

HIV RISK AND HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS AMONG AFRICAN GAY MEN AND OTHER MEN WHO HAVE SEX WITH MEN (MSM)

Stefan Baral, MD, MPH

Johns Hopkins School of Public Health

Overview



- Epidemics of HIV among MSM in lower income settings
- Gay men and other MSM in Africa
- Research
 - ▣ Context and Objectives
 - ▣ Study Design
 - ▣ Results
- Conclusions

Background

- HIV epidemic spread among MSM is occurring in both high and low income settings in 2009
- Lower income HIV epidemics among MSM are underway in Latin America, Asia, Eastern Europe/FSU, and Africa
- Many HIV epidemics among MSM are occurring in “hidden” contexts of discrimination, stigma, criminalization, and limited HIV surveillance
- This study was the first attempt to link individual level rights abrogations to HIV biological outcomes in the African context.

MSM in Africa

- Increasing amount of information available since 2006
 - HIV Risk Status
 - Reports from Ghana, Nigeria, Zambia, Tanzania, Uganda, Kenya, Senegal, Ethiopia describe high rates of UAI and a population in need of basic HIV interventions
 - As of Feb, 2009, there are still only two peer-reviewed publications of HIV rates among MSM in Africa (Senegal, Kenya)
 - Sexual Identity
 - Recent reports from Kenya and Uganda describe a more visible (reachable) and demographically diverse population than a decade ago
 - Encouragingly, communities of gay men in a few countries of Africa are now more actively demanding that their health care and HIV prevention needs are addressed

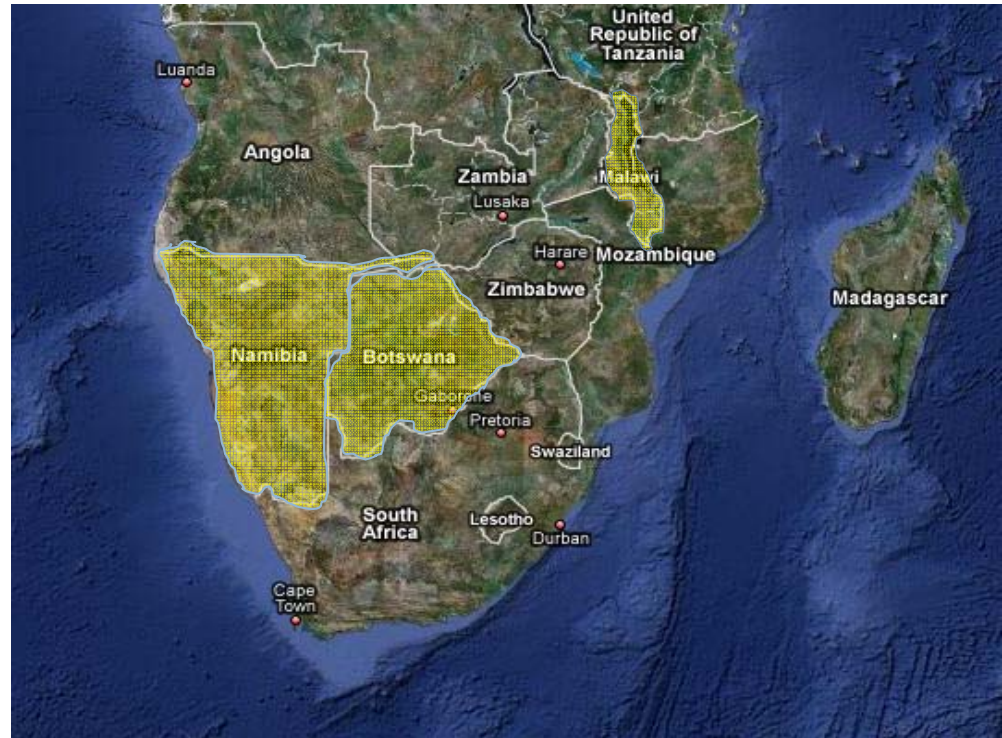
HIV Prevalence Rates among African MSM (Dec, 2008)

Country	Sample Size	MSM Prevalence (95% CI)	15+ HIV Prevalence
Senegal	943	21.6 (19.0-24.3)	0.88%
South Africa	574	15.3 (12.4-18.3)	15.89%
Zambia	641	32.9 (29.3-36.6)	15.72%
Kenya	1125	15.6 (13.5-17.7)	7.49%
Tanzania	509	12.4 (9.5-15.2)	5.88%
Malawi	201	21.4 (15.7-27.1)	11.46%
Nigeria	1961	13.5 (12.0-15.0)	2.88%
Sudan	1119	8.8 (7.1-10.4)	1.26%
Egypt	340	5.3 (2.9-7.7)	0.02%
Total	6470	15.7 (14.9-16.5)	5.00%

- Where studied, there is disproportionate HIV burden among MSM

Study Sites

- Namibia, Botswana, Malawi
 - ▣ No data on MSM
 - ▣ High HIV prevalence countries
 - ▣ CBO with experience working with MSM



- Namibia
 - The Rainbow Project (TRP)
- Botswana
 - Botswana Network on Ethics, Law and HIV/AIDS (BONELA)
- Malawi
 - Center for Development of People (CEDEP)

Study

- HIV Prevalence, Risks for HIV Infection, and Human Rights among MSM in Malawi, Namibia, and Botswana
 - ▣ Objectives
 - Evaluate HIV prevalence and risk status among MSM in each of these countries
 - Demonstrate need for targeted HIV prevention expenditures from regional, national, and international funding agencies
 - Characterize human rights contexts
 - Relationship of rights violations and HIV risk and infection

Study Design

- HIV Prevalence Probe Design
 - ▣ Men, 18 or older, who have ever had anal sex with another man recruited with snowball sampling
 - Gaborone, Lilongwe, Windhoek
- Key informant interviews used to develop protocol and structured survey instrument
- Community partner staff trained in research methods, subjects protection, HIV screening methodology
 - ▣ 537 men recruited for study
 - ▣ Structured quantitative survey instrument
 - ▣ OraSure HIV rapid kit screen (oral fluid samples)

Participant Characteristics

Characteristic		Malawi	Namibia	Botswana
Age	Mean	25.6	24.4	25.8
Education	Secondary or more	99.5%	90.4	98.3%
Self-Reported Sexual Orientation	Heterosexual	6.5%	19.4%	3.4%
	Gay/Homosexual	40.5%	48.6%	66.7%
	Bisexual	53%	29.1%	29.1%
	Transgender	0	2.9%	0.9%
Disclosed sexual orientation to	A family member	17%	44.5%	60.3%
	A Health Care Worker	8.9%	21.6%	24.1%

HIV Prevalence

HIV Prevalence	Malawi	Namibia	Botswana
	Estimate (n - 95% CI)	Estimate (n - 95% CI)	Estimate (n - 95% CI)
All Ages	21.4% (201 - 16.3-27.6)	12.4% (218 - 8.7-17.4)	19.7% (117 - 13.5-27.8)
Age 18-23	15.2% (79 - 8.9-24.7)	3.5% (113 - 1.4-8.8)	8.2% (49 - 3.2-19.2)
Age 24-29	21.6% (88 - 14.3-31.3)	17.1% (70 - 10.1-27.6)	21.2% (52 - 12.2-34.0)
Age \geq 30 (max 51)	35.3% (34 - 21.5-52.1)	31.4% (35 - 18.6-48.0)	46.7% (15 - 24.8-70.0)
Aware of HIV status	4.7%	59.2%	17.4%

Overall HIV prevalence = 17.4% (95% CI 14.4-20.8)

Univariate Associations with HIV

- Pooled across all three countries
 - Self-reporting as homosexual
 - Likely a marker of sexual positioning
 - Not always wearing condoms with men
 - Having been diagnosed with an STI
 - Had Transactional Sex
- Ever Arrested
 - Malawi, Botswana
- Ever Raped
 - Botswana

Human Rights Contexts

Characteristic	Malawi	Namibia	Botswana	Pooled
Denied housing other than not being able to pay	6.5%	8.3%	5.2%	6.9% (37/534)
Denied health care based on sexuality	4.0%	8.3%	0.9%	5.1% (27/533)
Afraid to seek health services	17.59%	18.3%	20.5%	18.5% (99/535)
Afraid to walk in community	15.5%	16.7%	29.1%	19.0% (101/532)
Blackmailed because of sexuality	18.0%	21.3%	26.5%	21.2% (113/533)
Yes to any of the above related to sexuality	34.3%	41.5%	56.9%	42.1% (222/527)

Associations with Rights Violations

- Men who reported blackmail
 - Much more likely to have disclosed sexual orientation to a family member
 - Less likely to have had HIV test in last 6 months
 - More likely to be afraid to seek health care

- Disclosing sexual orientation to health care workers
 - Highly associated with being denied health care
 - Much less likely to have had a HIV test in last 6 months

Limitations

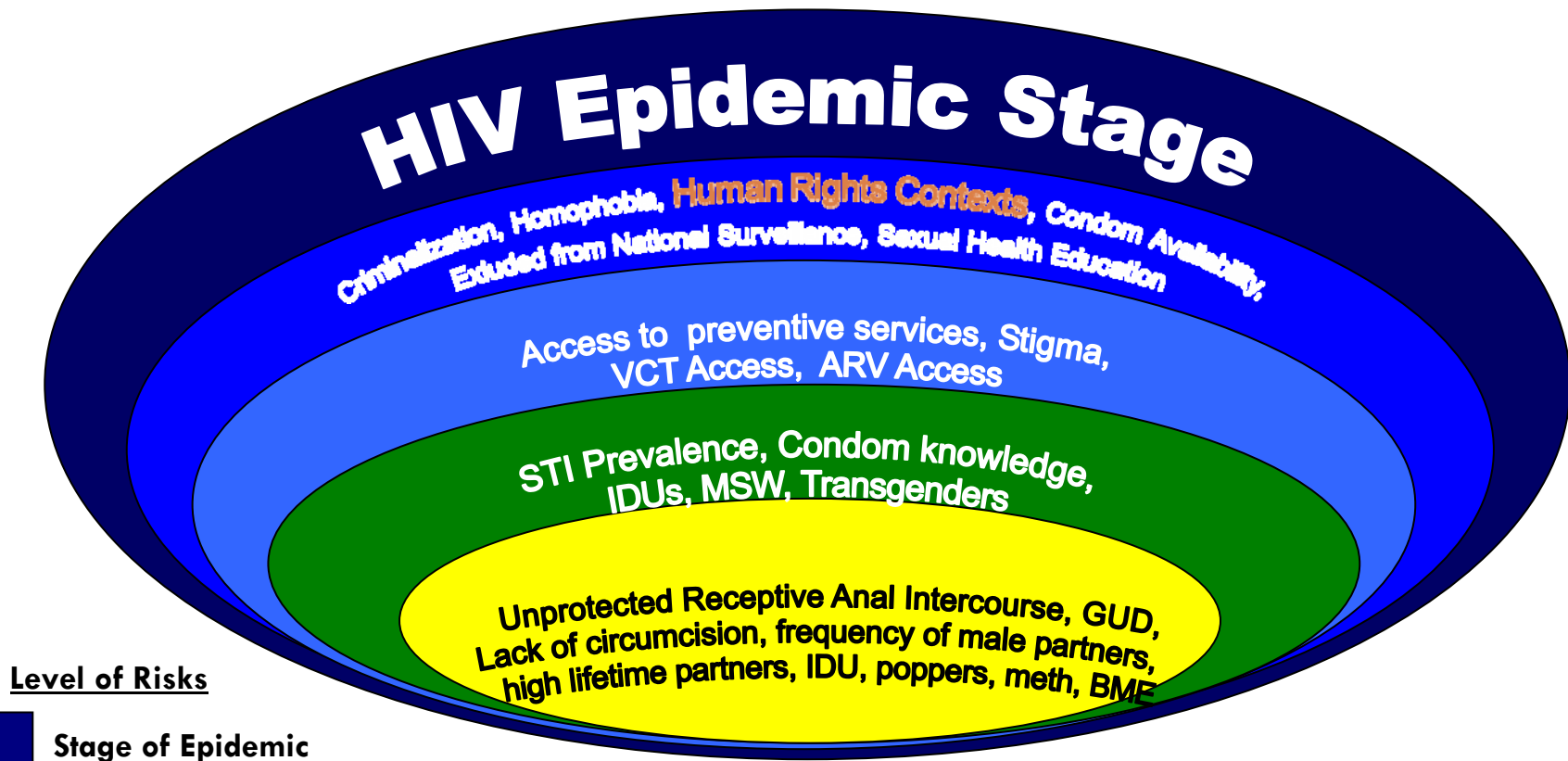
- Cross-Sectional Design
 - ▣ Unable to establish directions of causality
- Snowball Sampling only in urban centers
 - ▣ Results have limited generalizability
 - ▣ May underestimate risk as these men are in shared social and sexual networks as service providers

Conclusions



- In Malawi, Namibia, Botswana
 - ▣ Gay men and other MSM exist
 - ▣ These men are at high risk for HIV
- Powerful reminder of the level of stigma, discrimination and human rights abuses that these men face in their everyday lives, including
 - ▣ being denied housing and healthcare
 - ▣ being afraid to walk down the streets of one's community
 - ▣ or being afraid to seek health care services

Ecological Model for HIV Risk in MSM



Level of Risks

Stage of Epidemic

Public Policy

Community

Network

Individual

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