

Homophobic victimization, homelessness, and methamphetamine use in a cohort of men who have sex with men of color in Los Angeles, CA



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Background

- Men who have sex with men (MSM) show elevated use of methamphetamine use (range = 23% to 27%) relative to the general U.S. population¹, and some of the disparity in methamphetamine use in MSM may be explained by increased risk of homelessness in MSM.
- 40% of the homeless clients lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender (LGBT)³
- 55-66% forced out of their homes by family members or fled homophobia⁴
- 23-25% homeless in Los Angeles used methamphetamine ^{5,6,7,8}



Objectives

- To longitudinally test whether severity of homophobic victimization is associated with level of methamphetamine use over the course of 24 months
- To estimate the degree to which number of weeks of homelessness mediates this association



Methods

Analytic sample consisted of N = 498 MSM of color from parent cohort study (MASCULINE (mSTUDY)) assessed at baseline, 12-month, and 24-month follow-up (obs = 764).

Multilevel regression and path analysis

Outcome: Methamphetamine use

- 0-none, 1-occasional (once or once a month), 2-frequent (weekly or more)

Mediator: Homelessness

- # of weeks homeless in past 6 months

Independent variable: Homophobic victimization

- 0-none, 1-moderate (1-2 types of experiences), 2-severe (3-5 types of experiences)

Covariates: age, race, education level, employment status

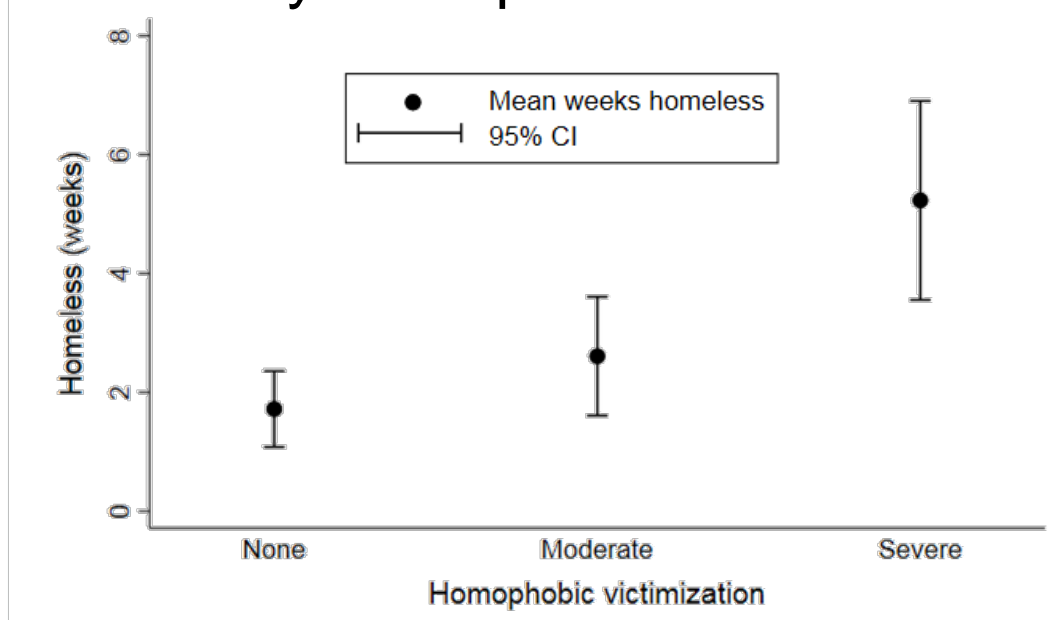


Baseline demographics (N = 498)

	n	%
Age, M (SD)	31.41	6.87
HIV status		
Negative	244	49.00
Positive	254	51.00
Race		
White	34	6.90
Black	215	43.61
Latino	226	45.84
Other	18	3.65
Education level		
Less than high school	60	12.74
High school/GED	315	66.88
Bachelors or higher	96	20.38
Employment		
Unemployed	263	54.12
Full-time	103	21.19
Part-time	120	24.69



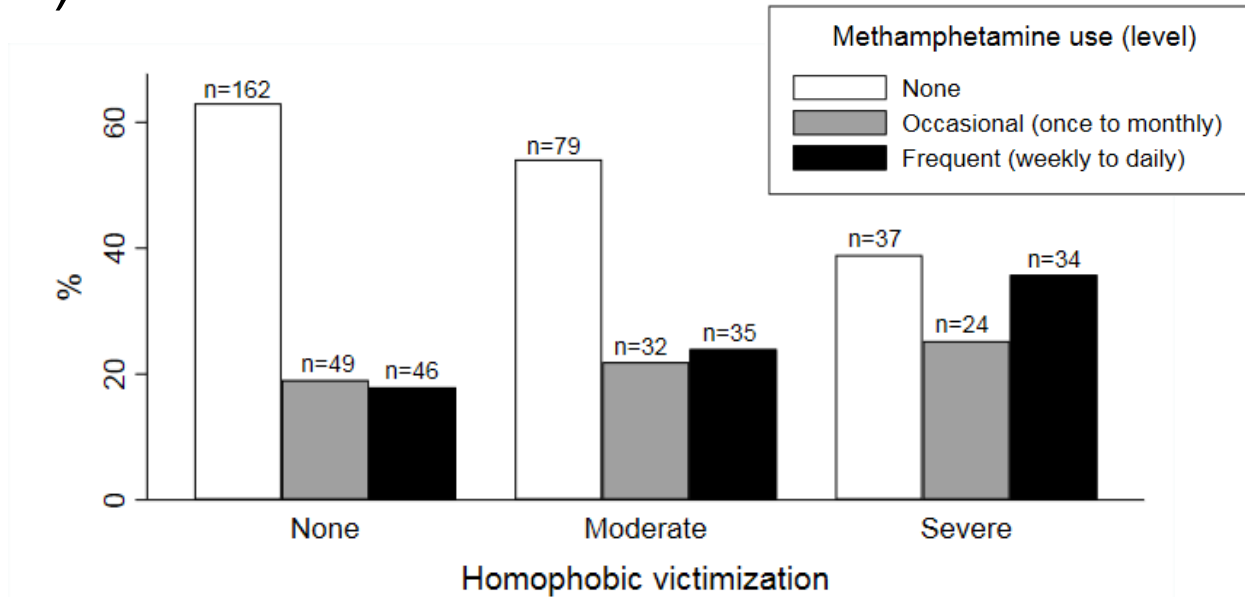
Homelessness by homophobic victimization (n=498)



Note: Point estimates graph (with 95% CIs) based on an ANOVA



Methamphetamine use by homophobic victimization (n=497)



Note: Bar chart based on cross-tabulation and chi-square.



	Homeless (weeks) ^a			Methamphetamine use ^b		
	IRR	95% CI	p	OR	95% CI	p
Within-person						
Homophobic victimization						
None	1.00	--	--	1.00	--	--
Moderate	2.82	1.37–5.80	.005	1.98	1.01–3.88	.048
Severe	4.17	1.77–9.83	.001	3.75	1.66–8.43	.001
HIV status						
Negative	1.00	--	--	1.00	--	--
Positive	1.03	0.53–2.03	.924	5.79	2.58–13.00	< .001
Age (years)	0.97	0.93–1.00	.293	1.08	1.02–1.14	.010
Race						
White	1.00	--	--	1.00	--	--
Black	0.78	0.23–2.70	.700	0.68	0.18–2.58	.570
Latino	0.40	0.12–1.36	.143	0.97	0.26–3.57	.966
Other	0.51	0.08–3.24	.472	0.39	0.05–2.90	.355
Education						
Less than high school	1.00	--	--	1.00	--	--
High school/GED	0.49	0.20–1.21	.121	0.89	0.35–2.27	.814
Bachelors or higher	0.38	0.12–1.22	.103	0.27	0.08–0.95	.041
Employment						
Not employed	1.00	--	--	1.00	--	--
Full-time	0.10	0.04–0.24	<.001	0.09	0.04–0.21	<.001
Part-time	0.23	0.10–0.53	.001	0.55	0.27–1.12	.098
Time (months)	0.96	0.93–1.00	.082	0.93	0.90–0.97	< .001
Between-person						
Variance component	2.51	1.17–5.39	--	8.62	5.19–14.34	--



Multilevel models (n=472)

	Homeless (weeks) ^a			Methamphetamine use ^b		
	IRR	95% CI	p	OR	95% CI	p
Within-person						
Homophobic victimization	1.00	--	--	1.00	--	--
None	2.82	1.37–5.80	.005	1.98	1.01–3.88	.048
Moderate	4.17	1.77–9.83	.001	3.75	1.66–8.43	.001
Severe						
•	•	•	•	•	•	•
•	•	•	•	•	•	•
•	•	•	•	•	•	•

^a Random-intercept negative binomial model used for count outcome, weeks homeless in the past 6 months.

^b Random-intercept ordered logistic model used for ordinal outcome, level of methamphetamine use in the past 6 months.



Mediation model (n=476)

Moderate homophobic victimization

Indirect (via homelessness)

➤ OR = 1.09, p = .060

Total (indirect + direct)

➤ OR = 2.04, p = .040

12% of association with meth use explained by homelessness

Severe homophobic victimization

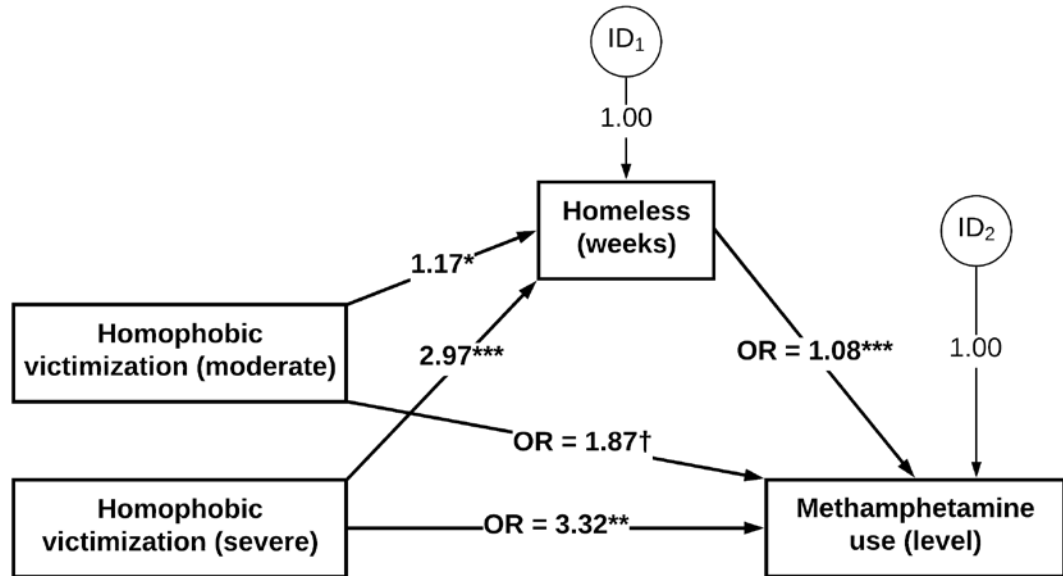
Indirect (via homelessness)

➤ OR = 1.25, p = .007

Total effect (indirect + direct)

➤ OR = 4.13, p = .001

16% of association with meth use explained by homelessness



Discussion

- Findings from this study suggest that greater homophobic victimization is longitudinally associated with greater number of weeks of homelessness and greater levels of methamphetamine use.
- Mediation analysis suggests that increased time homeless may partially explain the association between severity of homophobic victimization and level of methamphetamine use.
- Homophobic victimization was more strongly linked to frequent meth use than moderate meth use.
 - If this association is casual, these findings may suggest that experiences of homophobic victimization have a stronger effect on chronic methamphetamine use rather than on casual use.



Recommendations

- Instill awareness in MSM about how homophobia is linked to risk of homelessness and meth use.
- Educate providers on the cumulative challenges of homophobia, homelessness, and substance use in MSM.
- Provide referral services for housing and safety needs.



Limitations

- Cautious inferences should be made about the directionality of paths in the mediation model.
- Limited generalizability to all MSM or MSM of color outside of Los Angeles County.



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