

The HIV Transmission Gradient
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Of critical importance in the transmission of HIV are “gatekeepers,” the HIV-negative partners of persons who are HIV-infected. These are the persons at risk and they are the persons who can eventually spread the disease further. And since the highest infectivity comes in the first months after infection, usually before knowledge of infection, the behavior of these “gatekeepers” while they are HIV- is critical. In a sample of 267 persons from high drug use neighborhoods, we collected data 3254 relationships involving 1271 other persons. We quantitatively describe the gradient of infection potential by which HIV can diffuse from the HIV+ population through “gatekeepers” to the rest of the population through both drug injection behaviors and sex behaviors.

