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Migration, sexual networks, and HIV in Agbogbloshie, Ghana

By [Susan Cassels](#), [Samuel M. Jenness](#), [Adriana A. E. Biney](#), [William Kwabena Ampofo](#), [F. Nii-Amoo Dodoo](#)

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Abstract

Background: HIV is spread through structured sexual networks, which are influenced by migration patterns, but network-oriented studies of mobility and HIV risk behavior have been limited.

Objective: We present a comprehensive description and initial results from our Migration & HIV in Ghana (MHG) study in Agbogbloshie, an urban slum area within Accra, Ghana.

Methods: The MHG study was a population-based cross-sectional study of adults aged 18-49 in Agbogbloshie in 2012. We used a one-year retrospective relationship history calendar to collect egocentric network data on sexual partners as well as migration and shortterm mobility, and tested for prevalent HIV-1/2 infection.

Results: HIV prevalence was 5.5%, with prevalence among women (7.2%) over twice that of men (2.8%). Three-quarters of residents were born outside the Greater Accra region, but had lived in Agbogbloshie an average of 10.7 years. Only 7% had moved housing structures within the past year. However, short-term mobility was common. Residents had an average of 7.3 overnight trips in the last year, with women reporting more travel than men. Thirty-seven percent of men and 9% of women reported more than one sexual partner in the last year.

Conclusions: Population-based surveys of migration and sexual risk behavior using relationship history calendars in low-resource settings can produce high quality data. Residents in Agbogbloshie are disproportionately affected by HIV, and have high levels of shortterm mobility. HIV prevention interventions targeted to highly mobile populations in high prevalence settings may have far-reaching and long-term implications.

Comments: old title: Migration, Sexual Networks, and HIV in Ghana

Author's Affiliation

[Susan Cassels](#) - University of California, Santa Barbara, United States of America [[Email](#)]

[Samuel M. Jenness](#) - University of Washington, United States of America [[Email](#)]

[Adriana A. E. Biney](#) - University of Ghana, Ghana [[Email](#)]

[William Kwabena Ampofo](#) - University of Ghana, Ghana [\[Email\]](#)

[F. Nii-Amoo Dodoo](#) - Pennsylvania State University, United States of America [\[Email\]](#)

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