



# Reducing Risks While Increasing Sexual Pleasure : The Effects Of The Phénix Program For GbMSM



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Conflict of  
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# BACKGROUND AND METHOD



Created in 2006, Phénix is an intervention for gbMSM, which combines the **adoption and maintenance of HIV and STI risk reduction strategies** with **erotic training**.

Since 2015, the program has been updated to integrate **a combination HIV prevention approach**, and then implemented in 10 organizations across Quebec (community-based and clinical settings).

To evaluate the **effects** and **appreciation** of this version, multiple data collection were put in place, including:

**Telephone interviews** with voluntary participants (N=37)

**Before their participation** in the program

**6 months after** the end of the program

Pre and post-intervention data were compared using **content analysis**.

# RESULTS

## KNOWLEDGE AND AWARENESS

- + gbMSM increased their awareness of **HIV and STI transmission** and **risk reduction strategies**, which reduces their fears and allows them to expand their sexual practices **while feeling safer**.

" At first, there was a lot of things that I was uninformed about in terms of education. Now I'm more informed about the risks of getting HIV and so on. That helped me to be more comfortable and reassured, and to let myself go more\*." "

## RISK REDUCTION

- + A majority of participants **feel more in control** of their sexuality and **more able to reduce their at-risk behaviors**, which they do by :

Reducing the number of sexual partners

Being more selective in choosing sexual partners

" With what Phénix taught me, I have control over my life, over my sexuality, I feel I have the tools now to have more control. Before that I wasn't equipped. I was doing anything, with anyone, anywhere. [...] I have the tools now to say to the other, 'Look, you won't do anything you want to me'." "

Adapting risk reduction strategies to the type of sexual partner

Implementing new risk reduction strategies such as PrEP

# RESULTS

Due to Phénix, most of the men reported **greater sexual satisfaction** than before, feeling **more attentive to their own needs** and **expressing more easily what they like**.

" I feel that when I have sex now, I verbalize more what I like to be done to me, what I like to do. I feel less guilty. "



After Phénix, participants were **more likely to engage in discussions about sex** with their partners and to feel they have **increased their erotic skills**.

" Now I would be a little less embarrassed to say to my partner 'look, I have to protect you, you have to protect me'. Maybe I could tell him that I took Phénix and learned a lot. "

After the program, a number of participants **expanded their sexual practices** by focusing on **sensuality**.

" It also allowed me to understand how to negotiate my sex drive, and to also discover that there are other things besides the sexual act. There is a whole range of things we can experiment together. "



After their participation, a majority of men wanted to **explore and enjoy their sex life more safely**.

" It made me break out of my taboos, enjoy my sex life, dare, and do it in a much more... much safer way. "

# DISCUSSION

Programs such as Phénix would be **useful** to :

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- + Phénix creates a favourable context for gbMSM to **adapt their sexual practices and risk reduction strategies** in light of the intervention they received.
  - + Adding combination HIV prevention and discussions about sexual well-being in this new version of the program **seems successful**.

Reduce HIV  
and STI  
transmission  
among  
gbMSM

Increase  
their sexual  
quality of  
life

Help to  
reconcile  
risk  
reduction  
with sexual  
pleasure

An e-health  
version of  
the program  
is being  
considered