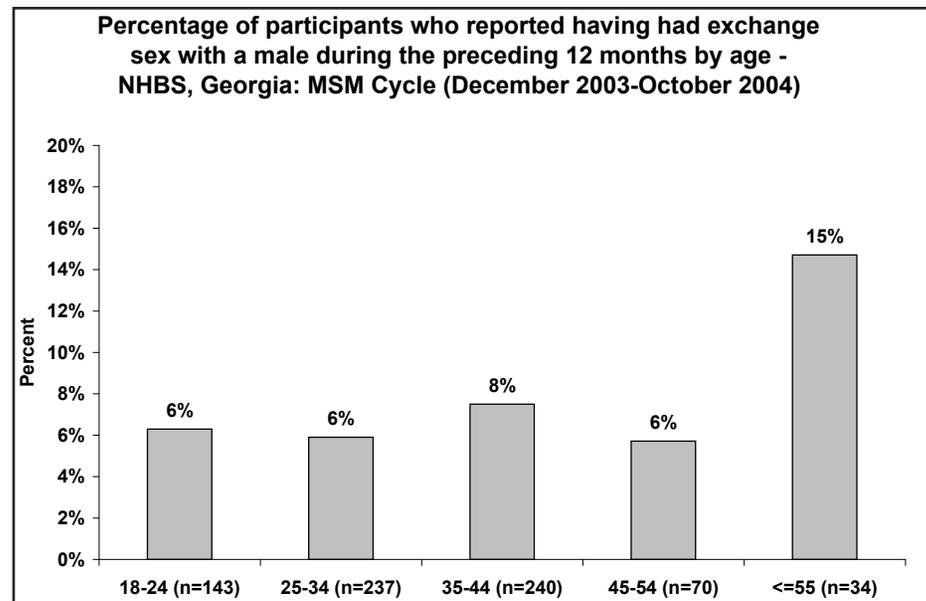
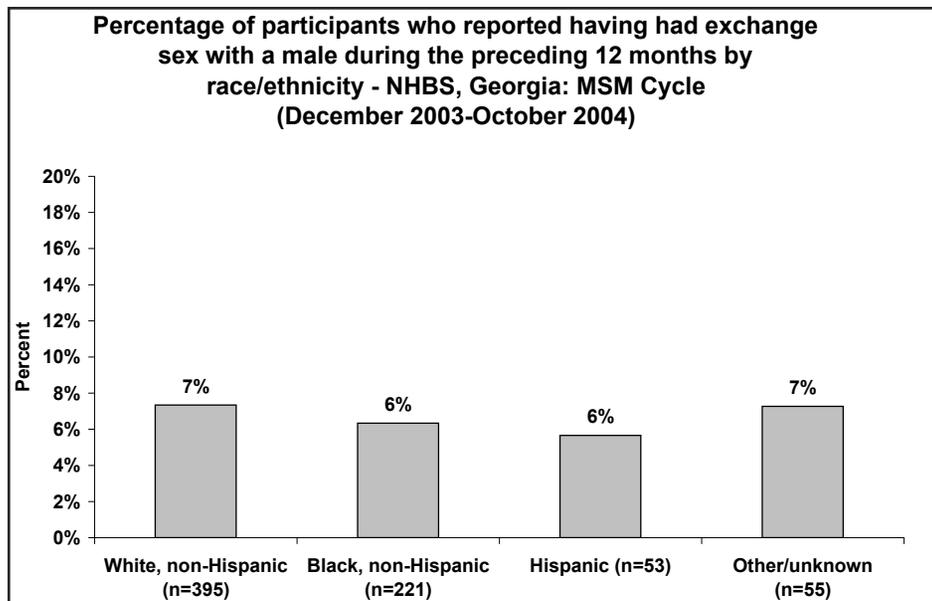


High Risk Behaviors

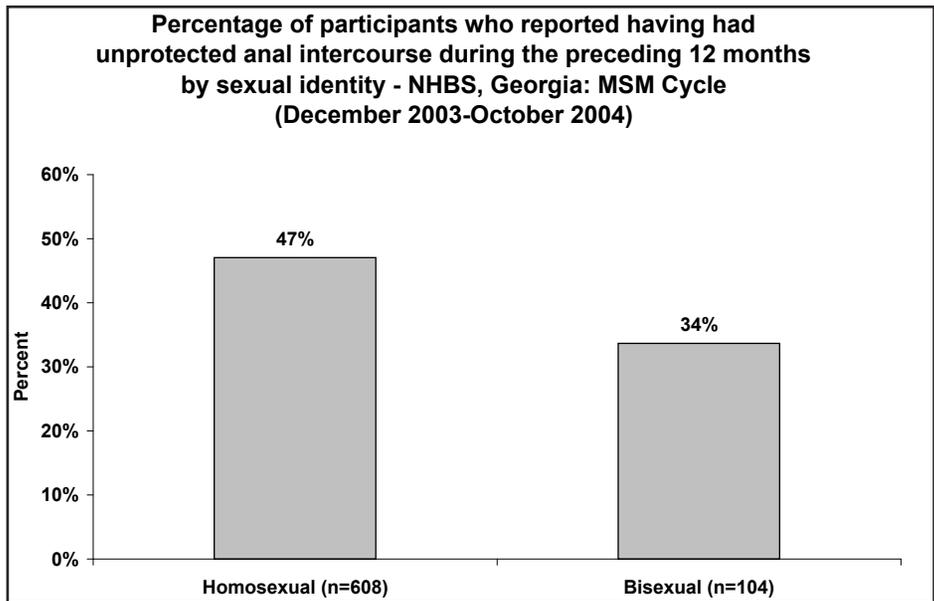
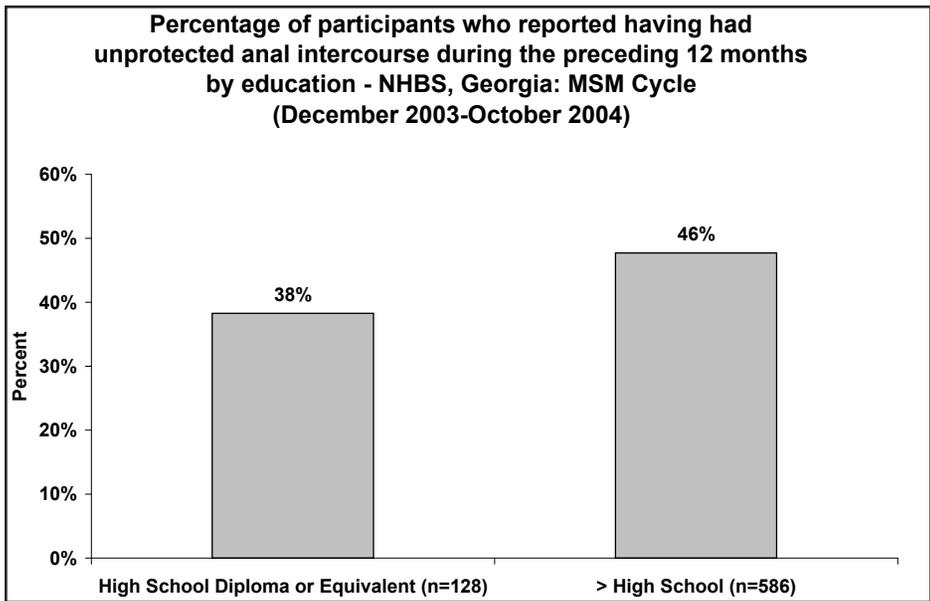
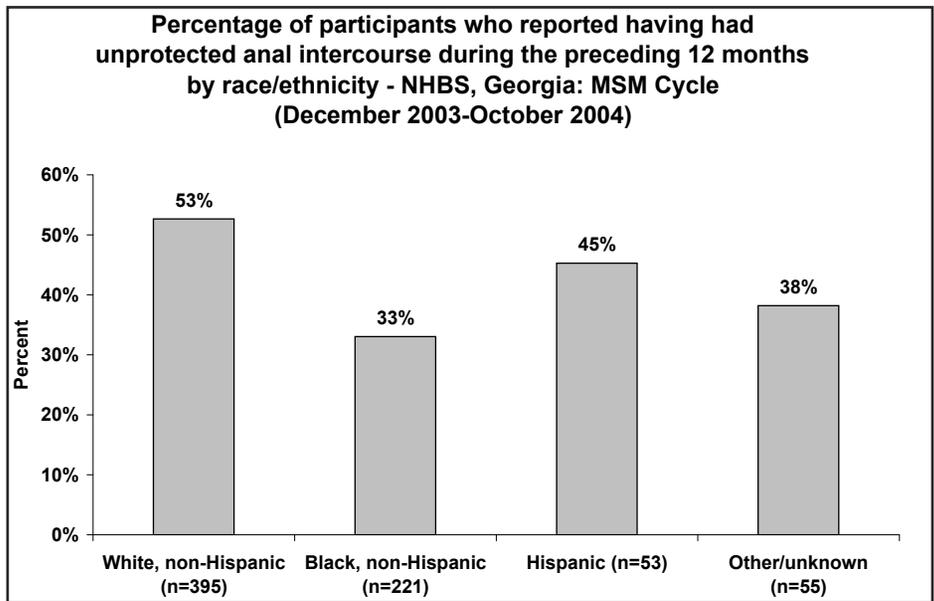
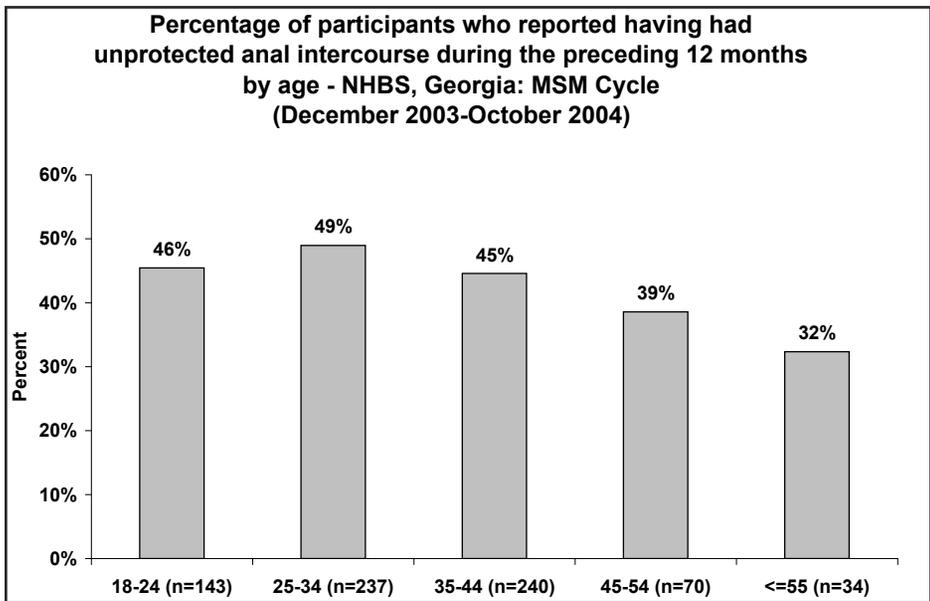
Almost half of respondents (45%) reported engaging in unprotected anal intercourse with a male during the year prior to interview and 17% reported receptive unprotected anal intercourse (37% of all those who reported unprotected anal intercourse). Seven percent reported exchanging sex with a male for drugs, food or money in the past year. Smaller numbers had injected drugs or shared drug injection equipment. Almost a third (31%) had used drugs during sex in the past year.



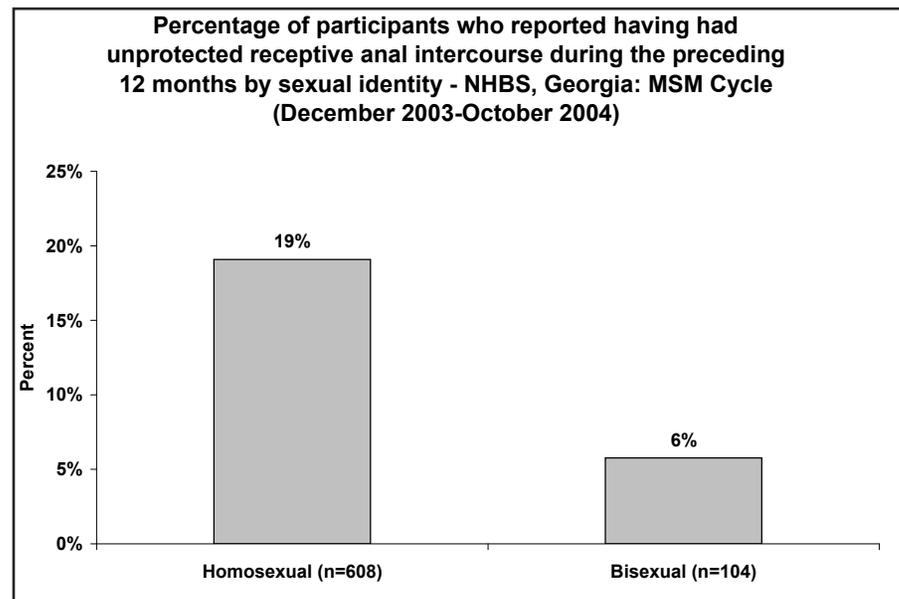
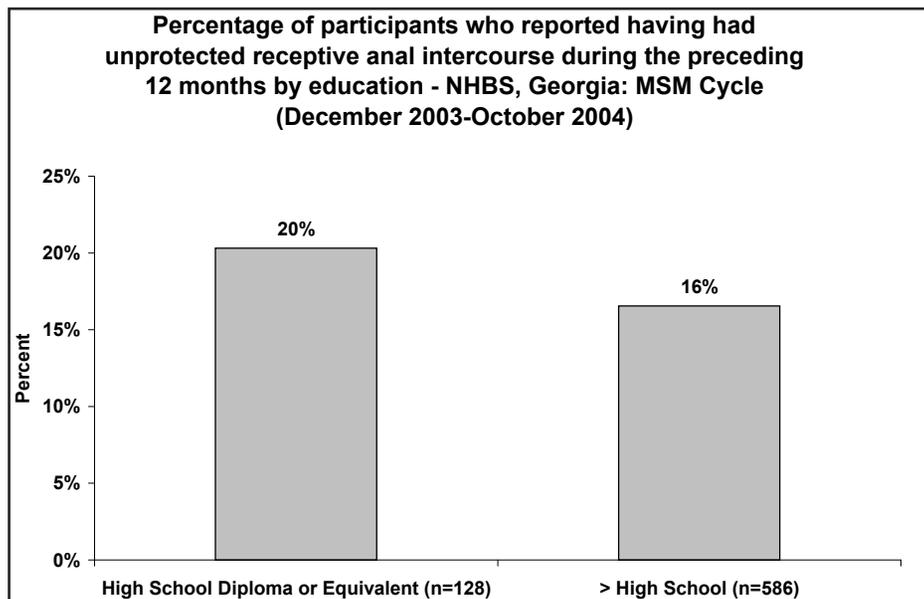
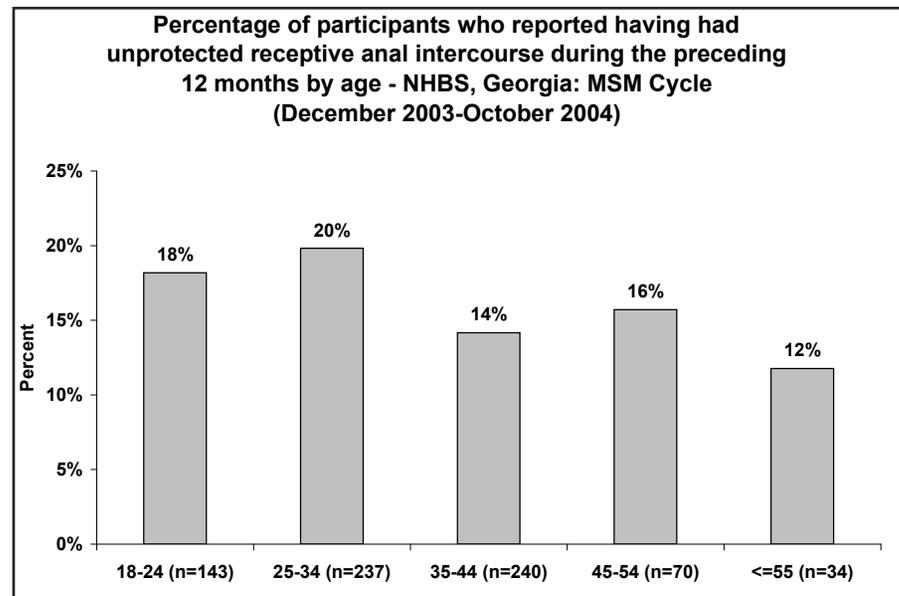
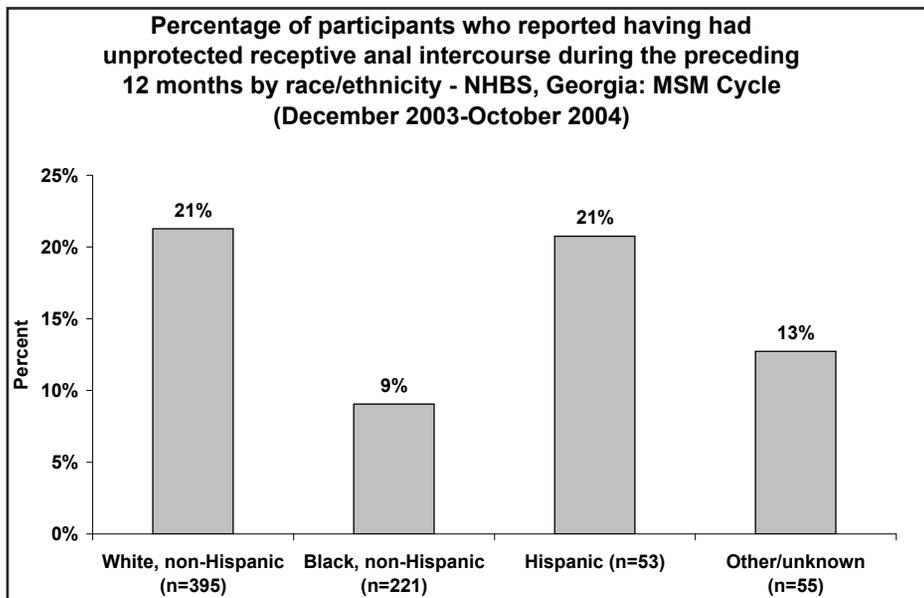
Exchange sex



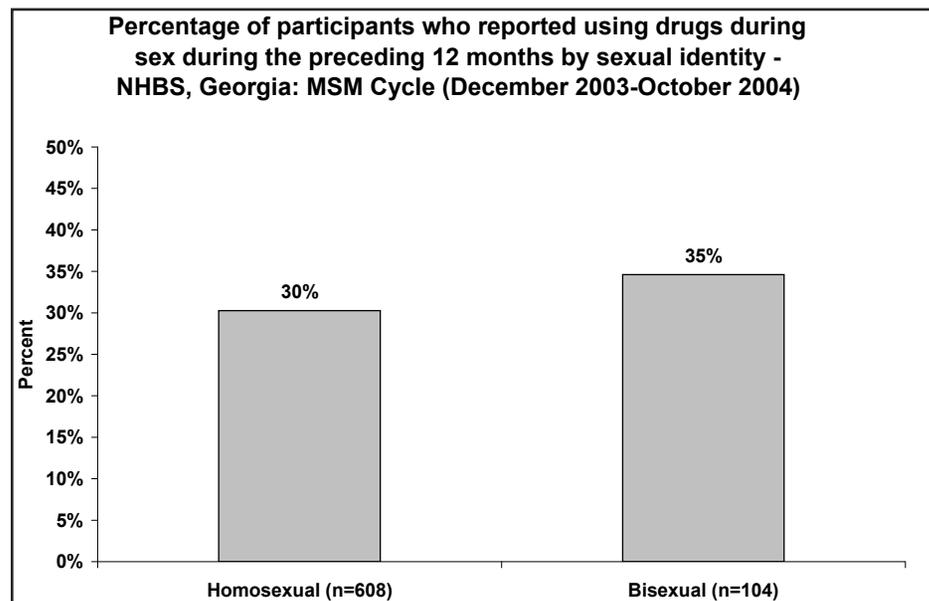
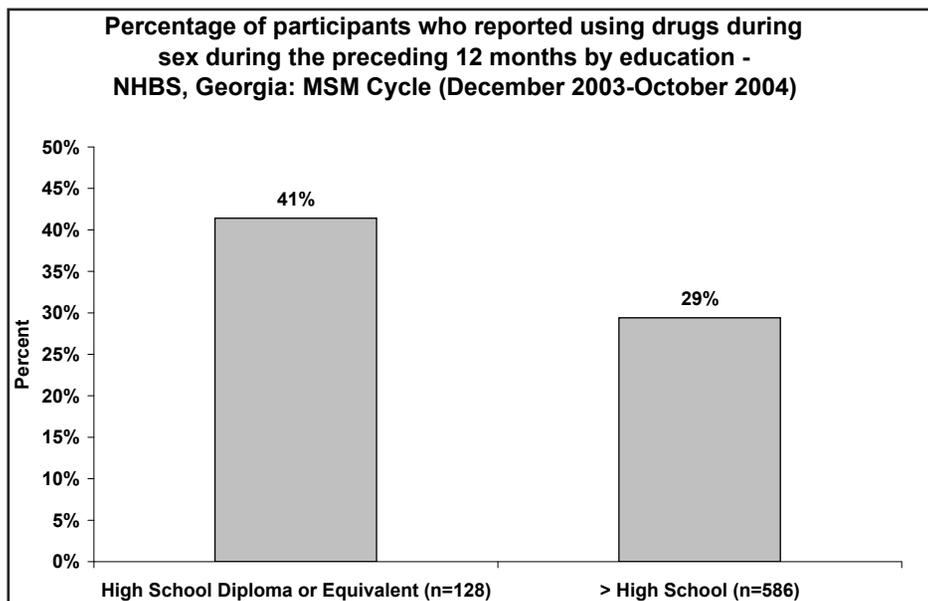
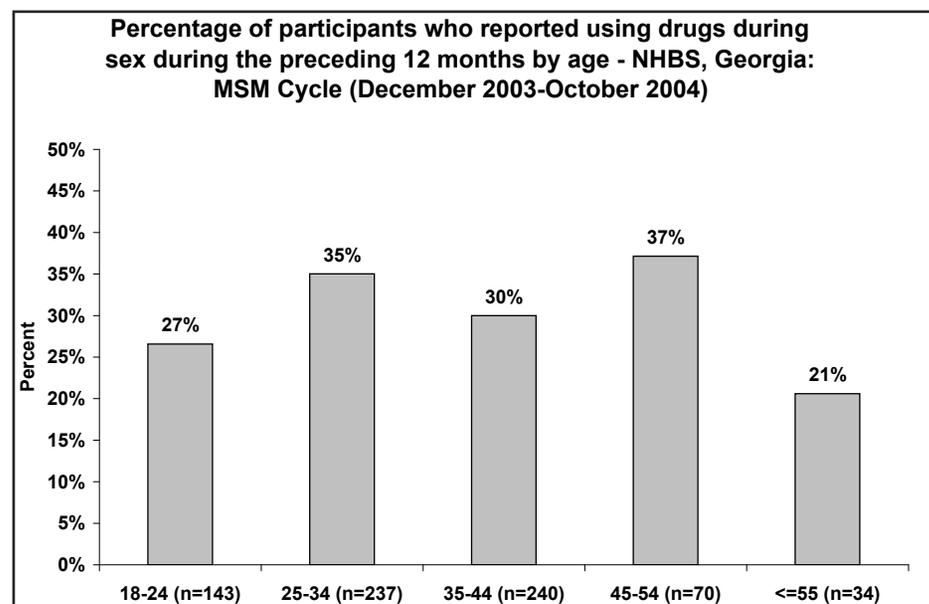
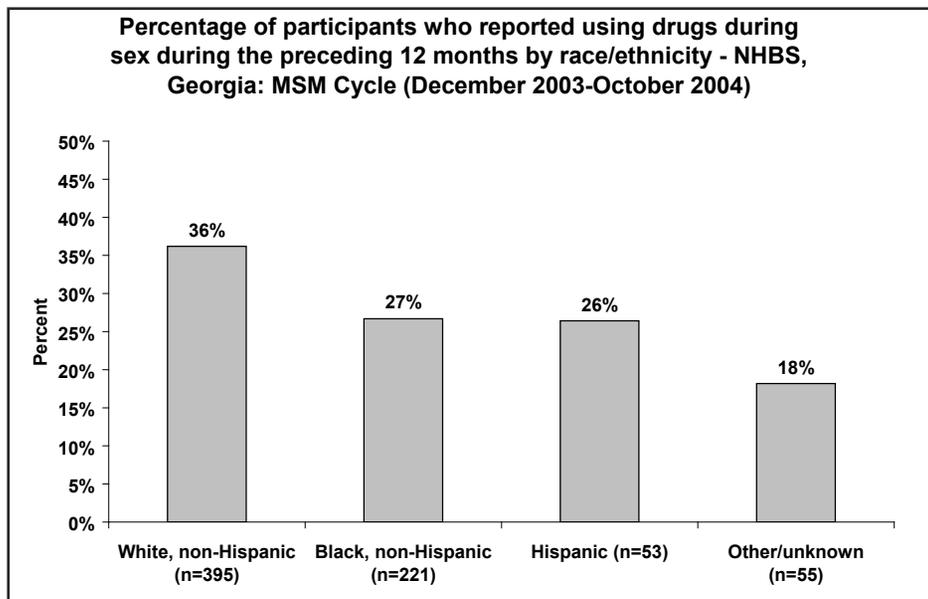
Unprotected anal intercourse



Unprotected receptive anal intercourse



Using drugs during sex





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