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HIV RISK AMONG MEN WHO HAVE SEX WITH MEN (MSM) IN HUNGARY

Research was conducted among gay and bisexual men in Hungary during 2011 to try to learn why Hungarians have a relatively low rate of HIV/AIDS in their country. It was initially hypothesized that men who have sex with men in Hungary have sex with condoms with non-Hungarians, but sex without condoms with other Hungarian men, creating a functional “firewall” keeping most HIV/AIDS infection out of Hungary. While our hypothesis was inconclusive, likely due to small sample size in this qualitative study, it examined key aspects of Hungarian gay male culture. Cultures and subcultural differences are important in understanding Hungarian gay male behavior. There was an emphasis on romance and monogamy as an ideal, the importance of personal reputation, a lack of a strong gay community, failure to use condoms when in love, sexual fantasies where condoms were irrelevant, infrequent HIV testing but accurate knowledge of safer sex. One possible solution would be to encourage the use of Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP), a daily pill which reduces the risk of HIV infection, among Hungarian MSM who refuses to use condoms.

Biography

Douglas A. Feldman is Professor Emeritus of Anthropology from the College at Brockport, State University of New York, former Chair of the Department of Anthropology and former President of the Society for Medical Anthropology. He is author/editor of seven books about HIV/AIDS and anthropology, most recently AIDS, Culture and Gay Men. He has conducted social research on HIV/AIDS in the United States, Hungary, Zambia, Uganda, Rwanda and Senegal. He is the recipient of the Kimball Award for Public and Applied Anthropology and the Distinguished Service Award of the AIDS and Anthropology Research Group.

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