The importance of core groups in the epidemiology and control of HIV-1 infection

Abstract:

In Africa, HIV transmission occurs mainly through heterosexual intercourse. High-frequency transmitter core groups are key to the epidemiology of HIV-1 and STD on the continent. The rapid growth of the HIV-1 epidemic in Africa appears to have resulted, in part, from social and economic factors which result in individuals' frequent engagement in sexual intercourse with members of HIV-infected core groups. Understanding the importance of core groups in HIV-1 transmission is therefore key to developing more effective programs for the control of HIV-1. Sections explore the core groups concept and the sexual transmission of infection, social and economic forces creating core groups in Africa, the interaction of STD and HIV-1 in core groups, the effect of STD on HIV-1 disease progression in core groups in accelerating the HIV-1 epidemic, the role of core group interventions in control programs, balancing disease control with the potential for victimization, and research needs.