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SEXUAL HISTORY TAKING AND RISK ASSESSMENT

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Rationale

Sexual history and risk assessments provide valuable information regarding the health of your patients. A thorough sexual history should be taken with each new patient, and a risk assessment should be conducted at least annually and at every visit for higher risk patients.

Providers who know the sexual orientation of their MSM patients are more likely to recommend HIV testing and HAV or HBV vaccination.³⁵

Patients experience less risk assessment than is recommended:

- 38% of MSM do not share their sexual orientation with their medical providers.³⁵
- 25% of HIV-infected patients report that they discussed transmission prevention with their providers.³⁶
- 6% of HIV-infected patients report discussing sexual practices with their primary care providers.³⁶

Assessing specific sexual risk will enable providers to identify:

- Anatomic sites that require testing (oral, pharyngeal, urethral)
- STD, HIV, and hepatitis risks
- Opportunities for counseling and patient education

The Five P's

Figure 6: The Five P's of Risk Assessment

The 5 P's ³⁷	At First Visit	At Subsequent Visits
Partners	Number and gender of sex partners in the past year	Number and gender of sex partners since last visit
Practices	Types of sex with partners in the past year	Types of sex with partners discussed above
Past history of STDs	Lifetime history of STDs	STD diagnosis since last visit (at current or other clinic)
Protection	Use of condoms with partners in the past year	Use of condoms with partners since last visit
Pregnancy Prevention	Method of contraception used with any female partners	Method of contraception used with any female partners

Remember:

- Make no assumptions.
- Assure confidentiality.
- Ask direct, open-ended questions.
- Ask for explanation of terms you are unfamiliar with.
- Normalizing behavior may result in more honest answers

³⁵ Petrolli, et al. STD, 2011.(38;1; 63-67).

³⁶ Among patients receiving care in Ryan White funded clinics. Source: Morin, et al. APHA Annual Meeting, 2003. Abstract #60724.

³⁷ STD Treatment Guidelines, 2015. MMWR. 2015;64(RR3). www.cdc.gov/std/tg2015/clinical.htm

Sample Questions to Ask During Sexual History and Risk Assessments

Partners

- Do you have sex with men, women, or transgender persons?
- In the past twelve months, how many people have you had sex with?
- Where do you meet your partners (through friends, online, bars, bathhouses)?
- How do you know the HIV status of your partners?
- Do you know if your partners have other partners and what they do with them?
- Have you noticed STD-type symptoms in your partner?
- Do you select partners based on HIV status?

Sexual Practices

- Do you have anal sex, meaning penis in anus sex? If yes, how often do you use condoms for this kind of sex? Are you a top (insertive partner), bottom (receptive partner), or both?
- Do you have oral sex, meaning mouth on penis/anus/vagina? If yes, do you use condoms never, sometimes, most of the time, or always for this kind of sex?
- If sex with women: Do you have vaginal sex, meaning penis in vagina sex? If yes, do you use condoms never, sometimes, most of the time, or always for this kind of sex?
- Compared to other times in your life, are you having more or less sex? Tell me about it.
- Do you do different things sexually depending on the HIV status of your partners?

Past History of STDs

- Have you ever had an STD, such as syphilis, chlamydia, gonorrhea, herpes or warts? If yes, do you know what treatment you received and where you were treated?
- Have any of your partners had an STD? If yes, do you know what the infection was and when it was?

Protection from STDs

- What do you do to protect yourself from sexually transmitted diseases and HIV?
- Do you use condoms when having sex? How often?
- What has been your experience with using condoms?
- What types of situations make you likely to not use condoms?

Injection Drug Related Risks

- Do you share needles or other injection equipment?
- If yes, with how many partners?
- What do you know about the HIV and Hepatitis C status of your needle-sharing partners?
- Do you have sex with your needle-sharing partners?
- Is your equipment clean or sterile? How do you know?
- What drugs do you inject? How often?
- What types of situations or environments make you more likely to use drugs?

HIV and Hepatitis Testing/Vaccination

- Have you ever been vaccinated against hepatitis A/hepatitis B? If yes, how many doses did you receive?
- Have you ever been tested for hepatitis C?
- Have you ever been tested for HIV?

For Men Who Have Sex with Women

- What do you do to prevent any unplanned pregnancies with your female partners?
- Do you use condoms when having sex with women? How often?