

# National HIV Behavioral Surveillance System: Heterosexuals at High Risk for Infection, Philadelphia 2013

## Ongoing HIV Risk Behaviors in Metropolitan Philadelphia: Data from the National HIV Behavioral Surveillance (NHBS) System, Heterosexuals at High Risk for Infection (HET3) in 2013

### What is NHBS?

The Philadelphia Department of Public Health collaborates with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to conduct a behavioral surveillance in the Philadelphia Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA). NHBS employs standardized anonymous questionnaires and optional HIV testing to better understand trends in HIV prevalence and risk behaviors among three sub-populations at highest risk of HIV infection in the United States: men who have sex with men (MSM), injection drug use (IDU), and high-risk heterosexuals (HET). Currently conducted annually in 20 MSAs in the United States, NHBS rotates between MSM, IDU, and HET populations in three year rounds. The overarching goal of NHBS is to help evaluate and direct local and national prevention efforts.

In 2013, the third cycle investigating high-risk heterosexuals (HET3) was conducted using respondent-driven sampling (RDS), a type of peer-driven chain-referral sampling. Survey participants were asked to recruit up to five peers in their social network until a sample size of 500 was reached. Data collection for the HET3 cycle was conducted between September and December 2013. Philadelphia previously participated in the HET cycle in 2006 (HET1) and 2010 (HET2) and will participate again in the HET cycle in 2016.

### Who are the participants?

Eligible adults for the HET3 cycle were between 18 and 60 years of age, lived in the Philadelphia MSA, could complete the survey in Spanish or English, and had at least one opposite-sex partner in the past year. Initial respondents were recruited from high risk areas, defined as geographic areas with high rates of poverty.

Of the 671 individuals screened, 540 (80.5%) were eligible, consented to the survey, and met CDC's definition for a high-risk heterosexual. This definition excludes anyone reporting injection drug use in the past year, transgender individuals, and those with an education level past high school unless they met the poverty threshold. Participants completed an anonymous survey interview and 538 (>99%) consented to HIV testing. Population estimates using statistics from this sample are presented within this factsheet.

The average age of the 540 eligible participants was 37 (Figure 1). Demographic information is presented in Table 1. Philadelphia's HET3 population was estimated to be 33% male and 67% female. The majority of the population was Black (92%), with Hispanic (6%) or white (2%) subpopulations.

Approximately 60% of the population completed grade 12 or a GED equivalent. Only 17% were estimated to be employed full- or part-time and 13% had experienced homelessness at one point. Approximately 72% have health insurance and 75% have seen a provider in the past year. Nearly half report using a clinic or health center for usual care, a quarter a doctor's office/HMO, and 20% the emergency room.

Figure 1. Estimated age distribution Philadelphia HET3 cycle, 2013

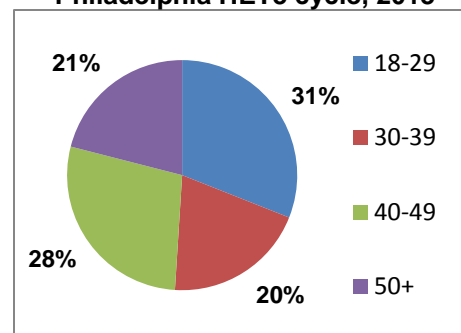


Table 1. Demographics HET3 Population Estimates, 2013

Race/Ethnicity	HET Pop est.
Black/African American	92%
Hispanic	6%
White	2%
<b>Sexual orientation</b>	
Heterosexual	90%
Bisexual	9%
Homosexual	<1%
<b>Marital status</b>	
Never married	74%
Previously married	16%
Married	10%
<b>History of homelessness</b>	
Never experienced homelessness	86%
Homeless previously, not currently	11%
Currently homeless	3%
<b>Education</b>	
Less than high school	40%
High school diploma/GED	48%
More than high school	12%
<b>Employment</b>	
Unemployed	44%
Unable to work for health reasons	21%
Full-time or part-time	17%
Homemaker	10%
Full-time student	4%
Retired/Disabled/Other	4%
<b>Ever held or arrested (lifetime)</b>	45%
Held or arrested past 12 months	(24%)
<b>Insured at time of interview</b>	72%
Medicaid insured	(62%)
<b>Saw health provider in past 12 months</b>	75%

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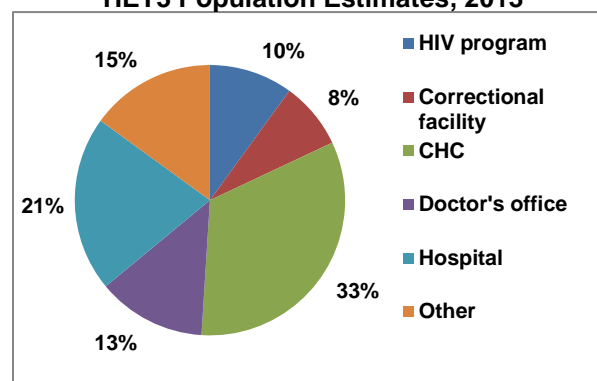
## Sexual Risk Behaviors

- Average age of sexual debut was 13.9 years of age for men and 15.6 years of age for women.
- 24% had 5+ sex partners in the preceding 12 months.
- 54% of men and 66% of women reported sex with a main partner at last sex versus a casual partner.
- Of those who reported vaginal sex at last sex, 81% did not use a condom. Of those who reported anal sex at last sex, 90% did not use a condom.
- During last sex, 17% used alcohol, 6% drugs, 12% both alcohol and drugs, and 65% neither.
- 33% exchanged sex for money, drugs, or other goods in the past 12 months. Men and women who engaged in exchange sex reported an average of 21 partners (median of 8) and 10 partners (median of 5) over the past 12 months, respectively.
- 45% knew the HIV status of their last sexual partner.

## Drug-related Risk Behaviors

- An estimated 53% reported non-injection drug use in the past 12 months
- In the past 12 months:
  - 48% used marijuana, 28% of total population reported daily use.
  - 44% binge drank (5+ alcoholic drinks in one sitting for men, 4+ alcoholic drinks for women) more than once a month.
  - 11% used crack cocaine, 9% used powder cocaine.
  - 10% used benzodiazepines.
  - 9% used painkillers.
  - 4% used heroin (non-injection use only).

**Figure 2. Location of most recent HIV test  
HET3 Population Estimates, 2013**



## What prevention services are HET accessing in Philadelphia?

- In the past 12 months:
  - 49% received an STD test from a health care provider.
  - 55% received free condoms: 78% from a health center or clinic, 28% from an HIV/AIDS focused organization, and 8% from somewhere else (more than one location could be listed). 65% used the free condoms.
  - Only 16% had a one-on-one conversation with an outreach worker or counselor and 5% participated in an organized group session to discuss HIV prevention.
- Within their lifetime, it is estimated that:
  - 24% participated in an alcohol treatment program. Of those, 31% were within the past year.
  - 27% participated in a drug treatment program. Of those, 35% were within the past year.
- 65% strongly agreed or agreed to the statement "Most people in Philadelphia would discriminate against someone with HIV."

## Self-reported HIV Status, Testing, and PEP/PrEP

Approximately 81% of the HET3 population received an HIV test in their lifetime, 3% (n=12) reported never obtaining results for the most recent test. Figure 2 shows the most commonly reported testing locations for their most recent HIV test. 44% of the sample reported having an HIV test in the past 12 months. Of those not tested for HIV in the past 12 months, the most commonly reported barrier to testing was fear of a positive result and perception of being at low risk for acquiring HIV. Approximately 8% had heard of people who do not have HIV taking anti-HIV medicines (PEP or PrEP) and 57% would be willing to take these anti-HIV medicines daily themselves.

Of the 538 participants who tested for HIV following the survey, <1% (n=5) were HIV positive. The 5 HIV-infected participants included 2 self-reported positives and 3 individuals who reported HIV-negative status during the interview.

For more information on NHBS, visit <http://www.cdc.gov/hiv/statistics/systems/nhbs/>