Men who have Sex with Men (MSM) – Update for ICAAP, Bali, 2009

**Malaysia**

**SUMMARY OF SITUATION**
The following and additional data and citations can be found at [www.aidsdatahub.org](http://www.aidsdatahub.org)

**HIV Prevalence**
- 2% of MSM were estimated to be HIV positive in 2006. No formal estimates available for TG.
- As of December 2008, homosexual transmission was 1.9% out of 84,630 and 3.2% of 14,576 cumulative HIV and AIDS cases respectively.
- There is perception through VCT centers data in Kuala Lumpur that HIV infections are on the rise among MSM in the last few years, including among a significant proportion of TG sex workers (around 30%).

**Selected Behaviors & Knowledge**
- No data available on HIV knowledge or condom use.
- No HIV surveillance among MSM and TG.
- Very few qualitative studies involving MSM and TG have been conducted. In the past year, venue based studies have begun and are currently ongoing.

**National Response**
- Continued harassment and raids by law enforcement on bars, saunas, bathhouses and health centres frequented by MSM impede and complicate access and availability of HIV prevention services including condom distribution.
- The Penal Code of Malaysia outlaws sodomy. Other legislation relating to public communication (publishing and broadcasting) restrict the availability and dissemination of information about sexuality, including discussions on homosexuality.
- MSM are organized, with at least one NGO working with MSM.

**RECOMMENDED RESPONSES**
Contact UNAIDS for more information at [www.unaids.org](http://www.unaids.org)

- Decriminalize homosexuality and remove other laws impeding effective HIV prevention.
- National strategic plan should include a costed comprehensive response for MSM and TG.
- More systematic studies and regular surveillance of HIV rates, risk behaviors and MSM and TG communities.
- Fully fund prevention programs, including condom and lubricant provision, peer education and outreach, community development, mass media, and individual counseling.
- Develop the capacity of MSM and TG community-based organizations to provide advocacy and peer-based programs.
- Scale up MSM and TG-friendly VCT and sexual health screening centers.
- Expand availability and coverage of care, treatment and support facilities for HIV-positive MSM and TG.
- Address stigma and discrimination toward PLHIV in MSM and TG communities.
- Specific prevention activities should focus on transgender people.

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The Regional Picture

REPORT ON THE COMMISSION OF AIDS IN ASIA

The Commission on AIDS in Asia used the Asian Epidemic Model (AEM) to construct a picture of how the regional HIV epidemic in different sub-populations has developed over the years, and how it is likely to grow in the future if prevention stays the same.

The regional projection shows that Asia is on the brink of a large increase in new infections among MSM if risk behavior stays at current levels of low condom use with many concurrent male partners.

AEM is a computer model that simulates the spread of HIV within and between important at-risk populations and their partners. Key inputs are levels of HIV (prevalence), and the most important HIV-related risk behaviors of each sub-population and their sizes. The regional projection was made by adding up results of AEMs for countries in Asia.

The main risky behaviors for MSM are the frequency of unprotected anal sex contacts with regular and commercial male partners, and unprotected vaginal sex with commercial and regular female partners. The probability of HIV being transmitted during anal sex between a HIV+ man and another man or transgender is much higher than during vaginal sex with a woman.

However if high coverage with effective interventions raises condom use in anal sex among men to 80% levels over the next few years, then the growing epidemic among MSM can be controlled as shown in the model on the left.

KEY MSM SESSIONS AT ICAAP

8 Aug. 08.00 Forum: From 200 to 0: Responding Effectively to HIV Among MSM in Asia and the Pacific
10 Aug. 16.00 Satellite: MSM and HIV in Asia and the Pacific – Cross-Cutting Issues
11 Aug. 16.00 Symposium: Overcoming legal barriers to comprehensive prevention among men who have sex with men (MSM) and transgender (TG) persons in Asia and the Pacific
18.00 Satellite: MSM HIV Infection in Developed East and South-East Asia
18.00 Satellite: Gender Variance and Male-Male Sexualities Across the Global South
12 Aug. 11.30 Launch: The Pacific Sexual Diversity Network Strategic Plan
14.00 Symposium: Addressing Legal Barriers and Criminalization of Risk Populations

Session details and all of the MSM Country Snapshots are available at www.msmasia.org

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