

## Full-Length Article

**HIV Prevention and Hip Hop: What's the Spin?**Abbas Rattani<sup>1</sup>, Raafay H. Syed<sup>2</sup>, Jeremy Sugarman<sup>1,3,4</sup><sup>1</sup>Johns Hopkins Berman Institute of Bioethics, Baltimore, MD, USA<sup>2</sup>School of Medicine, Stanford University, Stanford, CA, USA<sup>3</sup>School of Medicine, Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, MD, USA<sup>4</sup>Bloomberg School of Public Health, Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, MD, USA**Abstract**

Hip hop is becoming a more familiar element of HIV prevention efforts. In this paper, we review prominent public health interventions regarding HIV that have incorporated hip hop and then describe a content analysis of hip hop lyrics that we conducted in order to examine how HIV/AIDS is portrayed in hip hop music in general. Our content analysis indicates that there is a wide range of representations of HIV/AIDS in hip hop lyrics. Hip hop provides positive and negative representations of HIV/AIDS, but tends to offer strong positive messaging with respect to HIV prevention. Familiarity with the content and nature of hip hop song lyrics may help improve future HIV prevention efforts.

**Keywords:** *Ethics, Health Communication, Hip Hop, HIV/AIDS, Prevention*multilingual abstract | [mmd.iammonline.com](http://mmd.iammonline.com)**Introduction**

Hip hop is a dominant element of youth culture in the United States [1-3]. It is a form of musical and cultural expression that originated in New York City during the late 1970s that has now come to include vernacular styles, behavioral norms, personal identity, and belief systems [3-6]. Hip hop music is composed of “rapping,” or poetic expression, over rhythmic beats [4]. Within hip hop culture, music is the primary medium through which narratives, information, and self-expression are conveyed and relayed [5]. Hip hop’s roots can be traced to early forms of African American musical expression that include jazz, blues, soul, funk, and poetry.

Hip hop serves as an important and influential means through which many young people construct and express their sexuality [7-16]. In a study of daily music listening habits of seventh to twelfth grade students, rap/hip hop music accounted for 65% of their music listening. The authors found that rap/hip hop “is the preferred music type among African American, Hispanic, and White youths by a wide margin, easily outdistancing any other genre within each of the three

groups” [17]. In addition, some have suggested that 70% of hip hop music is consumed by White suburban youth [18-19]. The hip hop enterprise is enormous, amounting to a multi-billion dollar industry [20].

Given its extensive reach, hip hop music is being employed in some HIV prevention efforts. For example, Dr. Zubin Damania’s series of hip hop videos on public health topics have nearly a million views. His song on safer sex practices, entitled “Pull and Pray,” garnered nearly 34,000 views and has been used as a teaching tool at student health clinics [21]. In addition, following the internet craze of the music video, “Gangnam Style,” the AIDS Healthcare Foundation engaged rapper Cassidy to create “Condom Style,” a hip hop song with a public health twist wherein Cassidy warns viewers about the dangers of not practicing safer sex [22]. The video received over 300,000 total views, with substantial media coverage by hip hop magazines and blogs.

These recent approaches build upon earlier efforts that have used hip hop to promote HIV prevention. For instance, in 1993, the rap duo, Salt-N-Pepa, recorded a public service announcement entitled “PSA We Talk” that was included as part of their album, *Very Necessary*, as a means of increasing awareness about HIV/AIDS [23]. In 2011, the duo revisited the topic and released another public service announcement in collaboration with Life Beat, a nonprofit organization that uses the music industry to enhance awareness about HIV/AIDS prevention [24]. Rapper B.O.B. also participated in the filming of a safer sex public service announcement through Life Beat.

In 2004, rapper Common teamed with the Kaiser Family Foundation and Viacom Inc. to release a set of public service announcements that encouraged young individuals to get tested for HIV in a campaign called “Knowing is Beautiful”

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International Association for Music &amp; Medicine (IAMM).

[25,26]. In addition, “Rap It Up” (now “Greater Than Aids” [LINK]) is a media campaign about HIV/AIDS that is targeted to African Americans. It began in 1998, led by Black Entertainment Television (BET) and the Kaiser Family Foundation [27]. The campaign includes targeted public service announcements; long-form documentary and entertainment programming; informational guides; web resources; and hotline and SMS services. Several community events are also held around the country.

Taking a different strategy, the Houston Department of Health and Human Services Bureau of HIV/STD and Viral Hepatitis Prevention and AIDS Foundation Houston annually offer free tickets to a hip hop concert through their “Hip Hop for HIV Awareness Campaign” to encourage HIV testing. In 2010, 15,460 young adults were tested for HIV over 22 days, yielding 113 positive results [28]. Using a similar approach, in March 2012, the AIDS Foundation of Chicago’s AmeriCorps team organized a hip hop concert in order to raise funds for the development of Bettendorf Place, a residential facility created by the Alexian Brothers AIDS Ministry in order to provide safe and supportive housing for HIV-infected residents of Chicago’s South Side [29].

Further in 2008, Common teamed with the Kaiser Family Foundation and MTV to hold a lyrical contest to encourage young individuals to get tested for HIV [30].

Prominent hip hop artists have also collaborated with several organizations to promote HIV/AIDS awareness. Hip hop icons Wyclef Jean and Rihanna, for example, have partnered by clothing manufacturers, Levi’s and H&M respectively, in order to promote HIV awareness [31,32]. Mary J. Blige, Lil’ Kim, Nicki Minaj, and Eve teamed up with the MAC AIDS Foundation to provide support for those with HIV/AIDS in impoverished regions around the world [33]. The campaign, “Dialogues: Education and Treatment for a Well Planned Future,” created by Agouron Pharmaceuticals, the Association of Nurses in AIDS Care, the American Public Health Association, and the National Association of AIDS Education and Training Centers, recruited members of the group TLC to serve as spokeswomen for their initiative to provide HIV-positive individuals with information on how to be active in their care [34]. Artists Against AIDS Worldwide, an organization created to address the AIDS epidemic globally, produced a compilation album, the sales of which benefited many AIDS programs. The collaborators included popular hip hop artists such as Alicia Keys, Destiny’s Child, Ja Rule, Jermaine Dupri, Lil’ Kim, Mary J. Blige, Missy Elliott, Nas, Nelly, The Neptunes, Questlove, Sean “P. Diddy” Combs, and Wyclef Jean [35].

In South Africa, local radio has been used to target younger populations to increase HIV/AIDS awareness [36]. Important information is conveyed strategically in the form of entertainment employing the entertainment-education model of teaching [36]. Similarly in the US, “Who F\*\*kin’ Wit Us?,” was a campaign launched by Sound Bar Recordings (a music label dedicated to creating music and awareness projects that “spark thought and change”) and sponsored by the New York

Department of Health, to raise HIV awareness through hip hop music [37].

While such efforts are impressive, the nature of routine messaging regarding HIV prevention in hip hop music is unclear. Knowledge of the nature of such messaging could arm public health workers, policymakers, and community-based organizations with a more comprehensive understanding of the socio-cultural factors that may influence risk behaviors associated with acquiring HIV. Such knowledge could also serve as a useful resource for public health campaigns that might benefit from incorporating hip hop music into their interventions. In accordance with studies in health communication [38-41], hip hop should be a trusted source as long as the messages conveyed are relevant and relatable to its audience [42-48]. Thus, understanding how public health topics are communicated through hip hop may help improve health communication strategies aimed at changing health practices or risk behaviors pertaining to HIV.

## Methods

We conducted a content analysis of hip hop music in order to understand the nature of messages related to HIV in the genre. A directed analytic approach was employed wherein the topics of HIV and public health messaging guided our search for terms related to these topics [49,50]. Furthermore, the terms or codes used to describe the lyrics we identified were generated inductively during the review of lyrics. We defined a “lyric” as a stanza of a song or a group of different stanzas that relate to a specific theme. Only song lyrics by American and Canadian artists that were available before 2010 were included. We catalogued lyrics found in the following sources: RapArtists.com database [51], Google search engine, and Bosch (2006) [36]. We did not include any lyrics from the songs mentioned above because they were outside of the search parameters when lyric retrieval for this content analysis was conducted.

First, song lyrics were identified using RapArtists.com, an online database that chronicles hip hop song lyrics from the early 1980s to early 2008. More recent databases, such as the HIV/AIDS Music Project, World HIV/AIDS Music Project (WHAM Project), and Hip Hop Word Count, were not used in this study [52-54]. The hip hop genre section of the HIV/AIDS Music Project is nascent and underdeveloped, and many songs are uncategorized. The WHAM Project was not available during the design of this study. The Hip Hop Word Count database is not yet available for public use. Under the section “Rap Lyrics,” the keywords “AIDS,” “HIV,” “A.I.D.S.,” and “H.I.V.” were searched individually. This initial search resulted in 158 song lyrics.

Next, in order to identify relevant lyrics from 2008 to 2010, a search was conducted in Google. Specifically, for artists who had more than one song about HIV/AIDS in the RapArtists.com database (e.g., Common, Kanye West, Nas), Google was searched for more songs dated or beginning in 2008 that made explicit reference to HIV or AIDS. Using

logical operators, the following was entered: “[Artist Name] + lyrics + HIV” and “[Artist Name] + lyrics + AIDS.” Since search results in Google are displayed based on relevance, only the first page of listings was reviewed. This search resulted in identifying 1 additional song lyric.

Finally, the song “AIDS is Gold, HIV is Platinum”, referenced in Bosch’s discussion of using entertainment-education strategies to improve HIV/AIDS awareness (2006) but not captured in RapArtists.com, was used to identify additional lyrics. This song was performed by Canibus on World AIDS Day on December 1, 2001. The artists from the compilation album on which the song, “AIDS is Gold, HIV is Platinum,” later appeared was used in a Google search along with the aforementioned logical operators. This resulted in the identification of 32 additional song lyrics by American or Canadian artists.

We excluded song lyrics from RapArtist.com that were either observational commentary (n=60), incoherent (n=23), or analogies (n=18). These are defined as follows. *Observational Commentary*: Lyrics that describe a particular situation or comment on the current state of affairs with no clear reference to prevention, testing, or awareness (e.g., “Crack babies in the hood with AIDS infected mothers”). *Incoherent*: The words “HIV” and “AIDS” are used simply as a means of maintaining rhyme or flow, but their actual meaning is incoherent or used as non-sequiturs (e.g., “Yo 6-6-6 watch your back don't get caught in the rapture yo AIDS, Moses the plaque watch your back.”). *Analogies*: Lyrics in which the term “HIV” or “AIDS” is used purely as a means of displaying the artist’s skill. These lyrics are typically expressed as a comedic punch line or a witty remark that is self-flattery in nature (e.g., “My lyrics hit like HIV”).

Selected lyrics were coded by two of the authors (AR, RS) on the basis of whether they included messages about HIV/AIDS awareness, testing/treatment, or prevention. The initial inter-coder reliability rendered 64.8% agreement. Both coders then met to resolve areas of disagreement and the definitions of particular codes. Following recoding, inter-coder reliability was 85.2% agreement. Remaining lyric disagreements were discussed and a consensus categorization was reached before lyrics were catalogued into tables.

Lyrics were then reviewed to identify any references to our three primary domains of concern: HIV/AIDS prevention, testing/treatment, or awareness. Ultimately, this resulted in 104 available lyrics for coding and analysis. Definitions of these domains were agreed upon through author discussion after an initial review of lyrics. Following reviews of inter-rater agreement, the definitions of all codes were refined until consensus was reached. For the purpose of this analysis, *awareness* was defined as any explicit or implicit attempt to provide a factual assessment of, or express knowledge about, the HIV/AIDS epidemic, excluding references to factors associated with the contraction or spread of HIV/AIDS and references to testing for or treatment of HIV/AIDS. Song lyrics pertaining to HIV/AIDS awareness were further coded as to whether they were consistent with predominant or

alternative perceptions. *Predominant perceptions* were defined as statements congruent with medical or public health data on HIV/AIDS. In contrast, *alternative perceptions* were defined as statements in consonance with conspiracy theories related to HIV/AIDS or statements that are not supported by medical or public health data. Inter-coder reliability in this domain was 97.1%.

Song lyrics pertaining to testing/treatment were categorized and coded according to whether they were positive or negative representations. *Positive representations* were defined as statements that explicitly or implicitly encouraged testing for HIV/AIDS, or expressed statements concerning treatments that are in agreement with accepted medical or public health data on HIV/AIDS. *Negative representations* were defined as statements that explicitly or implicitly discouraged testing for HIV/AIDS, or expressed statements concerning treatments that are not in agreement with accepted medical or public health data on HIV/AIDS. Inter-coder reliability in this domain was 92.3%. Final codes were assigned based upon agreement of the coders.

Similarly, song lyrics pertaining to prevention were coded and categorized according to whether they were positive or negative representations. *Positive representations* were defined as statements that explicitly or implicitly encouraged protection from, or prevention of HIV/AIDS, or expressed statements concerning the contraction or spread of HIV/AIDS that are in agreement with accepted medical or public health data on HIV/AIDS. *Negative representations* were defined as statements that explicitly or implicitly discouraged protection from, or prevention of, HIV/AIDS or expressed statements concerning the contraction or spread of HIV/AIDS that are not in agreement with accepted medical or public health data on HIV/AIDS.

Positive representations of HIV/AIDS prevention were further coded for references to condom use, educational/cautionary advice, multiple partners, drug/needle use, serosorting, blood transfusions, and alternatives. There were references to multiple categories within one lyric and an initial test of intercoder reliability for this category was 60.3% agreement. Following a meeting of the coders to resolve disagreements, the lyrics were re-coded with an inter-coder reliability of 82.4%. Final codes were assigned based upon agreement of the coders.

Data were organized chronologically by year, alphabetically by artist and then by song title. Using UrbanDictionary.com [55], an online, crowd-sourced slang and vernacular dictionary, a glossary was compiled to provide definitions for certain slang terms or phrases (Table 1).

Term/Phrase	Definition
Bruh	A way of greeting a male friend or acquaintance; short for “brother”
Bunny	Woman; sometimes used as a term of endearment
Crack head	One who does excessive amounts of crack
Dick	Penis
Dicked up	To have multiple sexual partners
Diesel	Heroin
Dope Fiend	Heroin or crack addict
Glove	Condom; to wear a condom
Honey	Woman; sometimes used as a term of endearment
J-Hat	Condom; to wear a condom
Jimmy	Condom; to wear a condom
Jimmy Hat	Condom; to wear a condom
Jockin'	To obsess over, woo, imitate, or be sought after
Junky	Heroin addict
Laid	To have sex
Lays	To have sex
Muff	To have sex
Nigga	Emic term of association primarily used within the African American community
Pussy	Vagina
Quick job	Performance of a sexual act
Raw	Sex without a condom
Rubber	Condom; to wear a condom
Shawty	Woman; sometimes used as a term of endearment
Shield	Condom; to wear a condom
Slobbin'	The act of fellatio
Stick	To have sex
Strap your shit up	Condom; to wear a condom

**Table 1.** Glossary of Terms/Phrases Used in Song Lyrics Pertaining to HIV/AIDS.

**Results**

There is a wide range of representations of HIV/AIDS in the sample of hip hop lyrics we examined. However, we are obviously not able to report on the frequency with which listeners are exposed to them. Some of these lyrics mirror powerful negative community views related to HIV/AIDS, while others offer positive messages.

Table 2 outlines depictions of HIV/AIDS awareness in hip hop lyrics. These include predominant perceptions (n= 12) and alternative perceptions (n= 21) such as the belief that HIV/AIDS is a man-made disease, or HIV/AIDS is a genetically engineered virus to control the population.

However, despite the conspiratorial views towards HIV/AIDS in hip hop lyrics, nearly twice as many lyrics were found providing a strong and overwhelmingly positive collection of messages related to HIV/AIDS prevention. Many lyrics (n= 51) encourage risk reduction as a means of decreasing HIV transmission. Table 3 lists the various lyrics that encourages preventative measures and are grouped according to the prevalence of messages related to condoms (n=13), educational/cautionary advice (n=14), multiple partners (n=5), drug/needle use (n=7), serosorting (n=8), alternatives (n=2), and blood transfusions (n=2). It also includes a few (n=7) negative representations of HIV/AIDS prevention.

Table 4 captures lyrics related to HIV testing/treatment. These include three lyrics that were identified as explicitly encouraging the treatment or testing of HIV as well as some (n=10) instances of explicit disregard for HIV testing and conspiratorial beliefs that a cure for AIDS is being withheld.

**Discussion**

We found that hip hop music provides positive and negative representations of HIV/AIDS in general, but tends to offer strong positive messaging with respect to HIV prevention. The conspiracy theories related to HIV/AIDS found in hip hop lyrics have been described in previous studies. For example, in a random sample of 500 African Americans between the ages of 15-44 residing in the contiguous U.S., it was found that 26% believed that “AIDS is a man-made disease created in a U.S. government lab;” 56% thought that “There is a cure for AIDS but it is being withheld from the poor,” and 58% believed that “People who take the new medicines for HIV are human guinea pigs for the government” [56]. The mistrust of public health authorities reflected in some of these conspiracy theories can be understood given the historical mistreatment of African American populations by the researchers. For example, in the U.S. Public Health Service’s Study of Untreated Syphilis in the Negro Male (commonly referred to as the “Tuskegee Syphilis Study”), African American men were denied treatment for syphilis after it had been shown that penicillin was an effective treatment. According to Thomas and Quinn’s (1991) analysis, the study “has contributed to Blacks’ belief that genocide is possible and that public health authorities cannot be trusted” [57]. Some of these views are also better understood in the broader context of slavery, racism, and health disparities in the United States [58-59].

Within hip hop culture, the issue of HIV/AIDS prevention is clearly important. Hip hop lyrics include information about a range of related topics including specific modalities (e.g., condoms). Although hip hop has been used in some HIV prevention efforts, clinicians, policymakers, researchers and others involved with HIV prevention efforts should be aware of these messages in order to enhance HIV prevention initiatives through educational and behavioral interventions as well as further collaborations with key hip hop figureheads.

**Predominant**

<i>Artist</i>	<i>Song</i>	<i>Album</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>Lyrics</i>
2 Live Crew	Who's Fucking Who	Sports Weekend: As Nasty as They Wanna Be, Pt. 2	1991	Living in a world where no one has trust A lack of understanding, filled with lust Where diseases are common, inflicting much pain Gonorrhea and AIDS, too many to name Sex is alive in both young and old
Boogie Down Productions	Sex and Violence	Sex and Violence	1992	So AIDS now becomes the epidemic
Kool G Rap	Truly Yours	Killer Kuts	1994	A sex disease was as common as TB; but gays today get VD in 3-D; and that is called AIDS in case you didn't know
Tupac	The Good Die Young	Still I Rise	1999	We all ignorant to AIDS, 'till it happens to you
Bone Thugs-N-Harmony	Change the World	BTNHResurrection	2000	With the AIDS epidemic, we ain't cool no more;
M-1 (Dead Prez)	Shuffering And Shmilng ft. Dead Prez and Talib Kweli	Red Hot + Riot: The Music and Spirit of Fela Kuti	2002	AIDS is killin'; Africans, Africans, Africans
Talib Kweli	The Proud	Quality	2002	And put Islamic terrorist bombing, on the front page; it's like saying only gays get AIDS, propaganda
The Game	Compton	Doctor's Advocate	2006	I'm sick, you can't get rid of me, I'm HIV
Common	Strange Fruit	Finding Forever	2007	AIDS and poverty killing our young
Common	Misunderstood	Finding Forever	2007	People don't see how AIDS is affectin' 'em
Virtuoso	Military Intelligence ft. Virtuoso and Akrobatik	World War II: Evolution of the Torturer	2004	For every dollar on weapons, we spend a penny on AIDS
Canibus	AIDS is Gold, HIV is Platinum	Immortal Technique & Friends - Warrior Music Vol. 2	2008	AIDS is gold and HIV was platinum Sit down, ask them where you get your facts from, Five hundred thousand niggas in the hood with it, And a million more niggas is gettin' ready to get it [...] H-I-V will progress to A-I-D-S, And transform your warm blooded bones to dry flesh, By stressing the immune system, [...] Break ya body down in steps, breath for breath, In the hospital with less than a dozen T-cells left [...] I went from "Killing Them Softly" to killing them harshly, Minorities from twenty to forty can't afford to ignore me, They do my dirty work for me – goin' to [...] Forty percent of the AIDS patients is Afro-Americans, And we only twelve percent of the population, That statement is a fact, Latinos and blacks face it, It came straight from the World Health Organization, Its the iron fist, scientist, slash rhyme-chiatrist, Here to diagnose that we dyin' quick [...]

**Table 2. Hip Hop Song Lyrics Referring to HIV/AIDS Awareness coded as either “predominant” or “alternative” perceptions; Organized Chronologically by Year then in Alphabetical Order by Artist.**

**Alternative**

<i>Artist</i>	<i>Song</i>	<i>Album</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>Lyrics</i>
Boogie Down Productions	Jimmy	By All Means Necessary	1988	Cos now in winter AIDS attacks
Gang Starr	Conspiracy	Daily Operation	1992	That's why corrupt governments kill innocent people; with chemical warfare they created crack and AIDS
Ganksta N-I-P	Psychic Thoughts	Psychic Thoughts	1993	Over half the population on earth, they done caught AIDS
Wise Intelligent (Poor Righteous Teachers)	We Dat Nice	The New World Order	1996	The globe holders, the population controllers, disease makers aka AIDS creators
Boogiemonsters	Bodya	God Sound	1997	And if AIDS ain't a man-made disease, my name is Jill
Vinnie Paz (Jedi Mind Tricks)	Books of Blood: The Coming of Tan Ft. Jedi Mind Tricks and El EloH	The Psycho-Social, Chemical, Biological & Electro-Magnetic Manipulation of Human Consciousness	2002	Development of AIDS's was funded in 1969
Big Pun	Parental Discretion	Capital Punishment	1998	Couldn't fight us, made a virus, gave us AIDS
Kane and Abel	Only God Knows	Am I My Brother's Keeper	1998	The government designed a system, keep 'em mentally enslaved; control the population, outbreak, and AIDS
Down Low	HIV	Third Dimension	1998	In the 20th century they invented me
Outlawz	Our Life	Novakane	2001	To see freedom all over again; man...one love to my Africans; they try to kill us with AIDS
Immortal Technique	Point of No Return	Revolutionary Vol. 2	2003	Genetic engineered sickness spread amongst me
Hell Razah	High Science	Freedom of Speech	2004	Of this new age of AIDS, that was government made
Immortal Technique	Angels of Death ft. Outerspace, Vinnie Paz, Immortal Technique	Blood and Ashes	2004	That genetically engineered HIV; controlling the population according to mathematics
Kanye West	Heard 'em Say	Late Registration	2005	And I know that the governments administer AIDS; so I guess we just pray like the minister say
Ill Bill	Heavy Metal Kings ft. Jedi Mind Tricks and Ill Bill	Servants in Heaven, Kings in Hell	2006	Roll with the doctors that produce AIDS
Akrobatik	Military Intelligence ft. Virtuoso and Akrobatik	World War II: Evolution of the Torturer	2004	Fuck research; cause if you ask me Virtch we already got the cure; but turned it down cause it works better on the poor
Diabolic	Truth Pt. 1	The Foul Play Mixtape	2007	Governments playing a role; they invented AIDS for population control
Canibus	AIDS is Gold, HIV is Platinum	Immortal Technique & Friends - Warrior Music Vol. 2	2008	Yo yo, I just appeared outta nowhere, 1980 was the year; engineered as a biological weapon of warfare
Taboo	Walk With Me ft. Diabolic, Taboo, Coal	Immortal Technique & Friends - Warrior Music Vol. 2	2008	Strong as stone AIDS was made in the Club of Rome

*Table 2 (continued). Hip Hop Song Lyrics Referring to HIV/AIDS Awareness coded as either “predominant” or “alternative” perceptions; Organized Chronologically by Year then in Alphabetical Order by Artist.*

<b>Alternative</b>				
<i>Artist</i>	<i>Song</i>	<i>Album</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>Lyrics</i>
Wise Intelligent (Poor Righteous Teachers)	Globe Holderz	Blessed Be the Poor	2007	In 1950 the AIDS virus was fed to nearly 300000 black youth in Africa in the form of oral polio vaccine by Dr. Hilary Koprowski who is currently the Director of Bio Virology at Thomas Jefferson University in Philadelphia. Today, a child dies every minute of HIV/AIDS in sub-Saharan Africa and in the US African Americans represent 49% of all new AIDS cases...the AIDS makers
Kanye West	Gorgeous	My Beautiful Dark Twisted Fantasy	2010	I treat the cash the way the government treats AIDS; I won't be satisfied until all my niggas get it, get it?

*Table 2 (continued). Hip Hop Song Lyrics Referring to HIV/AIDS Awareness coded as either “predominant” or “alternative” perceptions; Organized Chronologically by Year then in Alphabetical Order by Artist.*

<b>Positive References to HIV/AIDS Prevention</b>				
<i>Artist</i>	<i>Song</i>	<i>Album</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>Lyrics</i>
<b>Condom Usage</b>				
Boogie Down Productions 2 Live Crew	Jimmy Who's Fucking Who	By All Means Necessary Sports Weekend: As Nasty as They Wanna Be, Pt. 2	1988 1991	So run out and get your Jimmy Hats; it costs so little for a pack of three The surgeon general says wear a condom [...], There may be a cycle that we failed to mention But people are fuckin' without protection [...] Use protection for others, if not yourself [...] So please choose a rubber before you choose your lover, [...] Stay safe, always use a condom, You know what I'm sayin', and everything'll be straight
Salt N Pepa	Let's Talk about AIDS	Promotional Radio Release, B-Side Single of "Let's Talk About Sex" from Blacks' Magic	1991	Protect yourself or don't have sex anymore... let's practice safe sex...You know what else will stop the spread of AIDS? If everybody stop cheating and messing around and just stay with one person; and wear condoms.
Big Daddy Kane	Give It To Me	Looks Like a Job for...	1993	In other words, the J-hat's on the head; cause I'm too sexy for AIDS like Right Said Fred
The Notorious B.I.G.	The What	Ready to Die	1994	I used to get feels on a bitch; now I throw shields on the dick; to stop me from that HIV shit
Jay Z	Bring It On	Reasonable Doubt	1996	Front the roll we roll back like rubbers motherfucker, for real; with no trace of AIDS
Down Low	HIV	Third Dimension	1998	When you don't protect yourself he strikes you; do you know who he is? It's the HIV [...] Protect yourself or get you a partner that's true [...] Life is born from unprotected sex.
Lil Wayne	Kisha	The Block Is Hot	1999	Should I use a rubber cause I heard she was a freak but; they say she keep it cleaned up, but I don't want HIV bruh
Tech N9ne	Mitchell Blade	The Calm before the Storm	1999	In a minute, I'ma get up in it, with a jimmy to avoid that AIDS epidemic
Nas	What Goes Around	Stillmatic	2001	He never used a condom, give him head he got ya; met the wrong bitch and now he dead from the monster AIDS

*Table 3: Hip Hop Song Lyrics Referring to HIV/AIDS Prevention; Organized Chronologically by Year, then alphabetically by Artist, then Alphabetically by Song Name. Positive References Categorized by Type of Prevention Messaging and Organized by Prevalence.*

**Positive References to HIV/AIDS Prevention**

<i>Artist</i>	<i>Song</i>	<i>Album</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>Lyrics</i>
<b>Condom Usage</b>				
Busta Rhymes	Take It Off Part 2	It Ain't Safe No More	2002	Cause I still believe you could catch AIDS from tongue kissing a bitch; so remember always strap your shit up
Fabulous	In My Hood	Real Talk	2004	But if you stick without a condom, it gets you AIDS
Canibus	AIDS is Gold, HIV is Platinum	Immortal Technique & Friends - Warrior Music Vol. 2	2008	To all the kids, thirteen to twenty-three tryin' Sex, unsafe sex, you niggas need to use latex
<b>Educational/Cautionary Advice</b>				
2 Live Crew	Who's Fucking Who	Sports Weekend: As Nasty as They Wanna Be, Pt. 2	1991	The surgeon general says wear a condom But you can catch AIDS nowadays from slobbin', Gynecology, and urology Take extreme measure for sexual pleasure If I'm positive, too late for an apology Living in a world where no one has trust A lack of understanding, filled with lust Where diseases are common, inflicting much pain Gonorrhea and AIDS, too many to name Sex is alive in both young and old But people are fuckin' without protection But a lack of education leaves us in the cold There may be a cycle that we failed to mention
Salt N Pepa	Let's Talk about AIDS	Promotional Radio Release, B-Side Single of "Let's Talk About Sex" from Blacks' Magic	1991	Now, you don't get AIDS from kisses, touches, mosquito bites, or huggin'; toilet seats, telephones, stop buggin'; you get it for sex or a dirty drug needle; anal or oral now, people; women can give it to men and men mostly to women...mothers might give it to their babies through the womb; or through birth, don't be an ass and assume
A.G.	Runaway Slave ft. Showbiz and A.G.	Runaway Slave	1992	My man got AIDS, he was hit hard; to get laid, he paid a crack head for a five dollar quick job
Grand Puba	Ya Know How It Goes	Reel to Reel	1992	Now I be careful on the lays because the AIDS are nowadays
Salt-N-Pepa	Big Shot	Very Necessary	1993	I seen a lot of women fall and gettin' fast money; cuz either AIDS or jail will get that ass, honey; I needed more to explore so I tried rap
Common	Watermelon	Resurrection	1994	My style is similar to AIDS; you can fuck with it now; but catch you later
Grand Puba	Don't Waste My Time	2000	1995	I make sho' I can't catch that old HIV
Chuck D	LSD	There's a Poison Goin' On	1999	Threat of the AIDS got the bitches afraid
MC Shan	Jimmy Hat ft. Snow and MC Shan	Cooler Conditions	1999	You don't wanna mess around; and catch the HIV
Tupac	The Good Die Young	Still I Rise	1999	We all ignorant to AIDS, 'till it happens to you
Nas	I Can	God's Son	2002	Careful, 'fore you meet a man with HIV

*Table 3 (continued). Hip Hop Song Lyrics Referring to HIV/AIDS Prevention; Organized Chronologically by Year, then alphabetically by Artist, then Alphabetically by Song Name. Positive References Categorized by Type of Prevention Messaging and Organized by Prevalence.*

**Positive References to HIV/AIDS Prevention**

<i>Artist</i>	<i>Song</i>	<i>Album</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>Lyrics</i>
<b>Educational/Cautionary Advice</b>				
Cassidy	Make U Scream ft. Cassidy and Snoop Dogg	Split Personality	2004	But man all them damn AIDS commercials got me kinda scared
Mobb Deep	Baby Baby	The Infamous Archives	2007	But y'all niggas so thirsty 'til that Virus bite you on your ass is dirt; I seen people die of AIDS my Pops is one of them
Canibus	AIDS is Gold, HIV is Platinum	Immortal Technique & Friends - Warrior Music Vol. 2	2008	Ready and willing, a couple of minutes of a good feeling is what'll kill them, Break ya body down in steps, breath for breath, In the hospital with less than a dozen T-cells left [...] I went from "Killing Them Softly" to killing them harshly, Minorities from twenty to forty can't afford to ignore me, They do my dirty work for me – goin' to, Through the semen and blood, needles and drugs, Choose which one of the two demons in evil you trust
<b>Multiple Partners</b>				
Salt N Pepa	Let's Talk about AIDS	Promotional Radio Release, B-Side Single of "Let's Talk About Sex" from Blacks' Magic	1991	Protect yourself or don't have sex anymore [...] There's no debate, conversate with your mate...let's practice safe sex [...] You know what else will stop the spread of AIDS? If everybody stop cheating and messing around and just stay with one person; and wear condoms...Now, you don't get AIDS from kisses, touches, mosquito bites, or huggin'; toilet seats, telephones, stop buggin'; you get it for sex or a dirty drug needle; anal or oral now, people; women can give it to men and men mostly to women...mothers might give it to their babies through the womb; or through birth, don't be an ass and assume
Ja Rule	Blood in My Eye ft. Ja Rule and Hussein Fatal	Blood in My Eye	2003	And I'm hearin' you letting yo' health slide these days; and yo lady's dicked up, and you contracted to AIDS
Nas	Getting Married	Street's Disciple	2004	Tired of hoppin' from honey to honey; HIV spreadin', everybody bump the same bunnies
Pretty Ugly	Josephine ft. Hi- Tek, the Willie Cottrell Band, Ghostface Killah & Pretty Ugly	Hi-Teknology 2	2006	Now I'm seen, but I caught AIDS when I was fucking with them
Canibus	AIDS is Gold, HIV is Platinum	Immortal Technique & Friends - Warrior Music Vol. 2	2008	Promiscuous men and women trying to avoid getting the micro-organism in them from running up in it raw [...] raunchy ass parties where they be havin' orgies to transport me

*Table 3 (continued). Hip Hop Song Lyrics Referring to HIV/AIDS Prevention; Organized Chronologically by Year, then alphabetically by Artist, then Alphabetically by Song Name. Positive References Categorized by Type of Prevention Messaging and Organized by Prevalence.*

**Positive References to HIV/AIDS Prevention**

<i>Artist</i>	<i>Song</i>	<i>Album</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>Lyrics</i>
<b>Drug Use/Needles</b>				
2 Live Crew	Who's Fucking Who	Sports Weekend: As Nasty as They Wanna Be, Pt. 2	1991	Junkies use the intravenous Then fuck each other? I can't see this Sex and drugs, you know they don't mix
Salt N Pepa	Let's Talk about AIDS	Promotional Radio Release, B-Side Single of "Let's Talk About Sex" from Blacks' Magic	1991	Now, you don't get AIDS from kisses, touches, mosquito bites, or huggin'; toilet seats, telephones, stop buggin'; you get it for sex or a dirty drug needle; anal or oral now, people; women can give it to men and men mostly to women...mothers might give it to their babies through the womb; or through birth, don't be an ass and assume
Down Low E-40	HIV Seasoned	Third Dimension Charlie Hustle: The Blueprint of a Self-Made Millionaire	1998 1999	Life is born sharing needles with the next My cousin shoots the needle, she be gone for days; she on that diesel, she gone end up with AIDS
Shyheim	ManChild	Manchild	1999	My aunt died from AIDS, I watched her deteriorate; she told me fuckin' with drugs, was her biggest mistake
Fat Joe	Murder Rap	Jealous Ones Still Envy (J.O.S.E.)	2001	I was the cause of dope fiends catchin' AIDS infections
Canibus	AIDS is Gold, HIV is Platinum	Immortal Technique & Friends - Warrior Music Vol. 2	2008	Through the semen and blood, needles and drugs; choose which one of the two demons in evil you trust
<b>Serosorting</b>				
2 Live Crew	Who's Fucking Who	Sports Weekend: As Nasty as They Wanna Be, Pt. 2	1991	Use protection for others, if not yourself 'cause people are fuckin', and this is true What you don't know is who's fuckin' who [...] So please choose a rubber before you choose your lover
Salt N Pepa	Let's Talk about AIDS	Promotional Radio Release, B-Side Single of "Let's Talk About Sex" from Blacks' Magic	1991	There's no debate, conversate with your mate [...] If everybody stop cheating and messing around and just stay with one person; and wear condoms [...] Now, you don't get AIDS from kisses, touches, mosquito bites, or huggin'; toilet seats, telephones, stop buggin'; you get it for sex or a dirty drug needle; anal or oral now, people; women can give it to men and men mostly to women...mothers might give it to their babies through the womb; or through birth, don't be an ass and assume
De La Soul	Breaks	Stakes is High	1996	Your boyfriend made you a carrier of HIV
Digital Underground	Fool Get a Clue	Future Rhythm	1996	Now everybody wanna tell everybody who to be with; really doesn't matter to me long as I miss that H-I-V shit
Kane and Abel	Black Jesus	7 Sins	1996	They like to overseers and we like the slave bitches; offer pussy to a nigga even though they got AIDS; you jumping in that pussy then you diving in the grave
Down Low	HIV	Third Dimension	1998	When you don't protect yourself he strikes you; do you know who he is? It's the HIV...Protect yourself or get you a partner that's true

*Table 3 (continued): Hip Hop Song Lyrics Referring to HIV/AIDS Prevention; Organized Chronologically by Year, then alphabetically by Artist, then Alphabetically by Song Name. Positive References Categorized by Type of Prevention Messaging and Organized by Prevalence.*

<b>Positive References to HIV/AIDS Prevention</b>				
<i>Artist</i>	<i>Song</i>	<i>Album</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>Lyrics</i>
<b>Serosorting</b>				
Lil Wayne	Kisha	The Block Is Hot	1999	Should I use a rubber cause I heard she was a freak but; they say she keep it cleaned up, but I don't want HIV bruh
Canibus	AIDS is Gold, HIV is Platinum	Immortal Technique & Friends - Warrior Music Vol. 2	2008	the person they having sex with as to whether or not they infected Even the people you already slept with wouldn't suspect that they can catch it
<b>Alternatives</b>				
Salt-N-Pepa	Big Shot	Very Necessary	1993	I seen a lot of women fall and gettin' fast money; cuz either AIDS or jail will get that ass, honey; I needed more to explore so I tried rap
Digital Underground	Fool Get a Clue	Future Rhythm	1996	and there's way to muff without the fluids touchin'
<b>Blood Transfusion</b>				
Immortal Technique	You Never Know	Revolutionary Vol. 2	2003	Baby don't you see, I had a blood transfusion that left me with HIV
Canibus	AIDS is Gold, HIV is Platinum	Immortal Technique & Friends - Warrior Music Vol. 2	2008	Through the semen and blood, needles and drugs; choose which one of the two demons in evil you trust
<b>Negative References to HIV/AIDS Prevention</b>				
<i>Artist</i>	<i>Song</i>	<i>Album</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>Lyrics</i>
Slick Rick	Venus	The Ruler's Back	1991	Meanwhile, still jockin' her, like a real sucker; says the waitress so fine, she could have AIDS - I'd still knock her
Big L	Danger Zone	Lifestylez Ov Da Poor and Dangerous	1995	I never wear rubbers bitch, if I get AIDS, fuck it!
Big L	All Black	Lifestylez Ov Da Poor and Dangerous	1995	Me being a virgin, that's idiotic; cause if Big L got the AIDS every cutie in the city got it
Tupac	I'm Gettin Money	R U Still Down?	1997	You might fold catch AIDS from a slight cold
Cam'ron	Confessions	Confessions on Fire	1998	I said man fuck a AIDS test; cause I'm gon' go raw anyway; I'm one that like to chase death
Nas	American Way	Street's Disciple	2004	I don't care about dying of AIDS; but I care if I got paid
Ill Bill	Soldiers Of Fortune	Black Metal	2007	I know about the stress from an AIDS test, I fuck with no glove; tattoos from a dirty needle spelling my alias

*Table 3 (continued). Hip Hop Song Lyrics Referring to HIV/AIDS Prevention; Organized Chronologically by Year, then alphabetically by Artist, then Alphabetically by Song Name. Positive References Categorized by Type of Prevention Messaging and Organized by Prevalence.*

**Positive References to HIV/AIDS Testing/treatment**

<i>Artist</i>	<i>Song</i>	<i>Album</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>Lyrics</i>
2 Live Crew	Who's Fucking Who	Sports Weekend: As Nasty as They Wanna Be, Pt. 2	1991	Take extreme measure for sexual pleasure If I'm positive, too late for an apology
Salt N Pepa	Let's Talk about AIDS	Promotional Radio Release, B-Side Single of "Let's Talk About Sex" from Blacks' Magic	1991	So if you do come up HIV positive or have AIDS we just want you to know that there are treatments And the earlier, the sooner, detected the better off you'll be...there ain't a cure so you gotta be sure
Canibus	AIDS is Gold, HIV is Platinum	Immortal Technique & Friends - Warrior Music Vol. 2	2008	Cause the only way I could be detected; is by getting tested

**Negative References to HIV/AIDS Testing/treatment**

<i>Artist</i>	<i>Song</i>	<i>Album</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>Lyrics</i>
Cam'ron	Confessions	Confessions on Fire	1998	I said man fuck a AIDS test; cause I'm gon' go raw anyway; I'm one that like to chase death
Eminem	I'm Shady	The Slim Shady LP	1999	And I don't have herpes, my dick's just itchin'; it's not syphilis, and as for being AIDS infested; I don't know yet, I'm too scared to get tested
Bone Thugs-N-Harmony	Change the World	BTNHResurrection	2000	With the AIDS epidemic, we ain't cool no more; and I know they gotta cure for this shit, we ain't rich
M-1 (Dead Prez)	We Need a Revolution	Turn Off the Radio: The Mixtape Vol. 1	2002	Gotta cure for AIDS and cancer
Jadakiss	Why	Kiss of Death	2004	Why they ain't give us a cure for AIDS
Kanye West	Roses	Late Registration	2005	You know the best medicine go to people that's paid; if Magic Johnson got a cure for AIDS; and all the broke muh'fuckers passed away
Vinnie Paz (Jedi Mind Tricks)	Heavy Metal Kings ft. Jedi Mind Tricks and Ill Bill	Servants in Heaven, Kings in Hell	2006	How if they government wanted to they could cure you of AIDS
Ill Bill	Doomsday Was Written in an Alien Bible	The Hour Of Reprisal	2008	They made the cure for AIDS and ceased production
Immortal Technique	Reverse Pimpology	The 3rd World	2008	Selling AIDS medicine, when we know you got the cure nigga; you leery of conspiracy theory but hear me; throw a business perspective, it makes more sense clearly
Ill Bill	Soldiers Of Fortune	Black Metal	2007	I know about the stress from an AIDS test, I fuck with no glove; tattoos from a dirty needle spelling my alias

*Table 4. Hip Hop Song Lyrics Referring to HIV/AIDS Testing/treatment; Organized Chronologically by Year.*

After all, messaging produced by communities and for their communities promises to be more persuasive than attempts by outside organizations to determine the types of health messaging relevant to particular cultural communities [42]. Culture plays a significant role in the perception of health and influencing health behaviors. It has been argued that “efforts to eliminate health disparities must be informed by the influence of culture on the attitudes, beliefs, and practices of not only minority populations but also public health policymakers and the health professionals responsible for the

delivery of medical services and public health interventions designed to close the health gap” [46]. Belief systems, cultural values, and group identity act as filters through which information is transmitted and received. As such, “matching the cultural characteristics of minority populations with public health interventions designed to affect individuals within the group may enhance receptivity to, acceptance, and salience of health information and programs” [46]. According to a survey of young African American and Latino men, the “frequency of enjoying listening to hip hop music was

positively associated with condom-use self-efficacy” [8]. In addition, hip hop music influences individuals’ negotiations of sexual messages as well as some of their thoughts, decisions, and actions [14-16,38-41,47,60-62].

Examining how health behaviors are influenced by cultural elements is important for improving health communication and public health strategies directed towards ameliorating health disparities among different population sub-groups. Hip hop culture serves as a means by which many young people now engage critically and creatively in the construction of their sexuality. Furthermore, hip hop’s popularity among many of those at high risk for becoming infected with HIV in the United States suggests how HIV awareness, testing and prevention may be actualized [63]. Research has shown that hip hop music is a promising medium through which public health messages can garner acceptability among some African American audiences in particular, mainly due to its source credibility and historic connection to the African American community [8,14-16,38-48,60-62].

It is clear that prevention efforts employing hip hop elements can attract considerable public attention, which is a crucial first step in reaching populations at risk. While such efforts are promising, familiarity with the content and nature of hip hop song lyrics may also help enhance more routine communications about HIV prevention perhaps by using these lyrics to improve educational efforts, counseling in prevention, and health communication interventions. The culturally relevant nature of hip hop music could also be used to promote learning about safer sex practices. Finally, knowledge about relevant hip hop lyrics will better prepare clinicians and public health educators to understand and address common predominant and alternative public health messages around HIV and be able to design more informed initiatives in light of them.

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