

Poster presentation

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The moderating influence of cognitive performance on risk awareness to predict HIV/AIDS risk-taking behaviors

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from 2006 International Meeting of The Institute of Human Virology
Baltimore, USA. 17–21 November, 2006

Published: 21 December 2006

Retrovirology 2006, **3**(Suppl 1):P41 doi:10.1186/1742-4690-3-S1-P41

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Background

The current study sought to explore the interaction between risk awareness and cognitive performance in predicting HIV/AIDS risk behaviors.

Materials and methods

This study uses data from the International Neurobehavioral HIV Study, an epidemiological examination of neuropsychological, social, and behavioral risk factors for HIV, HAV, HBV, and HCV. The current sample (N = 311) was limited to individuals who reported that they injected drugs within the last six months and that heroin was their drug of choice.

Results

Among respondents with greater risk awareness, those with greater cognitive performance were significantly more likely to reduce their HIV/AIDS risk behaviors (OR = 7.8) than those with lower cognitive performance. However, risk awareness alone did not predict fewer HIV/AIDS risk behaviors.

Conclusion

This finding refines the application of the protection motivation theory by specifying that risk awareness alone is insufficient to predict protective behaviors. Above average cognitive performance combined with risk awareness reduced HIV/AIDS risk behaviors. Future research should explore the causal mechanisms linking the interaction between risk awareness and cognitive performance in predicting a reduction in risk behaviors.