



Effectiveness of Enhanced and Cluster Interviewing to Identify Sexual Venues across Health Jurisdictions for Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STD) and HIV Transmission

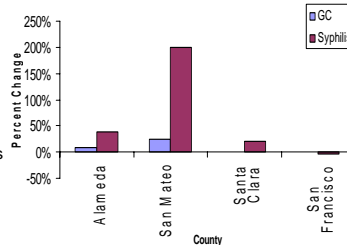
Cara L. Silva MPH¹, Brad Jacobson MPH¹, Swati Deshpande PhD¹, and Vivian Levy MD^{1,2}
¹San Mateo County Health Department, STD Control Program ²San Mateo County Medical Center, San Mateo, CA

Background

San Mateo County (SMC) is located between Santa Clara and San Francisco Counties in northern California. While San Mateo County (SMC) case numbers for gonorrhea and syphilis are below state averages, SMC has seen higher increases of these STDs compared to neighboring northern California counties. (Figure 1) This percent increase may reflect efforts to promote reporting in the County.

Enhanced and cluster interviewing techniques to elicit sex venues, internet sites, and social/sexual contacts have been shown to identify additional STD morbidity (Singh et al. 2007). SMC implemented enhanced interviewing in August of 2006 and cluster interviewing in October of 2007.

Figure 1: Percent Change in Rates of Syphilis and Gonorrhea in Bay Area Counties 2004-2006



Objective

Evaluate enhanced and cluster interviewing of gonorrhea and early syphilis patients to identify social acquaintances, social networks, sexual venues, and new STD and HIV infections.

Methods

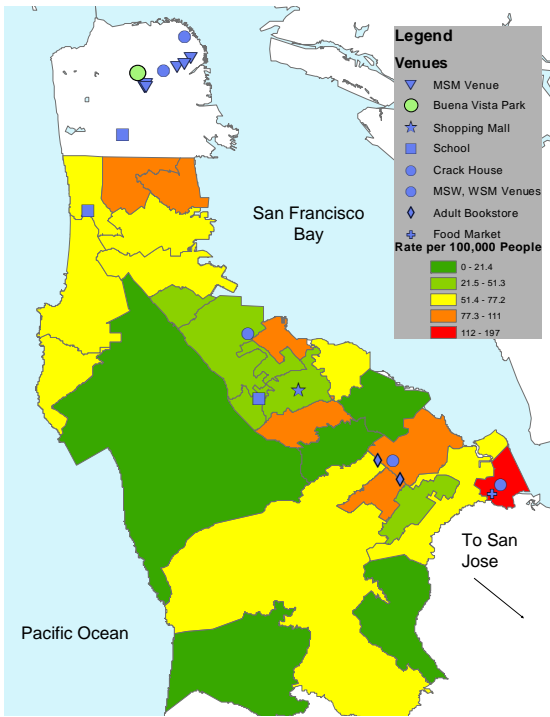
SMC Health Department staff performed enhanced and cluster interviews of newly reported cases of gonorrhea (GC) and early syphilis. The *enhanced interview* elicited sexual partners, venues, internet sites, and risk behaviors of the index case.

The *cluster interview* elicited high-risk, non-sexual acquaintances, venues, and internet sites that others use to meet sex partners. SMC would offer these acquaintances free STD and/or HIV testing.

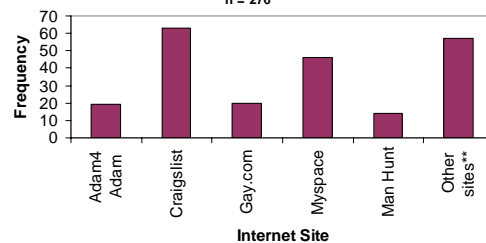
Rates of all reported early syphilis and GC by SMC zip code, and elicited sexual venues were mapped.

Results

Rates (Based on n = 457) of Gonorrhea and Early Syphilis and Reported Sex Venue Type by Zip Code in San Mateo and San Francisco Counties Elicited by Enhanced and Cluster Interviewing, 2006 - 2008



Frequency of Internet Sites Mentioned from Cluster Interviewing October 2007 - October 2008 n = 276*



*Two hundred sixty index cases named 276 internet sites.

**Other sites include those that were mentioned fewer than five times. For example, AOL was mentioned twice, and therefore counted as an "other site" twice.

Outcomes of Enhanced and Cluster Interviewing

	Enhanced Interviewing (n = 576)	Cluster Interviewing (n = 260)
Venues	57	73
Internet Sites	68	276
Sex Partners	268	NA*
Social Acquaintances	NA*	8
Social Networks	1	0

*Enhanced interviewing only elicits sexual partners of the index case (rather than social acquaintances), while cluster interviewing elicits social acquaintances in the community.

Conclusions

San Mateo County residents with STDs often go to venues in San Francisco to meet sex partners. Most venues identified in San Mateo County are close to zip codes with high STD morbidity. With web sites mentioned 276 times by 260 index cases, the internet is a significant medium to arrange sexual encounters. Future research of this nature requires inter-county cooperation and modified interviewing techniques to better elicit social networks for STD and HIV transmission.

Challenges/Limitations

-Only one cluster interviewee was willing to disclose names of their social, non-sexual contacts to Health Department staff.

-Health department staff were unable to interview every reported case due to difficult-to-reach patients and time and resource constraints.

Acknowledgements

Dennis Israelski MD¹, Sharon Byrd², Teresa Lopez², Judith Ochoa² MPA

¹Peninsula AIDS/HIV Research Center, ²San Mateo County Health Department, STD Control Program, San Mateo, CA