

Health service, peer and/or structural and policy interventions to respond to sexual health for international students

Dr Chris Bourne

Head, NSW STI Programs Unit, Centre for Population Health

Senior Staff Specialist, Sydney Sexual Health Centre, South East Sydney Local Health District

Conjoint Associate Professor, Kirby Institute UNSW

19 September 2019

► NSW context



NSW newly diagnosed HIV

Jan-Mar 2019

- Of all MSM (n=52)
 - 35 (67%) overseas-born cf 17 Australian born MSM
 - 26 (51%) were born in SE/NE Asia
- Of overseas-born MSM, 12/35 (34%) ≤ 29 y
- 21/35 (60%) of overseas-born MSM likely acquired HIV in Australia
- Overseas-born MSM with early stage infection
 - 3/10 (30%) had been in NSW for less than 4 years
- Overseas-born MSM with late stage infection
 - 10/15 (67%) in NSW for less than 4 years
- 7 /10 (70%) of heterosexual people newly diagnosed were born overseas



Figure 4: New diagnoses January 2014 to June 2019 in Australian versus overseas-born MSM

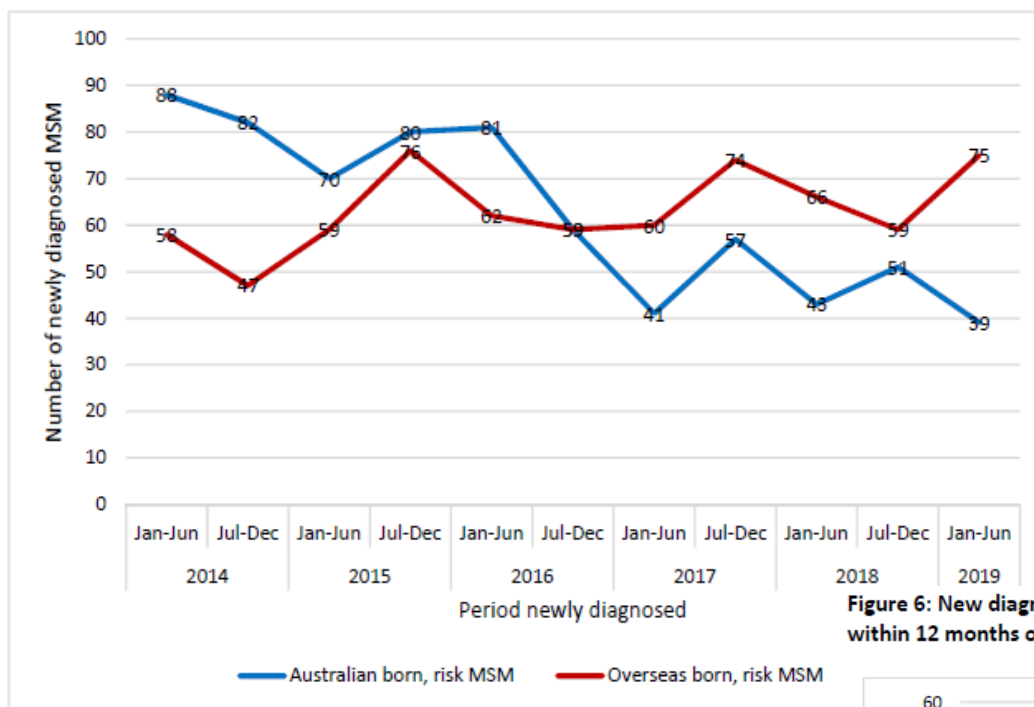
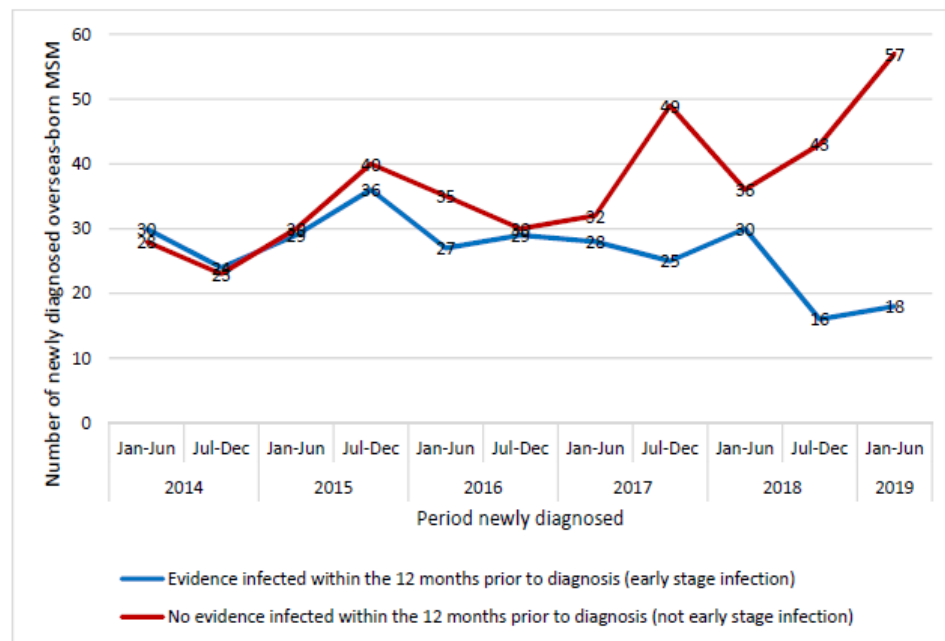


Figure 6: New diagnoses January 2014 to June 2019 of overseas-born MSM by evidence infected within 12 months of diagnosis



Working in collaboration

- ▶ NSW Sexual Health Promotion Action Plan, NSW STI Strategy 2016-20, NSW HIV strategy 2016-20
- ▶ Sexual Health International Students group, 2018
- ▶ Members:

STIPU	Overseas Student Health Insurance (BUPA, Medibank, Allianz, NIB, etc)
Universities (UNSW, USYD, UTS, WSU)	NSW LHD
NSW Dep of Industry	FPNSW, ACON
TAFE International	Redfern Legal, City of Sydney
English Australia, Council of International Students Australia (CISA)	ISANA International Education Association.
Multicultural HIV and Hepatitis Service (MHAHS-NSW)	Centre for Culture, Ethnicity and Health (CEH-Vic),

- ▶ Aim: to inform, develop & implementation NSW project activities targeting International Students.

International student demographics

- ▶ NSW has highest number 225,300 international student (Jan-Mar 2019)
- ▶ 66,584 (74%) coming from Asian countries (2019) (Australian Government, Dep of Education & Training)

Literature review:

International student's sexual health education and behaviours

- ▶ Adolescents and young people in Asia-Pacific countries are provided limited sexual health education (McManus & Dhar, 2008; Smith et. al, 2003; Stone et. al, 2003; Zhang et. al, 2010).
- ▶ more likely to engage in risky sexual behaviours (ie unprotected sexual intercourse) when compared to domestic students (Vivancos et. al, 2009).
- ▶ association between sexual risk-taking behaviour and limited sexual health knowledge (Lim et. al, 2007)



Barriers to sexual health for international students

- ▶ Limited knowledge and understanding of
 - ▶ Overseas health cover
 - ▶ Australian health system
 - ▶ Accessing sexual health services
- ▶ Cost and affordability of sexual health care
- ▶ Stigma, beliefs, fear of discrimination
- ▶ Confidentiality concerns



Enablers to sexual health for international students

- ▶ Sexual health education during university lectures, digital mediums and online resources
- ▶ Same-sex and cultural group sessions for some (female) students
- ▶ When accessing services,
 - ▶ confidentiality
 - ▶ expert staff
 - ▶ anonymous counsellors
 - ▶ online advisors
 - ▶ doctors and providers with similar backgrounds to students and
 - ▶ education programs



Actions:

Complete:

- ✓ quarterly meetings
- ✓ systematic review - barriers/enablers to accessing sexual health services/information

Underway

- ✓ Apply for a Study NSW partner project grant
 - ✓ Development & promote via a media campaign Sexual and Reproductive Health hub for international students
- ✓ Test the Peer education toolkit (Sex Health Promotion Action Plan) in the University setting.
 - ✓ Review findings, adjust & upscale across NSW
- ✓ Piloting HIV content for lesson plans for English colleges.
 - ✓ Upscale in English colleges across NSW in partnership with English

'Discreet lives'

▶ NSW HIV testing campaign 'Discreet Life'

▶ Target audiences:

- ▶ Heterosexual men who have sex with men, including CALD* (Chinese, Indonesian, Filipino, Thai, Vietnamese)
- ▶ Men who have sex overseas, including CALD*

▶ Channels:

▶ Outdoor advertising (posters)

Sex beats' (male toilets – parks, truck stops, shopping centres, university, TAFE)

- metro/regional venues

Sydney Airport – Arrivals Terminal; 47 display points

▶ MSM online hook-up apps

- ▶ Geo-targeted advertising to sex beat visitors and hook-up app users (men, 20yrs+, NSW)

Proactive media (The project), Health Professionals



Further proposed actions:

- ▶ Partner with key **health insurance providers**
 - ▶ identify sexual health data collection
 - ▶ analysis to assist in enabling barriers and facilitators
- ▶ Explore opportunities for **sexual health training** for GPs (health insurance funds ‘**preferred providers**’)
- ▶ Develop and implement policy on the provision of **condom vending machines** with University residential colleges/private university accommodation services



SESLHD and service responses

Community outreach clinics:

1. Mandarin speaking aTEST SSHC/ACON
 - Jan 2019
 - language nurses (male, female) and ACON male Chinese speaking peers
2. UNSW Health, SSHC/ HARP testing kiosk for GBM
 - MSM students not born in Australia (incl international students) or not speaking English at home
 - ETA Sextember promotion week
 - Concurrent health promotion actions at UNSW

SSHC core business:

1. All MSM priority population in NSW STI & HIV strategy
2. HBV clinic-Asian MSM, often students who need PrEP and have viral hepatitis

ACON

Asian gay men's project- Social event



Research

- ▶ The characteristics of recently arrived Asian born men who have sex with men diagnosed with HIV through sexual health services in Sydney and Melbourne, 2014-2017 Blakshaw et al ANZJPH 2019
 - ▶ N= 114, fewer partners, less HIVT, lower CD4 , longer TTRx

- ▶ Asian gay men periodic survey

Wong, H.T.H.,etal. (2018). 2018 Sydney Gay Asian Men Survey: Brief report on findings. Sydney: Centre for Social Research in Health, UNSW Sydney. <http://doi.org/10.26190/5c070cf9692fe>

- ▶ ‘Not so conservative’
- ▶ Qualitative research on newly diagnosed HIV+ from overseas
 - ▶ Slow recruitment



Other jurisdictions

- HIV and mobility – Road Map for Action. 2014, Curtin University (SIREN, ACSHR, La Trobe Uni, CERIPH)
- Communities of Practise for Action on HIV & Mobility (CoPAHM) 2015 (WA, Qld, SA, Victoria)
- 2018 Priority Actions aligned with HIV strategy
 1. Local solutions
 2. Health literacy
 3. Test
 4. Treatment and prevention meds
 5. Inform
 6. Evaluate



Many thanks

- ▶ Carolyn Slattery
- ▶ Carolyn Murray

