TRANSLATING SCIENCE TO END HIV IN EASTERN EUROPE AND CENTRAL ASIA

AIDS 2018 POST-CONFERENCE SYMPOSIUM

Georgia, 20 June 2019
Addressing Stigma against Gay Men and other MSM in EECA - Regional Perspective

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Concentrated HIV epidemic among MSM in most countries of South East Europe, Eastern Europe and Central Asia

> 5% HIV prevalence among MSM
13 of 22 countries in SEE and EECA
(9 of 14 countries in EECA)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prev. Group</th>
<th>Countries</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&gt; 10%</td>
<td>Georgia (20.7%), Montenegro (12.5%), Romania (18.2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 – 10%</td>
<td>Moldova, Russia (22.8% St.Petersburg), Ukraine (16% Kyiv)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 – 7%</td>
<td>Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Macedonia, Serbia</td>
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<tr>
<td>2 - 4%</td>
<td>Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria (12.7% Sofia), Estonia, Kosovo, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan</td>
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<tr>
<td>&lt; 2%</td>
<td>Albania, Armenia</td>
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HIV Services Cascades for MSM in EECA

- ECOM: measuring cascades of HIV treatment services for MSM in 5 countries of EECA
- Community-led data collection, in cooperation with national AIDS centers and other stakeholders
- A tool based on the “90-90-90” HIV treatment cascade and MSMIT
- A simple and practical guide + training for national partners with following technical support
HIV Services Cascades for MSM in EECA (2)
HIV Services Cascade for MSM in Georgia

Source: Equality Movement
HIV Services Cascade for MSM in Georgia (3)

Source: Equality Movement
HIV Services Cascade - Conclusions

• Major gap in “90-90-90” for MSM at the first 90
• Substantial number of MSM living with HIV do not have access to ART

• Reasons:
  • Low coverage by HIV prevention and testing
  • Existing prevention programs do not match the needs of MSM
  • Low use of services

What should be done
• Support regular community-led situation assessment
• Revise national indicators for HIV treatment and prevention programs
Gate Keepers Attitudes towards LGBT

- Study in 5 countries: Armenia, Belarus, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, and North Macedonia
- Healthcare workers, social workers and police officers
- 505 respondents
Gate Keepers Attitudes towards LGBT (2)

Personally acquainted with LGBT people

Are there any gay or bisexual people among your relatives, friends, acquaintances (gays, lesbians)?

![Bar chart showing the percentage of people personally acquainted with LGBT people in different professions: healthcare workers, social workers, and police. The chart indicates a higher percentage in each profession compared to the previous slide.](chart.png)

- Healthcare workers: 63% (Да) and 37% (Нет)
- Social workers: 74% (Да) and 26% (Нет)
- Police: 80% (Да) and 20% (Нет)
Assessment of attitudes towards homosexuality

Which of these statements is closest to your own opinion?

- Homosexuality should be accepted in the society
- Homosexuality should not be accepted in the society
- Neither of two statements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Statement Accepted</th>
<th>Statement Not Accepted</th>
<th>Neither of Two Statements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Healthcare workers</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social workers</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Police</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Gate Keepers Attitudes towards LGBT (4)

Definition of homosexuality

People have very different attitudes towards homosexuals, what do you personally think homosexuality is?
Gate Keepers Attitudes towards LGBT (5)

Attitude towards LGBT people: equal rights

Do you agree with the statement that gays and lesbians should have the same rights as other citizens?
Gate Keepers Attitudes - Conclusions

• Police most negative, then healthcare workers, and social workers most tolerant
• Most unacceptable (for all) - same-sex marriages and raising/adoption of children by same-sex families
• Gate keepers are more tolerant if they personally know someone who is LGBT in their close environment

What should be done:
• Sensitization of gate keepers
• National campaigns to reduce stigma against LGBT
• Training for communities on countering stigma and discrimination
Internalized Homophobia and Access to Services

Most of respondents are young, highly educated, employed, irreligious big cities' inhabitants
8239 respondents from 12 countries

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Russia</th>
<th>Ukraine</th>
<th>Belarus</th>
<th>Other countries</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Respondents</td>
<td>5252</td>
<td>1365</td>
<td>495</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Gay / homosexual: 100%
- Bisexual: 64%
- Straight / heterosexual: 27%
- Another term: 2%
- I don't use terms / Don't know: 6%

- Master degree / equivalent: 100%
- Higher education below master degree: 37%
- Vocational: 31%
- Secondary: 13%
- Below secondary: 11%
- PhD / equivalent: 5%
- (MUST BE MOVED ABOVE MASTER!!!!): 4%

Distribution by size of domicile:
- Capital city
- Another big city (>= 100,000)
- Town
- Rural area

Share of the HIV-positive among the respondents who was tested for HIV, %:
- Armenia
- Ukraine
- Moldova
- Georgia
- Russia
- Kazakhstan
- Macedonia
- Lithuania / Estonia
- Kyrgyzstan
- Belarus
- Russia
Internalized Homophobia (2)

Average acceptance of homosexuality by MSM in 12 countries

Acceptance of own homosexuality prevails over its rejection among the surveyed MSM.

Important: the sample was not statistically representative. Results should be applied very cautiously to overall MSM populations in respective countries.
Internalized Homophobia (3)

Associations between the coverage by MSM services and internalized homonegativity

Scale of own homosexuality acceptance (aka Short Internalized Homonegativity Scale).
1 - Total non-acceptance, 7 - Total acceptance

Communication with other MSM

Joint events with MSM

Information about HIV & STIs

Information about sexual health

Psychologist

Lawyer

Medical doctor

Free HIV testing

Free testing for other STIs

Free antiseptics

Free condoms

Free lubricants

Associations are significant even controlling for other variables.
Internalized Homophobia (3)

Associations between the coverage by MSM services and internalized homonegativity

Scale of own homosexuality acceptance (aka Short Internalized Homonegativity Scale).
1 - Total non-acceptance, 7 - Total acceptance

Associations are significant even controlling for other variables.
Internalized Homophobia and Access to Services - Conclusions

• High IH is a barrier to HIV response, incl. HIV testing and prevention services, and to contacts with LGBT organizations

• LGBT activism and participation is stronger when acceptance of homosexuality is high

What should be done:
• Include SOGI as explicit in antidiscrimination legislation
• Support community mobilization
• Organize safe spaces / community centers, include psychological and legal counseling in the package of services
ECOM: Developing Advocacy, Activism and Partnerships

Key Advocacy Objectives
- Participation of MSM and Trans People in national HIV decision-making
- Strengthening Strategic Information on HIV among MSM and Trans People
- Domestic Resource Mobilization
- Creating Enabling Legal Environment
- Combatting SOGI-based stigma and discrimination
Combatting Stigma

- Legal Literacy Trainings for Activists
- Monitoring of Violations of Rights to Health
- ToT on Working with Public Officials
128 cases, 2017-2018
33% (43 cases) – healthcare workers and / or organizations

- National Reports on Violations of the Right to Health
- Reporting to UN Treaty Bodies
- Preparation of UPR shadow reports
- Meetings with UN Expert on SOGI
International Standards and Principles on SOGI and HIV

Relevant UN and Council of Europe recommendations, UN covenants, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, UNAIDS recommendations, Yogyakarta Principles.
Epidemiological Briefs on HIV among MSM in EECA Countries
Regional Media Campaign

- 2018 - Partnership campaign of 9 regional networks for AIDS-2018
- 2019: ECOM - focus on gay men, other MSM and trans people
- Decrease the barriers for access to services by addressing discrimination, public stigma, stigma within LGBT community
Thank you!

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