

## **2006 Vancouver Symposium on sex, drugs, and social networks**

**April 24-25, 2006**

This symposium provided an opportunity for leading social networks researchers, infectious disease epidemiologists, and public health practitioners to discuss their common problems and approaches. It was organized around some of the puzzles and difficulties that face us. Discussions were guided by 5 papers that were distributed in advance and outlined by their authors at the meeting itself.

A series of questions (see below) was prepared as an organizing tool and to guide the authors of materials for the meeting.

The Symposium specifically focused on social networks, drug networks (including those of the users of drugs, those of the neighborhoods in which drugs are used, those of the suppliers of drugs, and the related policing and governmental agencies), and the sexual networks through which STDs spread. It considered HIV, tuberculosis, syphilis and hepatitis. An important part of the discussion was how the ideas raised at the meeting help to understand and/or to intervene in the HIV and hepatitis epidemics in Vancouver — but materials and issues ranged more broadly than this.

To give some coherence to the sessions, papers were invited addressing specific topics prepared for distribution to all participants a few weeks before the meeting. While Vancouver would have made an appropriate location to use to illustrate most of the relevant issues, authors were encouraged to take a more general approach so they may include issues particular to other locations as well as ones seen in Vancouver. Some of the Symposium's papers were also presented at the Sunbelt conference that filled the rest of the week.

### **Questions to focus and guide discussion:**

1. What network phenomena can shape epidemics and the responses to epidemics? These might include social influence networks, bridges between groups (HIV- and HIV+, IVDU and non-IVDU sex partners, etc...), political networks and organizations.
2. What local social phenomena help shape these networks? Possibilities include various kinds of social pressures, behaviour, event occurrence and event attendance, the epidemics themselves, local neighborhood stakeholders, and relevant bureaucratic structures.
3. What more general factors shape social, sexual and drug-related networks? How does this happen? Possibilities include norms? customs? politics? policing? economics? We must go far beyond simple propinquity as explanations!
4. What kinds of data do we need to collect to study these issues? Which of these data are routinely available? Which are normally collected in epidemiologic or political research? Which require network designs? Specifically, what data — social network and other — are already available in Vancouver? ... or elsewhere? ... and how might we go about designing appropriate studies?
5. What kinds of simple interventions might reduce HIV and STD spread? And how do sexual network patterns affect their impact? And do political or workplace network dynamics or structures affect their feasibility ; or is this more an issue of non-network-based norms, values or interests? For example, given the extent to which IVDUs and other drug users are a core for some STDs: How are their social networks connected to the larger communities of drug users and ordinary residents? Why is there so little STD screening, cure, or therapy at drug treatment, needle exchange, and safe injection sites?

6. How do transportation networks affect risk networks and social networks?

In India and parts of Africa, truck routes seem to affect HIV transmission dynamics. In Vancouver, does the Skytrain structure crime? drug use? HIV or STDs?

7. What is the agenda for network research in relation to wars, transitions, natural disasters, urban redevelopment and other 'big events'?

**A selection from the following papers were presented and discussed at the Symposium and/or the Sunbelt:**

**Evaluation of partner notification for syphilis; before and after enhanced social network strategies; Vancouver, Canada.**

Ann Jolly, Public Health Agency of Canada, Centre for Infectious Disease Prevention and Control, AL0602B Room 2310, LCDC Bldg #6, Tunney Pasture Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0K9, Canada; Darlene Taylor, British Columbia Centre for Disease Control STD Division Epidemiology Services BC Centre for Disease Control 655 West 12th Ave Vancouver, BC V5Z 4R4, Canada; Gina Ogilvie, British Columbia Centre for Disease Control STD Division Epidemiology Services BC Centre for Disease Control 655 West 12th Ave Vancouver, BC V5Z 4R4; Michael Rekart, Director, STD/AIDS Control, BCCDC and Clinical Professor, Medicine, UBC.

**Sex partner concurrency in a high HIV prevalence community.**

Caroline Korves ck2187@columbia.edu Columbia University Mailman School of Public Health New York, New York USA; Maureen Miller, Columbia University Mailman School of Public Health New York, New York US

**The importance of "house regular" clients and bridging in sexual networks of massage parlour-based commercial sex workers (CSW) in Vancouver, Canada.**

Valencia Remple, University of British Columbia, BC Centre for Disease Control Epidemiology, Vancouver, BC, Canada; David M Patrick, UBC, BCCDC Epidemiology Vancouver, BC, Canada; Mark W Tyndall, BC Centre for Excellence in HIV/AIDS Vancouver, BC, Canada; Caitlin Johnston, BC Centre for Excellence in HIV/AIDS Vancouver, BC, Canada; Ann Jolly, Public Health Agency of Canada, Centre for Infectious Disease Prevention and Control, AL0602B Room 2310, LCDC , Bldg #6, Tunney Pasture Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0K9, Canada.

**Comparison of networks resulting from respondent driven sampling and a social network inventory.**

Elizabeth Costenbader, and William A. Zule, Research Triangle Institute, International, Behavioral Health Research Division, Substance Abuse Treatment Evaluations Intervention, 3040 Cornwallis Road PO Box 12194, Research Triangle Park, NC 27709-2194, USA; Georgiy Bobashev, Research Triangle Institute, International, Social & Statistical Sciences, 3040 Cornwallis Road PO Box 12194, Research Triangle Park, NC 27709-2194, USA.

**Degree Distributions of Sexual Networks: Should We Buy Scale Free.**

Deven Hamilton, University of Washington, Sociology, 2032 NE 177th, Shoreline, WA 98155, USA; Mark Handcock, University of Washington, Sociology and Statistics.

**Connectivity, Density, and Diffusion: Low degree networks can be as effective as scale free.**

Martina Morris, University of Washington, Department of Sociology, Box 353340, Seattle, WA 98195-3340, USA; David Hunter, Penn State University, Department of Statistics, University Park, PA, USA; Jim Moody, Ohio State University, Department of Sociology, Columbus, OH, USA.

**Effects of TND Network on Monthly Substance Use.**

Thomas Valente, Alan Stacey, Jennifer Unger, Steve Sussman, all from University of South California, Department of Preventive Medicine, 1000 S. Fremont Ave., Unit #8 Alhambra, CA 91803, USA.

**The Winnipeg Injection Drug Use Social Network study: the molecular epidemiology of hepatitis C within social networks of injection drug users.**

John Wylie, Cadham Provincial Laboratory 750 William Ave. Winnipeg, Manitoba R3C 3Y1 Canada; Ann Jolly,

Centre for Infectious Disease Prevention and Control, Population and Public Health Branch, Health Canada  
Brooke Claxton Bldg Level 01 Postal Locator 0900 B1 Tunney's Pasture Ottawa, ON K1A 0K9 Canada; Lena  
Shah, Department of Community Health Sciences Faculty of Medicine University of Manitoba Winnipeg,  
Manitoba, Canada.

**Assessing the Effects of Social Network Variables on Project Retention: It's How You See Them Not  
How They See You That Matters.**

Scott Clair, Richard Spoth, ChungYeol Shin, Cleve Redmond, all from Iowa State University, Partnerships in  
Prevention Science Institute, 2625 North Loop Drive Suite 500, Ames, IA 50010, USA.

**Exposure to Cognitions through social networks leads to Marijuana & Alcohol Use.**

Kathryn Coronges, Institute of Prevention Research University Southern CA Los Angeles, CA, USA; Tom  
Valente, Institute of Prevention Research University Southern CA Los Angeles, CA, USA; Alan Stacy, Institute  
of Prevention Research University Southern CA Los Angeles, CA, USA.

**The relative contribution of sex and drug ties to STI-relevant network connectivity.**

James Moody and jimi adams, both from The Ohio State University, Sociology, 372 Bricker Hall, 190 North Oval  
Mall, Columbus, OH 43210, USA.

**Substance-based Informal Social Networks: Investigation into Stronger Ties.**

Michael Read, Ph.D. Student University of British Columbia Sauder School of Business OBHR Division.

**Homophily and Assimilation among Adolescent Substance Users.**

Michael Pearson, Napier University, Centre for Maths & Stats, 2/62, 219 Colinton Road, Edinburgh, Mid  
Lothian EH11 4BN, Scotland; Christian Steglich, ICS / Department of Sociology, University of Groningen, The  
Netherlands; Tom Snijders, ICS / Department of Sociology, University of Groningen, The Netherlands; Patrick  
West.

**Symposium participants**

Mara Adelman	Seattle University, Communication
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Erik Apedaile	University of Ottawa, Epidemiology and Community Medicine
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Juan Carlos Barahona	Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Media Lab
Dean Behrens	University of Toronto, Sociology
Devon Brewer	Interdisciplinary Scientific Research, Seattle
Alan Brown-Hart	University of Ottawa
Loren Beyerstein	Simon Fraser University, Communication
Dragos Calitoiu	Carleton University, Computer Science
Richard Callahan	University of Washington, Sociology
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