

# HIV TESTING, TREATMENT AND VIRAL SUPPRESSION MEN WHO HAVE SEX WITH MEN (MSM) IN FIVE COUNTRIES: RESULTS OF THE ASIA PACIFIC MSM INTERNET SURVEY

## Authors:

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## Background:

Men who have sex with men (MSM) bear a disproportionately high burden of HIV in South-East Asia. However, there are few studies examining viral suppression and the HIV care cascade including HIV testing among this population, nor of factors associated with these outcomes.

## Methods:

We conducted an online cross-sectional survey among 15,938 MSM across Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia, Japan and Vietnam from May 2020 to January 2021. Multiple logistic regressions were performed to obtain adjusted odds ratios (AOR) of factors associated with HIV testing within the past 12 months among HIV-negative/untested MSM; engagement with ART and viral suppression among those HIV-positive.

## Results:

Of the 10,953 HIV-negative/untested MSM who reported  $\geq 1$  male partners in the previous year, 39.0% (Thailand=56.2%; Malaysia=53.4%; Indonesia=43.7%; Vietnam=42.0%; Japan=32.1%) reported that they had tested for HIV in the past year, which was associated with high income, group sex (AOR=1.17, 95%CI=1.01-1.36), >20 male partners in the past year (AOR=1.68, 95%CI=1.31-2.14). Recent HIV testing was negatively associated with concerns relating to MSM stigma in healthcare settings, identifying as bisexual compared to gay, and compared to Thailand, residing in Japan or Indonesia.

Three-quarters (75.5%; n=815) of 1,080 HIV-positive MSM reported current use of ART (Indonesia=93.2%; Malaysia=90.5%; Thailand=78.5%; Vietnam=76.2%; Japan=70.7%), of whom 71.9% (Japan=88.8%; Malaysia=60.7%; Vietnam=51.0%; Indonesia=50.0%; Thailand=46.0%) reported having an undetectable viral load (UVL). Identifying as bisexual compared to gay, and past-year transactional sex were associated with lower odds of ART adherence. UVL was associated with older age, high income and compared to Thailand, residing in Japan or Malaysia. Participants engaging in past-year transactional sex were less likely to report viral suppression.

**Conclusion:**

Twelve-month HIV testing was low among sexually active MSM. ART uptake was reasonable although viral suppression among those HIV-positive remains much lower than international targets, except for Japan. Sustained and consistent investment in HIV testing promotion is required, hand-in-hand with stigma-reduction strategies within health-care settings.

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