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## Extra-marital sexual partnerships and male friendships in rural Malawi

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### Abstract

Extra-marital sexual partnerships (EMSPs) are a major route of HIV/AIDS transmission in sub-Saharan Africa. In this paper, we investigate the roles of two types of male friendships - best friends and friends with whom they talk about AIDS - in determining whether men have EMSPs. Using data from men in rural Malawi, we find that men's current extra-marital sexual behavior is most closely correlated with their best friends', but that the behaviors of both types of friends are associated with men's subsequent EMSPs. These findings suggest that men's friendships could be used to help combat the AIDS epidemic.

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