Risk Behavior Assessment

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The instrument was developed to document behaviors that put individuals at risk for infection with the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV). A companion instrument, the Risk Behavior Follow-up Assessment (RBFA), is available in 3-month and 6-month versions. The RBA-RBFA system was originally designed to measure intervention effects in the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) Cooperative Agreement for HIV/AIDS Community-Based Outreach/Intervention Research program (CA).

Description

The instrument was developed by the Community Research Branch of NIDA along with principal investigators in the NIDA CA. The original RBA was revised twice with the final version consisting of the following sections: preliminary data, such as ID number, and interview date and time (Section P); demographics (A); drug use (B); C is only for those respondents who have injected drugs in the 30 days prior to interview (C); recent drug use in the last 48 hours (D); drug treatment history (E); sexual risk behavior with separate subsections for men who have sex with men, men who have sex with women, men who have sex with both men and women, women who have sex with women, women who have sex with men, and women who have sex with both men and women (F); sex trading (G); health-related conditions (H); arrest and incarceration (I); economic questions (J); and interviewer’s impressions of interviewee’s understanding, honesty, and accuracy (K).

Response Mode and Timing

The RBA takes from 18 to 60 minutes to administer depending upon the interviewer’s skill and the interviewee’s responses. Most items are responded to as a single-, a double-, a triple-, or a quadruple-digit answer. There are a few yes/no and categorical questions, and some questions, such as other race or country of origin, require word responses. All items have the capability of being coded Don’t Know/Unsure or Refused. Skip patterns are included in most sections to expedite completion of the interview.

Scoring

As all items are self-report of behavior, no scoring is required. A data entry package, NOVA-DE, is available, which produces a raw ASCII file. This file is readable by either SAS or SPSS code, includes labels and formats, and can be saved as either a permanent SAS dataset or an SPSS SAVE file.
Reliability and Validity

The original reliability study collected data on 48-hour test-retest administration and found that, with the exception of needle sharing, most questions had acceptable reliability and validity (Needle et al., 1995; Weatherby, Needle, Cesari, & Booth, 1994). The reliability and validity of a revision of the RBA, with improved needle-sharing questions, was conducted using a 48-hour test-retest interval for the basic drug and sex variables, and a comparison of recent drug use and urine test results (Dowling-Guyer, Johnson, Fisher, & Needle, 1994). Subsequent analyses have examined the reliability and validity of the questions pertaining to amphetamine use (Napper, Fisher, Johnson, & Wood, 2008); hepatitis infection (Fisher, Kuhrt-Hunstiger, Orr, & Davis, 1999; Schlichting et al., 2003); syphilis infection (Fisher, Reynolds, Creekmur, Johnson, & Deaugustine, 2007); and HIV/AIDS testing and infection (Fisher, Reynolds, Jaffe, & Johnson, 2007). Similarly, further analyses have examined the reliability of questions pertaining to homelessness (Klahn, Fisher, Wood, Reynolds, & Johnson, 2004); gonorrhea infection (Paschane, Fisher, Cagle, & Fenaughty, 1998); drug treatment (Edwards, Fisher, Johnson, Reynolds, & Redpath, 2007); and economic issues (Johnson, Fisher, & Reynolds, 1999); and alcohol use (Johnson, Pratt, Neal, & Fisher, in press). Finally, the reliability and validity of the RBFA 6-month follow-up version have been reported (Johnson et al., 2000).

Relative to the RBA sexual risk items, the 48-hour test-retest reliability coefficients ranged from a low of .07 for male reporting of oral sex (cunnilingus) with barrier, to a high of .92 for the number of different sex partners in the last 30 days (Dowling-Guyer et al., 1994). Four of the sexual risk behavior items have reliability coefficients greater than .80, and four have reliability coefficients greater than .70. Two have reliability coefficients greater than .60, one each for .50 and .40, and two greater than .30 (Dowling-Guyer et al., 1994). For the RBFA, the 48-hour test-retest reliability coefficients for the sexual risk behavior questions range from a low of .57 for the number of drug-injecting sex partners, to a high of .87 for the male reporting of number of times for vaginal sex (Johnson et al., 2000).

Other Information

Annotated versions of all Cooperative Agreement instruments are in the public domain and are available as .pdf files from the Inter-University Consortium for Political and Social Research, Substance Abuse Mental Health Data Archive at the University of Michigan, http://www.icpsr.umich.edu/SAMHDA/survey-inst/CAA_1.pdf.

References


Exhibit

Risk Behavior Assessment (sample items)

Now, we are going to talk about your sexual practices, including each of the times you have had vaginal, oral, and anal sex. We are also talking about all types of partners: regular partners, partners for money, drugs, or whatever.

Q25. How many days in the last 30 days have you had sex (vaginal, oral, and/or anal)?
   DK/Unsure Refused
   Days ___ ___ 77 88

Q26. During the last 30 days, how many different people have you had vaginal, oral, and/or anal sex with?
   DK/Unsure Refused Skip
   ___ ___ ___ 777 888 999

Q27. How many of your sex partners were likely to have been drug injectors or shooters?
   DK/Unsure Refused Skip
   ___ ___ ___ 777 888 999

Q28. How many of your sex partners were female?
   DK/Unsure Refused Skip
   ___ ___ ___ 777 888 999

Q29. How many of your sex partners were male?
   DK/Unsure Refused Skip
   ___ ___ ___ 777 888 999

Now I want to ask you more specific questions about your vaginal, oral, and/or anal sexual practices. When I ask you these questions, I want you to think about all the partners that you have had sex with in the last 30 days, not just your main or last partner.

Q30. How many times in the last 30 days when you had sex did you put your penis in your partner’s vagina?
   DK/Unsure Refused Skip NA
   Times ___ ___ ___ 777 888 999 666
   (IF “000,” GO TO Q31.)

Q30a. Of these ___ (NUMBER FROM Q30) times, how many times did you use a condom?
   DK/Unsure Refused Skip NA
   Times ___ ___ ___ 777 888 999 666

Q31. How many times in the last 30 days when you had sex did you put your penis in your partner’s mouth?
   DK/Unsure Refused Skip NA
   Times ___ ___ ___ 777 888 999 666
   (IF “000,” GO TO Q32.)

Q31a. Of these ___ (NUMBER FROM Q31) times, how many times did you use a condom?
   DK/Unsure Refused Skip NA
   Times ___ ___ ___ 777 888 999 666

Q32. How many times in the last 30 days when you had sex did you put your mouth on your partner’s vagina?
   DK/Unsure Refused Skip NA
   Times ___ ___ ___ 777 888 999 666
   (IF “000,” GO TO Q33.)
### Q32a. How many of those ____ (NUMBER FROM Q32) times did your partner use latex or other barrier protection?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Times</th>
<th>DK/Unsure</th>
<th>Refused</th>
<th>Skip</th>
<th>NA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>777</td>
<td>888</td>
<td>999</td>
<td>666</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Q33. How many times in the last 30 days when you had sex did you put your penis in your partner’s anus?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Times</th>
<th>DK/Unsure</th>
<th>Refused</th>
<th>Skip</th>
<th>NA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>777</td>
<td>888</td>
<td>999</td>
<td>666</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Q33a. Of these ____ (NUMBER FROM Q33) times, how many times did you use a condom?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Times</th>
<th>DK/Unsure</th>
<th>Refused</th>
<th>Skip</th>
<th>NA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>777</td>
<td>888</td>
<td>999</td>
<td>666</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Q58. In the last 30 days, how many times have you used the following drugs immediately before or during sex?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Drug Category</th>
<th>Times</th>
<th>DK/Unsure</th>
<th>Refused</th>
<th>Skip</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A Alcohol</td>
<td>777</td>
<td>888</td>
<td>999</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B Marijuana/hashish (weed, grass, reefers)?</td>
<td>777</td>
<td>888</td>
<td>999</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C Crack?</td>
<td>777</td>
<td>888</td>
<td>999</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D Cocaine by itself (other than crack) that you injected or snorted?</td>
<td>777</td>
<td>888</td>
<td>999</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E Heroin (by itself)?</td>
<td>777</td>
<td>888</td>
<td>999</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F Heroin and cocaine mixed together (e.g., speedball)?</td>
<td>777</td>
<td>888</td>
<td>999</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G Nonprescription methadone?</td>
<td>777</td>
<td>888</td>
<td>999</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H Other opiates (e.g., demerol, codeine, dilaudid)?</td>
<td>777</td>
<td>888</td>
<td>999</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I Amphetamines (e.g., speed, uppers, bennies)?</td>
<td>777</td>
<td>888</td>
<td>999</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J Some other drug? (Specify: ____________________________)</td>
<td>777</td>
<td>888</td>
<td>999</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>