

Annual Report of the



Advancing an agenda for research, policy,
and service In the interest of Black Gay Men

2008-09

Dr. Marlon M. Bailey, Chair

Black Gay Research Group Annual Report 2008

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National African American MSM Leadership Conference on HIV/AIDS
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SECTION I. INTRODUCTION

After twenty six years of the AIDS pandemic, Black men who have sex with men (MSM) have experienced increasingly disproportionate rates of HIV infection as compared to MSM representing other racial/ethnic groups in the United States. To respond to the urgent nature of this crisis, a group of Black gay researchers convened an organization in order to address the disproportionate HIV infection rates among Black MSM. Notwithstanding the multitude of pertinent research activities in which Black gay researchers have been engaged long since this moment, in January of 2007 the Black Gay Research Group (BGRG) met in Charlotte, North Carolina to chart a new course aimed at confronting the scourge of HIV and its impact on Black MSM in a more focused and aggressive manner. In collaboration with the National Black Gay Men's Advocacy Coalition (NBGMAC) and with funding from the Office of AIDS of the State of California, members of (BGRG) participated in a research summit. One of the major outcomes of the research summit was the development of a national research agenda focused broadly on HIV prevention, treatment, and research and Black gay men.

After drafting and publishing the *Black Gay Research Agenda*, (June 2007), the BGRG has focused its efforts and resources on the implementation of the research agenda. In so doing, throughout the past eighteen months, the steering committee and the general membership of the BGRG have undertaken several tasks and been engaged in key projects that moves us in the direction of implementing this research agenda. The report that follows covers the most recent twelve months. This annual report provides an overview of the infrastructural development of the BGRG, a brief itemized description of the research activities and projects in which we have and continue to be involved, and the research publications/presentations by members of the BGRG.

The BGRG is a totally volunteer organization made up of primarily Black gay men who are health, humanities, and social science researchers, as well as community based service providers and workers. As such, we are deeply grateful to the San Francisco AIDS Foundation, the State of California Office of AIDS, the New York State Department of Health, the National AIDS Education & Services for Minorities [NAESM], and People Of Color in Crisis, Inc [POCC] for providing the funding and technical support for our efforts to implement the research agenda.

SECTION II. NEW ADMINISTRATIVE RECONSTRUCTION PLAN

On January 24, 2008, the BGRG held its annual "face to face" meeting at the National African American MSM Leadership Conference on HIV/AIDS in Oakland, CA. During the BGRG's earlier history, the organizational structure and function were somewhat ad hoc. Thus, upon the election of a new leadership team (Chair, Dr. Marlon M. Bailey, and the Chair Elect, LaRon E. Nelson) three months prior, the team drafted and vetted proposals to restructure the organization. During the administrative meeting in January 2008 in Oakland, the general body voted to approve the restructuring plan. In addition, the general body approved revisions to the organizational goals and objectives as proposed by the new leadership team.

Currently, the Steering Committee constitutes the leadership body of the BGRG. The Steering Committee meets once a month, two weeks prior to monthly meetings with the general membership of the BGRG. The Steering Committee manages and coordinates all activities in which our membership is involved and sanctioned by the BGRG. In addition, the Steering Committee generates and vets proposals that are designed to improve the function of the organization as well as advance our overall goals. Although the Steering Committee is the primary means through which organizational policy is implemented, it does not create and/or decide on any organizational policy without consultation and approval from the general body.

The Steering Committee consists of the following:

Chair	Dr. Marlon M. Bailey
Chair Elect	LaRon E. Nelson
Secretary	Craig Hutchinson
Membership Chair	Gregory D. Victorianne
Budget Committee Co-Chairs (formerly named Fundraising & Development Committee)	Evelyn Williams
	Rudy Carn
Special Projects Chair:	Dr. Leo Wilton

Co-Chairs

The Chair of the organization serves a one year term. The Co-Chair (or Chair Elect) serves a one year term and becomes the Chair of the organization upon the end of the Chair's term.

Committee Chairs

There are three (3) standing committees: the Membership Committee, the Budget Committee, and the Special Projects Committee. Each committee Chair is responsible for coordinating the tasks of his/her respective committee, and reporting to the Steering Committee the monthly progress. The Chair of the committee also assists the Chair and Chair Elect with the implementation of organizational aims that directly relate to the role of the committee. The Chair of committees can serve as long as they are willing and able to serve.

Secretary

During the 2008 year, we created the position of secretary. This position was previously a part of our institutional relationship with People of Color in Crisis (POCC) in New York City. However, in order to alleviate some of the administrative burden placed on POCC, one of our members, Craig Hutchinson volunteered to take over the secretary position. We are enormously grateful to Craig for his extraordinary work as our organizational secretary. Craig's duties include taking minutes at all meetings, organizing all meetings involving the BGRG membership, maintaining our organizational history and assisting the members of the Steering Committee upon request.

SECTION III. INSTITUTIONAL RELATIONSHIPS

Currently, the work of BGRG is anchored by three formal institutional relationships:

POCC, Inc.

First, our administrative home continues to be POCC. Evelyn Williams, the Interim Executive Director, serves as the Co-chair of the Budget (formerly Fundraising and Development Committee), and POCC staff provides maintenance support to the BGRG website and other administrative tasks as needed.

NAESM

Our fiscal conduit is the National AIDS Education and Services for Minorities (NAESM) in Atlanta, GA., the Founder and Executive Director, Rudy Carn, is the Co-Chair of the Budget (formerly Fundraising and Development Committee) for the BGRG.

NBGMAC

The National Black Gay Men's Advocacy Coalition is the BGRG's strongest advocacy partner and ally in advocacy for policies that positively impact the lives of Black Gay Men, including research policies and priorities at the local, state, and federal levels.

SECTION IV. CONFERENCE ACTIVITIES

2008 (January) National African American MSM Leadership Conference on HIV/AIDS

Building on previous work, the BGRG developed and sponsored a Black Gay Men's Research Institute at the 2008 National African American MSM Leadership Conference on HIV/AIDS that was held in January in Oakland, California. From the invaluable and timely funding support from the San Francisco AIDS Foundation, the State of New York, and the State of California, the BGRG organized and facilitated a highly active schedule of events at the leadership conference. The list of activities that we organized and facilitated is as follows:

- BGRG meeting with local HIV/AIDS prevention researchers, service providers and workers in conjunction with the 2008 National African American MSM Leadership Conference on HIV/AIDS (January)
- BGRG Institute
 - Introduction to the BGRG
 - Introduction to the Black Gay Men's Research Agenda
 - Interdisciplinary Research Methods
- Break Out Session: Exploring research needs and collaborations between CBOs and BGRG
- Plenary Session
- Skills Building Workshop: Introduction to Program Evaluation (see Section VI.)
- Participation in Town Hall meeting (Oakland, CA)
- BGRG Steering Committee Meeting with HPTN 061 Co-PIs (Note: this meeting solidified our ongoing collaboration with this project now called "*The BROTHERS Project.*")

2008 HIV Prevention Leadership Summit, Detroit, MI. (June)

- BGRG meeting with Empowerment Detroit (Jonathan Davis, Executive Director), a local HIV/AIDS prevention organization targeting young Black men who have sex with men.
 - Exploring research needs and possible collaborations with BGRG
- Participated in NBGMAC sponsored Town Hall Meeting during HPLS in Detroit MI
- Disseminated information about BGRG and the Black Gay Men's Research Agenda

2008 U.S. Conference on AIDS, Ft. Lauderdale, FL (September)

- Participated in NBGMAC sponsored community meeting

Other BGRG Activities

- *BGRG listserv*
 - BGRG has activated and maintains a regular listserv in which information is disseminated regarding research, program, employment, grant funding, and other scholarly information related to the lives of Black Gay Men or the professional advancement of Black Gay Research Group members and friends. Send all requests for posts to the BGRG listserv to info@bgrg-international.org
- Re-Launch of BGRG website: www.blackgayresearchgroup.org
- Consultation with Florida Department of Health on Finding Our Voices
 - The Finding Our Voices Intervention is a video based intervention designed to promote community mobilization for HIV prevention. It is currently being implemented by community based organizations in Florida. BGRG engaged in discussions with the Florida Department of Health Bureau of HIV AIDS on the possibilities for refinements and evaluation of the Finding Our Voices and advised them on the most promising directions for the intervention.
- Consultation with New York State Department of Health, AIDS Institute
 - BGRG Steering Committee engaged in consultative discussion with Office of HIV Prevention and Program Evaluation about directions and possibilities for understanding the inventory and nature of homegrown HIV prevention interventions and other risk protective assets of Black Gay Men in New York State.

SECTION V. INSTITUTES

Black Gay Men's Research Group Institute

In review, since the beginning of the AIDS epidemic, Black men who have sex with other men (MSM) have experienced increasing disproportionate rates of HIV infection as compared to MSM representing other racial/ethnic groups in the United States. As a strategy to address this health disparity, several members from the BGRG and the National Black Gay Men's Advocacy Coalition (NBGMAC) participated in a research summit in Charlotte, North Carolina in 2007.

One of the major outcomes of the research summit was the development of a National Black Gay Men's Research Agenda. Building on this previous work, the BGRG developed and

sponsored a Black Gay Men's Research Group Institute at the 2008 National African American MSM Leadership Conference on HIV/AIDS in Oakland, California. This Institute was a one-day, pre-conference program.

The purpose of this Institute was to discuss the National Black Gay Men's Research Agenda with conference participants. More specifically, the overall objectives of the Institute were as follows:

1. To provide an overview of the Black Gay Research Group. .
2. To examine the socio-historical, political, and cultural contexts of HIV-related health disparities for Black MSM.
3. To present the National Black Gay Men's Research Agenda and lead a discussion on how to undertake and utilize the research components of the agenda in academic, community based organization, and policy settings. More specifically, we explored how the BGRG and the National Black Gay Men's Research Agenda can serve as a catalyst to encourage and direct future research, policy, and program undertakings.
4. To discuss interdisciplinary approaches to research on HIV/AIDS and Black MSM.
5. To facilitate discussion on the next steps to be undertaken by the BGRG and its collaborators.
6. To promote dialogue about how research and community based organizations can operationalize research agenda recommendations in their respective settings.

SECTION VI. SKILLS BUILDING WORKSHOPS

Introduction to Program Evaluation

One way in which the BGRG helps to build research capacity in the Black Gay community is by offering annual skill's building workshops. Our inaugural workshop focused on foundational program evaluation, skills, terminology, and techniques.

The foundational workshop, titled "Introduction to Program Evaluation" was conducted by Sheldon D. Fields, Mitchell Wharton, and LaRon E. Nelson at the 2008 National African-American MSM Leadership Conference on HIV/AIDS, Oakland CA

The Introduction to Program Evaluation workshop was delivered in two components: 1) Understanding Evidence and 2) Program Evaluation Basics.

Understanding Evidence

LaRon E. Nelson, RN, FNP, PhD Candidate

This component of the workshop focused on raising participants' awareness on the different epistemologies involved in understanding and evaluating health programs in Black Gay communities as well as the methodological approaches that are associated

with various epistemologies. This component of the workshop was designed to equip participants to:

- Be able to identify the different types of evaluation methods used in HIV/AIDS prevention programs.
- Be able to match the evaluation methods with the primary question it is designed to answer.

Program Evaluation Basics

Sheldon D. Fields, PhD, RN, APRN, FNP & Mitchell J. Wharton, MSN, FNP, CNS, RN
This component of the workshop built on the antecedent conceptual portion by focusing on building participants skills in applying what they've learned about the various types of evidence, and methods used to assess the various types of knowledge. In this component, participants were guided through exercises designed to better equip them to:

- Be able to write evaluation objectives that are specific and measurable.
- Be able to identify the steps necessary for them (or their agency) to increase the capacity to evaluate their programs

Participant Feedback

Workshop participants verbally expressed their satisfaction with the content and delivery of the workshop. This is corroborated by NAESM's report of the 2008 National AA MSM Leadership Conference on HIV/AIDS. According to evaluation results for the workshop, 75% of participants indicated that they were "extremely satisfied" with the workshop and the remaining 25% indicating that they were satisfied. Immediately at the conclusion of the workshop, participants expressed interest in future workshops relating to program evaluation.

One major suggestion was for BGRG to provide an intermediate level program evaluation workshop for individuals for already have a grasp of program evaluation basics. In an effort to be responsive to the suggestions of the workshop participants, the BGRG plans to offer an intermediate level program evaluation workshop that branches out beyond traditional discussions of the topic.

SECTION VII. UPCOMING WORKSHOPS & INSTITUTES

"The Master's Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master's House'": Raising the Bar of Competence with Culturally Relevant Program Evaluation for Black MSM Communities

2009 National AA MSM Leadership Conference on HIV/AIDS

January 22, 2009

Renaissance Concourse Hotel, Atlanta, Georgia

Black Gay Research Group (BGRG) Institute

2009 National AA MSM Leadership Conference on HIV/AIDS

January 22, 2009

Renaissance Concourse Hotel, Atlanta, Georgia

Black Men in Nursing: Re-Learning, Re-Presenting, and Respecting Femininity

2009 Chi Eta Phi Sorority Incorporated, 57th Northeast U.S. Regional Conference

April 15, 2009

Hyatt Regency Hotel, Rochester, New York

SECTION VIII. BGRG IMPACTING RESEARCH ON BLACK GAY MEN

HIV Prevention Trials Network 061: The ***BROTHERS Project*** (*Broadening the Reach of Testing, Health Education, Resources, and Services*)

As biomedical research and HIV clinical trials have not found a cure or vaccine for HIV, researchers have minimal knowledge and understanding about the longer-term effectiveness of HIV antiretroviral therapies. Behavioral interventions have thus become an essential route to curtail the sexual transmission of HIV. Within this context, based on collaborative work that developed during the 2008 National African American MSM Leadership Conference on HIV/AIDS in Oakland, CA, the BGRG has assumed a prominent leadership role in the development and implementation of a National Institutes of Health (NIH) community-level HIV prevention intervention research investigation for Black MSM in the United States

HIV Prevention Trials Network (HPTN) 061: *Feasibility of a Community-Level, Multi-Component Intervention for Black MSM in Preparation for a Phase IIB Community-Level Randomized Trial to Test the Efficacy of the Intervention in Reducing HIV Incidence among Black MSM*. The objective of this large-scale research investigation is to examine the effectiveness of reducing HIV incidence rates in a community based sample of approximately 2,540 Black MSM through a multi-site (Atlanta, Boston, Los Angeles, New York, San Francisco, Washington DC) HIV prevention intervention that incorporates HIV/STI testing, identifies undiagnosed HIV/STI infections, connects Black MSM into peer-based health care networks, and examines socio-cultural, psychological, and substance use factors associated with HIV protective and risk behavior.

During the National African American Leadership Conference on HIV/AIDS in 2008, the Steering Committee of the BGRG met with Kenneth Mayer, M.D., one of the lead investigators of the HPTN 061, now known as “*The BROTHERS Project*.” The purpose of the meeting was to provide background information to the BGRG regarding the critical components of HPTN 061 and the specific role that researchers from the BGRG would have in the development of this research investigation. Based on this initial work, the BGRG developed a process for the BGRG’s Steering Committee in selecting two BGRG researchers to participate in the development phase of HPTN 061. The two researchers that were selected for this project were: (1) Leo Wilton, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Human Development and Africana Studies at the State University of New York at Binghamton and (2) Darrell P. Wheeler, Ph.D., MPH, Associate Professor of Social Work and Associate Dean for Research and Community Partnerships at the Hunter College School of Social Work.

Subsequently, Drs. Wilton and Wheeler have served in the capacity as members of the HPTN 061 Protocol Team that provides key leadership on the development and implementation of this research investigation. More specifically, Drs. Wilton and Wheeler have provided scholarly consultation in the development of the qualitative and quantitative components of the BROTHERS project research investigation, including the provision of culturally grounded expertise in this area. With respect to the qualitative component of the BROTHERS project, both Drs. Wilton and Wheeler have assumed leadership roles on the Qualitative Working Group that facilitates the development and implementation of focus groups and individual interviews that

will occur across each of the study's six sites. This ongoing work has involved the development of the focus group and individual interview protocols and a qualitative procedures manual.

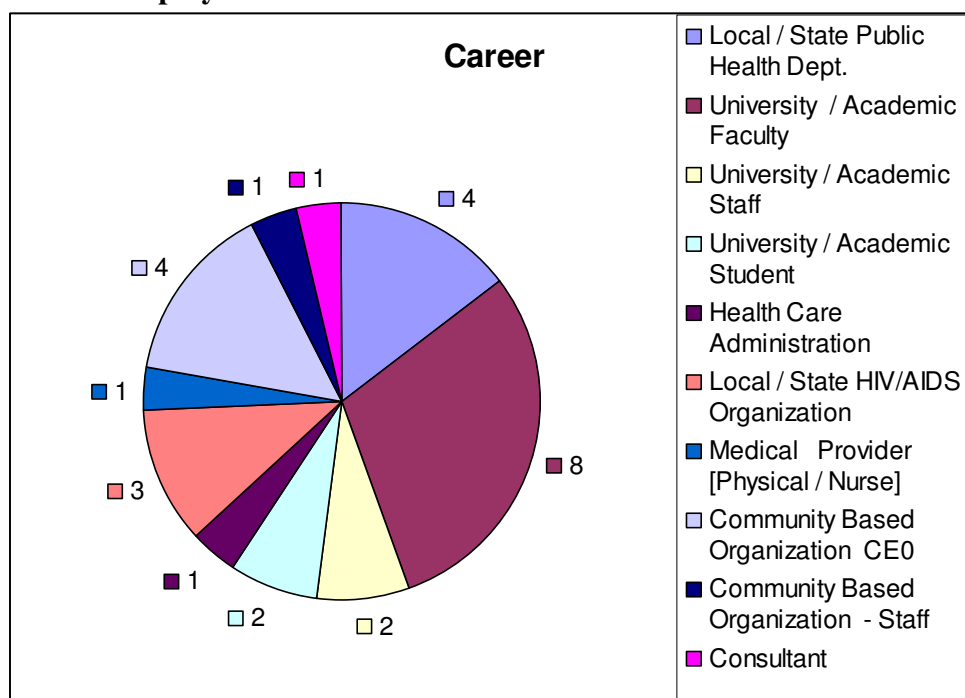
In addition, for the quantitative component of the research study, Drs. Wilton and Wheeler have worked on teams in the development of the quantitative survey instrument that will be used for the project. Much of this work has involved providing critical feedback in the selection, development, and use of the quantitative measures, particularly as related to culture-specific measures. Further, Drs. Wilton and Wheeler have participated in weekly conference calls as well as have undertaken other administrative responsibilities associated with the project. The collection of data for this study is expected to begin during the beginning of 2009. Drs. Wilton and Wheeler will be involved for the duration of this project.

SECTION IX. 2008 MEMBERSHIP REPORT

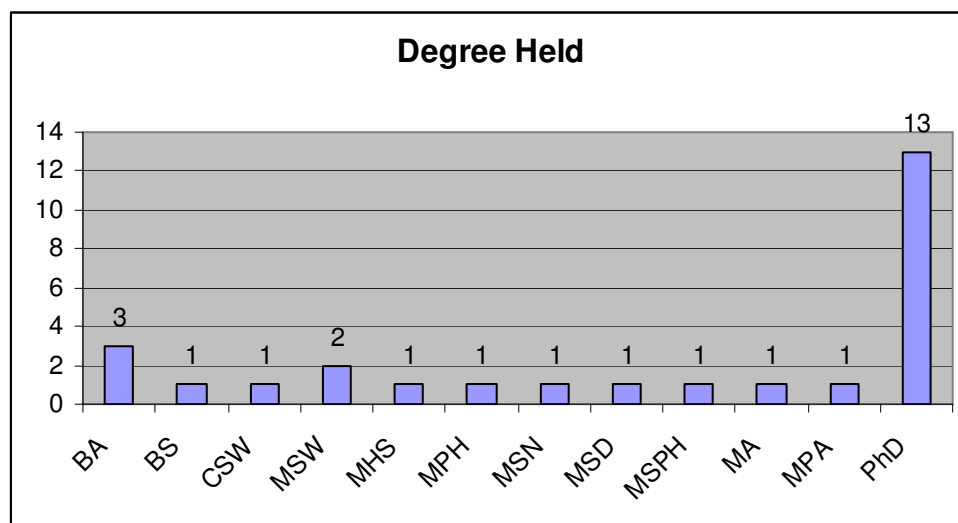
The strength of any organization can be seen in its membership. 2008 was a great year of growth and stabilization for the BGRG with a total of 27 members from across the United States. The BGRG also experience the spirit of interest with inquires from Canada and the United Kingdom regarding potential membership.

Many of the members have been associated with the BGRG since the Summits in 2003 and 2005 held in Brooklyn, New York during the Pride in the City celebration. To confirm membership in 2008, members were asked to submit their Curriculum Vitae to the Membership Chair. Potential members were voted into the BGRG by the Membership Committee: Gregory D. Victorianne, Membership Chair, and members Sheldon D. Fields, Ph.D., and Micah E. Lubensky, Ph.D., and LaRon E. Nelson. CVs are kept on file with the Membership Chair for confirmation of membership.

Membership by Professional Career / Academic Students



Membership of Academic Degree [Highest degree per member]



As part of the foundation building, the Membership Committee developed a structure and criteria for membership, and outlined duties/responsibilities for the Membership Co-Chairs. The documents were reviewed by the Steering Committee and will be discussed and voted on by the BGRG general body during the 2009 National African American MSM Leadership Conference on HIV/AIDS in Atlanta, GA January 22nd -25th.

2008 was also an extremely productive year for the BGRG as members were able to participate in monthly membership conference calls on a toll free 1-800-Chorus-Calls provided by the Membership Chair. The Chorus Call line also provided opportunities for members to conduct research activities and engage in the development of potential projects. Monthly Steering Committee calls also utilized the toll free number.

In 2009, members will be asked to submit their published articles for the BGRG website / database in addition to having their name listed with their area(s) of program, practice, and research concentration, for networking purposes. The web site will serve as a resource tool for its members and the general public who wish to inquire about the BGRG.

One of the goals of the membership committee in 2009 is to develop ways for the BGRG to be more effective in engaging prospective members, ensuring that they have a positive and enduring relationship and maximizing their involvement with the organization.

In conclusion, through membership, the collective experience and expertise will allow Black Gay Researchers to pave the way for today's advances and tomorrow's breakthroughs in research activities.



SECTION X. 2008 SELECTED PUBLISHED REFERENCE LIST

The articles listed are manuscripts published by Black MSM researchers for the year of 2008.

Bing EG, Bingham T, Millett GA. (2008) Research needed to more effectively combat HIV among African-American men who have sex with men. *Journal of the National Medical Association* 2008; 100(1):52-56.

Dowsett, G., Williams, H., Carballo-Diéguez, A., & Ventuneac, A. (2008). Taking it like a man: Masculinity and barebacking online. *Sexualities*, 11(1/2), 121-141.

Fields S, Malebranche D, Feist-Price S. (2008) "Childhood Sexual Abuse among Black men who have sex with men: Results from Three Qualitative Studies." *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology*, 14(4): 385-390.

Harawa NT, Williams JK, Ramamurthi HC, Manago C, Avina S, Jones M. (2008) Sexual behavior, sexual identity, and substance abuse among low-income bisexual and non-gay-identifying African American men who have sex with men. *Archives of Sexual Behavior*, 37(5): 748-762.

King W.D., Minor P., Ramirez-Kitchen C., Oré L.E., Victorienne, G.D, Shoptaw, S., Rust G. (2008) 'Racial, gender and geographic disparities in receipt of antiretroviral treatment among United States Medicaid enrollees in 1998. *Journal of Epidemiology & Community Health*. Sep 2008; 62:798-803.

King W.D., Larkins S, Hucks-Ortiz C., Gorbach P., Veniegas R., Shoptaw S., (2008) Factors Associated with HIV Viral Load in A Respondent Driven Sample in Los Angeles. *AIDS & Behavior Journal*.

Lauby JL, Millett GA, LaPollo AB, Bond L, Murrill CS, Marks G. (2008) Sexual risk behaviors of HIV-positive, HIV-negative, and serostatus-unknown black men who have sex with men and women. *Archives of Sexual Behavior*; 37:708-719.

Malebranche D. (2008) "Bisexually active Black men and HIV: Time to think deeper." *Archives of Sexual Medicine*, 37(5): 810-816.

Marks G, Millett GA, Bingham T, Bond L, Lauby J, Liau A, Murrill CS, Stueve A. (2008) Understanding differences in HIV sexual transmission among Latino and Black men who have sex with men: the Brothers y Hermanos Study [published online ahead of print]. *AIDS and Behavior*. doi: 10.1007/s10461-008-9380-6.

McGruder K., (2008) Black Sexuality in the U.S.: Presentations as Non-normative. *Journal of African American Studies* 1559-1646 (Print) 1936-4741 (Online) www.Springerlink.com

Millett, G.A., Ding, H., Lauby, J., Flores, Stueve, A., Bingham, T., Carballo-Diequez, A., Murrill, C., Liu, K., Wheeler, D.P., Liau, A., & Marks, G. (2008). Circumcision status and HIV Infection among Black and Latino men who have sex with men in three U.S. cities. *Journal of AIDS*. Dec 15; 46(5):643-50.

Millett GA, Flores SA, Marks G, Reed JB, Herbst JH. (2008) Circumcision status and risk of HIV and Sexually Transmitted Infections among men who have sex with men. *Journal of the American Medical Association* 2008; 300(14):1674-1684).

Nelson, L. E., & Morrison-Beedy, D. (2008). Sex partner type and condom use in African-American adolescent mothers: A literature review. *Journal of Child and Adolescent Psychiatric Nursing*, 21, 213-219.

Nelson, L. E., & Morrison-Beedy, D. (2008). Research team training: Moving beyond the job description. *Applied Nursing Research*, 21, 159-164.

Wheeler, D.P. & Mahoney, A.M. (2008). Caribbean Immigrants in the United States—Health and Health Care: The Need for a Social Agenda. *Health and Social Work*, 33(3), 238-240.

Wheeler, D.P., Lauby, J.L., Liu, K., Van Sluytman, L.G. & Murrill, C. (2008). A Comparative Analysis of Sexual Risk Characteristics of Black Men Who Have Sex with Men or with Men and Women. *Archives of Sexual Behavior*, 37(5), 697-707.

Wheeler, D.P. and Patterson, G. (2008) Prisoner reentry. *Health and Social Work*, 33(2), 145-147.

Williams, H. (2008). A bisex-queer critique of same-sex marriage advocacy. In M. Galupo (Ed.), *Bisexuality and Same-Sex Marriage* (175-180). Routledge: New York.

Williams JK, Wyatt GE, Liu H, Rivkin I, Ramamurthi HC, Li X. (2008) Risk reduction for HIV-positive African American and Latino men with histories of childhood sexual abuse. *Archives of Sexual Behavior*, 37(5): 763-772.

2008 CONFERENCE PAPERS & POSTER PRESENTATIONS

Bailey, Marlon M. (2008 November) “From Home to House: Toward a Theory of Black Queer Diaspora.” American Anthropological Association, San Francisco, CA.

Bailey, Marlon M. (2008 October) “HIV/AIDS and Black Queer Lives: Toward a Performance Praxis.” American Studies Association Annual Meeting, Albuquerque, NM.

Lubensky, M. E., Bradford, T., & Bland, W. (2008, August). Black Brothers Esteem’s Spiritual Health Initiative: Focusing on spiritual health to further HIV prevention and strengthen holistic health among African-American MSM (men who have sex with men). Poster session presented at the annual meeting of the International AIDS Society, Mexico City, Mexico.

* If you are aware of any published articles by African American MSM in which we did not include, please contact the Black Gay Research Group info@bgrg-international.org and we will document their accomplishment in the Black Gay Research Group Annual Report 2009.