Old Colony: Puerto Rico, Puerto Ricans, and continuity of HIV care

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Objectives

1. Discuss the current economic and healthcare environment in Puerto Rico (PR).
2. Describe the HIV/AIDS epidemic among Puerto Ricans.
3. Describe the intersections of HIV care, migration, mobility, and continuity of care for Puerto Ricans.
Puerto Rico: *La isla del encanto*

- Located in the Caribbean Sea
- “The mix of three cultures: Taíno, Spanish, and African”
- A Commonwealth of the United States of America (US)
A very brief history of Puerto Rico

- Ponce de León y Taínos
- African slaves
- Sugar becomes gold
- Short-lived autonomy
- Slave trade stopped
- Spanish-American War
- US Rule
- WWI & US citizenship
- WWII and migration
- PRERA & Korean War
- Commonwealth and economic boar

Street art in Santurce – San Juan as part of the project “Santurce es Ley”

Source: Caribbean Business
Politics, policies, and health

Tales from the colony

• Ambiguous and subjugated position within the US body politic.

• US is continuing to rely on the congressional cap on federal funding for health care in Puerto Rico established in 1967.
  – There have been no changes to the congressional limitation on health care funding for Puerto Rico since its inception.

• Effective HIV prevention and equal access to treatment is structurally impossible in this context.

Garriga-López, 2015
PR: Politics, policies, and health

Puerto Ricans Aren’t Real Americans, Apparently

POSTED ON JULY 3, 2015 BY HECTOR LUIS ALAMO
Current population trends in PR

- 1990: 3.522037
- 2000: 3.80861
- 2010: 3.725789
- 2011: 3.686771
- 2012: 3.642281
- 2013: 3.595839
- 2014: 3.548397
- 2020: 3.455

Millions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Population</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>3.522037</td>
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US Census Bureau, 2014
Current population trends in PR Cont.

![Bar chart showing population trends in different age groups](image)

- **0-19**: -162
- **20-39**: -65
- **40-59**: 62
- **50-69**: 55
- **70+**: 83

**Thousands**

**Age groups**

US Census Bureau, 2014
Economic issues

**Why Puerto Rico’s Debt Is So Big**
Puerto Rico’s public debt has ballooned because of a failing economy and an inefficient government that has spent more than it has taken in.  **JULY 3, 2015**

**Puerto Rico**

**Greece in the Caribbean**
Stuck with a real debt crisis in its back yard, America can learn from Europe’s Aegean follies
Oct 26th 2013 | From the print edition

**Paul Krugman**

**No, Puerto Rico Isn’t Greece**
By PAUL KRUGMAN  
**JULY 4, 2015**
Despair and Anger as Puerto Ricans Cope With Debt Crisis

By LIZETTE ALVAREZ  JULY 3, 2015

Puerto Rico Needs Debt Relief

By THE EDITORIAL BOARD  JULY 1, 2015

Could Puerto Rico become America's 51st state?

Oct 21st 2013, 23:50 by D.R. | NEW YORK

While Europe’s debt crisis seems to have stabilised, the vigilantes of the bond market have found a new target on the other side of the Atlantic.
PR and the Affordable Care Act

• When ACA was launched in 2014 there was some confusion about how the law would apply to US territories, including Puerto Rico.
• In July 2014, DHHS declared that US territories aren't required to follow most of the roles of the ACA.
  – Technically, that means that 4 of 5 of the US territories were essentially untouched by the bill.
  – PR’s government passes its own series of bills adopting ACA roles.
PR and the Affordable Care Act

- Insurance companies in PR must follow all the provisions of the law and cannot deny coverage and must pay for essential health benefits.

- However, there is no individual mandate, the rule that says everyone must get health insurance.
ACA, *Mi Salud*, and HIV care in PR

- Funding for HIV services in PR is not administered as part of *Mi Salud*

- PR Department of Health is the primary administrator of ADAP/Ryan White funding
History of HIV care in PR

• Impacted by the US regulation
  – Changes in the “Emergency Metropolitan Areas”

• Mostly administered by PR government
  – Complicated history of corruption (ie: Instituto del SIDA)

• Important participation of non-governmental and community-based organizations

• Major contributor in HIV research
  – Research as a mean to access to care
HIV/AIDS epidemic in PR

• More than 46,600 persons has been diagnosed with HIV/AIDS
  – 26,304 have died
  – Approximately, 20,305 people with HIV in Puerto Rico
• Two (2) persons are diagnosed with HIV or AIDS every day
• One (1) out of six (6) persons who have HIV don’t know he/she has the virus
• Perinatal transmission was officially eliminated in 2013
Since 2002, HIV incidence among MSM has increased by 126%.
Cascade of HIV care in PR, 2010

- Viviendo con VIH: 18,637
- En cuidado médico: 13,000 (69.8%)
- Retenido en cuidado médico: 11,722 (62.89%)
- En ART: 10,252 (55%)
- No-detectable: 7,712 (41.4%)

Puerto Rico Department of Health, 2014
HIV/AIDS unmet needs

1. Mostly among men (75%)
2. Between the ages of 35 to 45 years
3. Drug users (38%) and heterosexuals (30%)
4. Residents of the San Juan metropolitan area

Puerto Rico Department of Health, 2014a
# HIV/AIDS epidemic in PR (Cont.)

## Behind the bars of Paradise: Incarceration and HIV

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Correctional population</th>
<th>12,130</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Types of correctional facilities by security level</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimum: 4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium: 20 (2 juvenile)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Maximum: 5 (1 female)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conviction type</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>23.4% violations of local laws related to illicit drugs</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>66.0% offenses related to substance use</td>
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<tr>
<td>Annual average of people passing through the system</td>
<td>16,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health care system</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Funded by the government and administered by a non-profit organization</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### Incarcerated population in PR:
- 73.8% have history of drug use
- 6.9% are HIV+
  - 6.7% adult males
  - 14.3% adult females
  - 50% meet criteria for ART
  - 88% are in care

Rodríguez-Díaz & Andrinopoulos, 2012; Rodríguez-Díaz et al., 2011
HIV/AIDS epidemic in PR (Cont.)

Behind the bars of Paradise: Incarceration and HIV

- In PR, we have documented it can take an average of 4 years to link to care at the community level

Clatts, Rodríguez-Díaz, García, Vargas-Molina, Jovet-Toledo, & Goldsamt, 2011
Stigma as a determinant of health

• HIV-related stigma continue to impact HIV prevention and access to care
  – Mediate healthcare provision

• Perceived and felt gay-related stigma multiplies the impact of HIV stigma
  – Recent studies evidence the impact on the quality of life and mental health of gay men and other men who have sex with men in PR

Jimenez et al., 2012; Ortiz-Sánchez, Rodríguez-Díaz, et al., 2015; Varas-Díaz et al., 2005
HIV and health equity

“After celebrating: The hard work for LGBT health equity continues”. – Makadon, 2015
Mobility and migration

• A migratory pattern between PR and the continental U.S. (particularly to the east coast) has been documented since the 1950’s.
  – This migration and mobility has been characterized according to the needs and opportunities that historic periods (industrialization, economic recession, etc.) have posed for those of Puerto Rican descent.

• Currently, there are nearly 761,000 Puerto Ricans living in NYC and over 4.7 million Puerto Ricans in the continental US.

US Census Bureau, 2015
Mobility and migration (Cont.)

- Puerto Rican migration to the continental US, particularly the northeast, has increased mostly due to the island’s economic landscape and inequity for sexual minorities.

- Simultaneously, although at a lower rate, the “returning migration” - people of Puerto Rican descent returning to the island - continues.
Puerto Ricans in the 50 states

In the 1920s factory jobs—many in New York City’s garment industry—drew Puerto Ricans to the urban Northeast. As of 1980 half of the two million mainland Puerto Ricans lived in New York City and Chicago.
Mobility patterns have impacted the HIV trends in PR and among Puerto Rican descendants in the continental U.S. This “airbridge” has been studied specifically among injecting drug users.

- Findings show inadequate risk reduction options for IDU in PR and increased sexual risks among mobile (migrants from PR to NY and vice versa) drug users.

Deren et al., 2003; 2007
HIV/AIDS epidemic among Puerto Ricans

• Puerto Ricans who inject drugs, both in the Northeast US and in PR are among Latinos at the highest risk for contracting HIV.

• Puerto Rican comprise only 9% of the US Hispanic population, but nearly 23% of HIV cases among Hispanics are among those born in PR.

Deren et al, 2014
Transnationalism

- Defined as “the processes by which immigrants forge and sustain multi-stranded social relations that link together their societies of origin and settlement.”

- “The form, frequency, and intensity of transnationalism largely hinges on the nature of the relationship between sending and receiving countries”

Basch et al., 1994, p. 6, Duany, 2011, p. 7; Levitt et al., 2007
Puerto Rican Transnational Identity

• The interaction between mainland-born and island-born Puerto Ricans brings to light other processes of identity formation and issues of belonging that demonstrate how Puerto Ricanness is constantly negotiated in the migration experience.

• The construction of a Puerto Rican identity within the migrant community is based on various notions of differences where place of origin and the ability to speak Spanish are important markers. Furthermore, the presence of numerous Puerto Rican institutions in the US is helping create a unique community landscape, a “new” Puerto Rico.
Puerto Rican Transnational Identity

“Although Puerto Ricans are US citizens, they cross significant geographic, cultural, and linguistic borders when they migrate between the Island and the mainland, and this displacement helps to reconfigure their national identities”.

Duany, 2003, p. 424; Duany, 2011, p. 103
Transnational practices Cont.

Puerto Rico: Migration and Politics

• Transnational colonial state is exemplified by Puerto Rico’s relationship with the U.S. In this case, the sending and receiving nations share the same citizenship, but migrants from the dependent territory to the metropole are treated as “foreigners in the ‘mother country’”.

• Due to the political status of Puerto Rico with the US, diasporic communities often develop different representations of identity from the US canon by stressing their broad kinship, cultural, and emotional ties to Puerto Rico, rather than its narrow linguistic and territorial boundaries.

Duany, 2003, 2011
Communication
Ease of communication due to shared electronic networks, including cellphone and fiber optic-based services
Transnational practices Cont.

**Travel**

Meet Oscar and the experience in the PR-NY airbridge
Transnational practices Cont.

Language
Preference of Spanish, English or Spanglish
Economic and Social Remittances

- It is common to send money to PR
  - Cost of living vs. average salary in PR
  - Taking care of family members

- Exchange of food and remedies using USPS
References


Questions?

THANK YOU!
¡GRACIAS!