

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY FOR MSS230R

Objective. To assess the transmission potential of HIV among men who have sex with men (MSM), it is crucial to understand the changes in sex partnership and sexual behaviours after HIV diagnosis and highly active antiretroviral therapy (HAART). The study was developed to (a) characterize the sex partnership patterns of MSM before and after HIV diagnosis; (b) describe the prevalence of unprotected sex and its changes over time; and (c) assess the inter-relationship between sex partnership, behavioural practice and the use of HAART.

Design / settings. A self-administered cross-sectional questionnaire survey was conducted at a HIV specialist clinic in Hong Kong. Constructed in both English and Chinese and hosted on a designated online platform, the online questionnaire comprised items divided into the following sections – demographics; HIV status; sexual partnership characteristics; behavioural profile and partner sourcing patterns. The latter three sections were evaluated at multiple time points, including the one-year period before and after HIV diagnosis, and after initiation of HAART. HIV+ MSM attending an HIV specialist clinical service were recruited with the assistance of volunteers..

Participants. Over a 2-month period in 2014, 387 MSM were approached of which 372 consented to participate in the Project and completed the questionnaire. A total of 345 eligible returns were used in the analyses. The mean age of respondents was 37.8 years. Some 125 (36.2%) respondents have been diagnosed with HIV infection for no more than 2 years. HAART had been initiated in almost 90% of the respondents.

Results. For all types of sex-networking venues assessed, the usage rate of MSM following HIV diagnosis was lower than that in the one-year period before diagnosis. The decrease in usage rate ranged between 1.9% for mobile applications and 33.9% for bars. About half of the respondents no longer had any casual sex partners after their HIV diagnosis, while the proportion of MSM having lovers or regular sex partners remained at the same level as that prior to HIV diagnosis. Condom use rose during their post-diagnosis period, but more than a third of the respondents were still engaged in unprotected anal sex. After initiation of HAART, the percentage of MSM who always used a condom for anal sex with regular and casual sex partners was 52.6% and 54.4% respectively.

Conclusions. Reduced use of sex-networking venues was observed among MSM after their HIV diagnosis. Nonetheless, a certain proportion of HIV-positive MSM remained sexually active in various social networks, particularly through mobile applications, with ongoing risk behaviours.

CONFERENCE PRESENTATION

Poon CM, Wong NS, Lee SS. Adjustment of HIV prevalence in men who have sex with men to account for changes in networking pattern following diagnosis.[poster no.: MOPEC494] *VIII IAS Conference on HIV Pathogenesis, Treatment and Prevention*. 19 – 22 July 2015, Vancouver, CANADA.