Behavioral treatment approaches for methamphetamine dependence and HIV-related sexual risk behaviors among urban gay and bisexual men.

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Abstract

BACKGROUND: Methamphetamine-dependent gay and bisexual men (GBM) are at high risk for HIV transmission, largely due to drug-associated sexual risk behaviors. This project evaluated the efficacy of four behavioral drug abuse treatments for reducing methamphetamine use and sexual risk behaviors among this population.

METHODS: In this randomized controlled trial, 162 methamphetamine-dependent (SCID-verified) GBM in Los Angeles County were randomly assigned to one of four treatment conditions for 16 weeks: standard cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT, n=40), contingency management (CM, n=42), combined cognitive behavioral therapy and contingency management (CBT+CM, n=40), and a culturally tailored cognitive behavioral therapy (GCBT, n=40). Stimulant use was assessed thrice-weekly during treatment using urine drug screens (48 measures). Sexual risk behaviors were monitored monthly (four measures). Follow-up assessments were conducted at 6 (80.0%) and 12 months (79.9%).

RESULTS: Statistically significant differences in retention (F(3,158)=3.78, p<.02), in longest period of consecutive urine samples negative for methamphetamine metabolites (F(3,158)=11.80, p<.001), and in the Treatment Effectiveness Score were observed by condition during treatment (F(3,158)=7.35, p<.001) with post hoc analyses showing the CM and CBT+CM conditions to perform better than standard CBT. GEE modeling results showed GCBT significantly reduced unprotected receptive anal intercourse (URAI) during the first 4 weeks of treatment (X²=6.75, p<.01). During treatment between-group differences disappeared at follow-up with overall reductions in outcomes sustained to 1-year.

CONCLUSIONS: Among high-risk methamphetamine-dependent GBM, drug abuse treatments produced significant reductions in methamphetamine use and sexual risk behaviors. Drug abuse treatments merit consideration as a primary HIV prevention strategy for this population.

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