

MSM and Drug Use in the Asia Pacific Region



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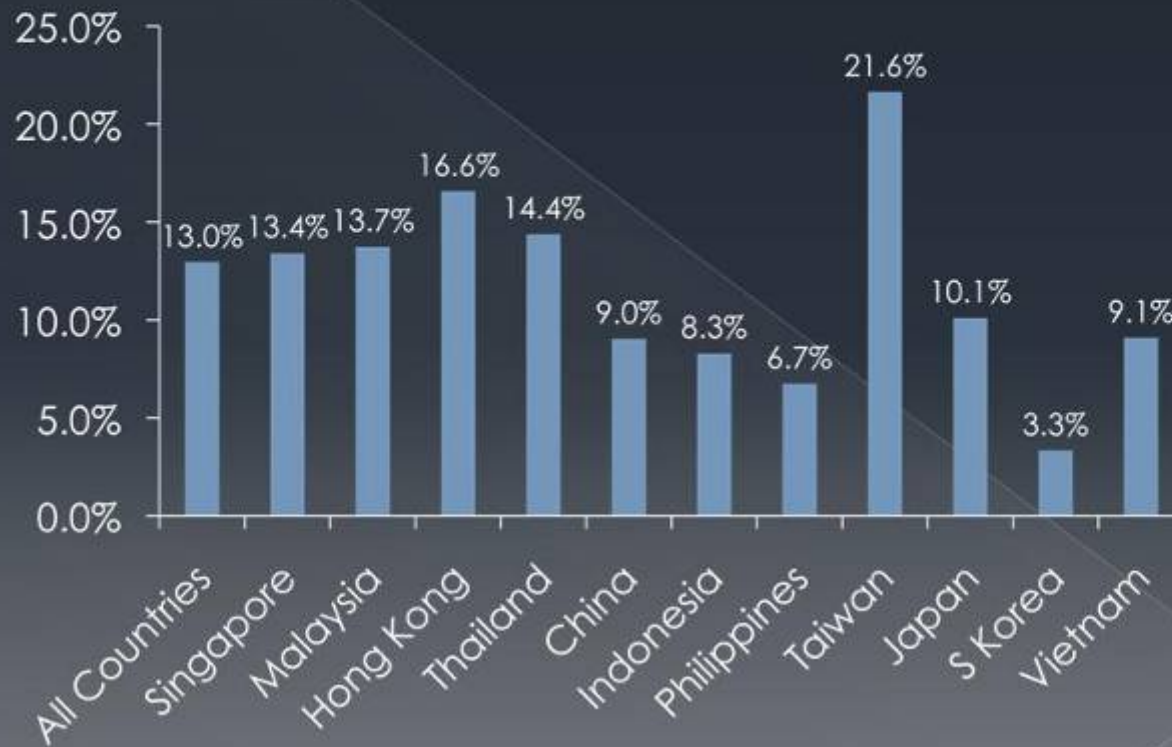
Acknowledgments

- Simon Baldwin, Harm Reduction Adviser, FHI/APRO and Vietnam
- Stuart Koe, C.E.O. Fridae.com, Singapore
- Frits van Griensven, Thai US Collaboration, Bangkok, Thailand

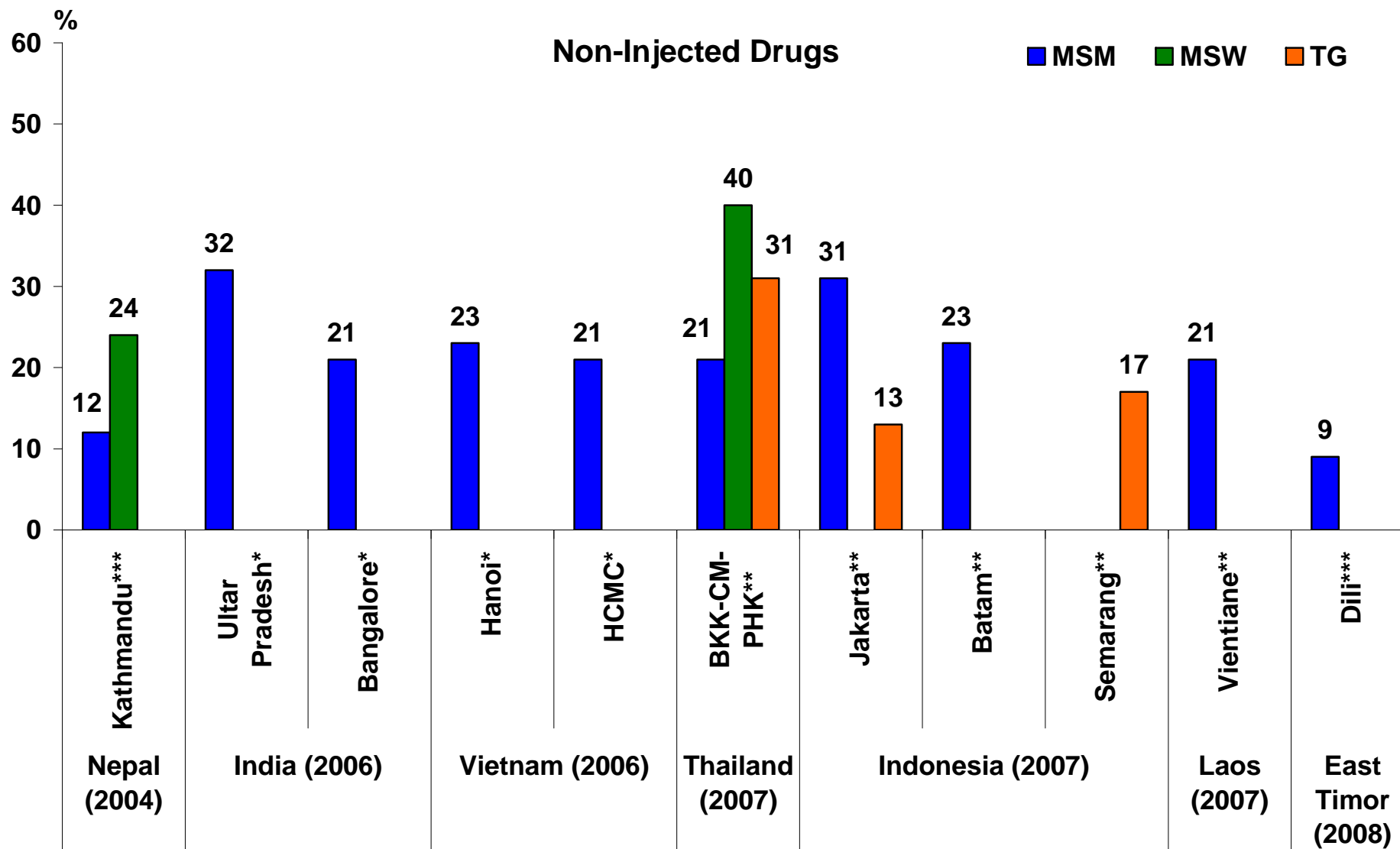
Outline

- Overview of the situation in Asia: Non-injecting and Injecting Drugs
- Main reasons for using drugs
- Drug use & behaviors
- Drug use and medical and psychological issues
- Drug use and HIV
- Conclusion
- Key recommendations

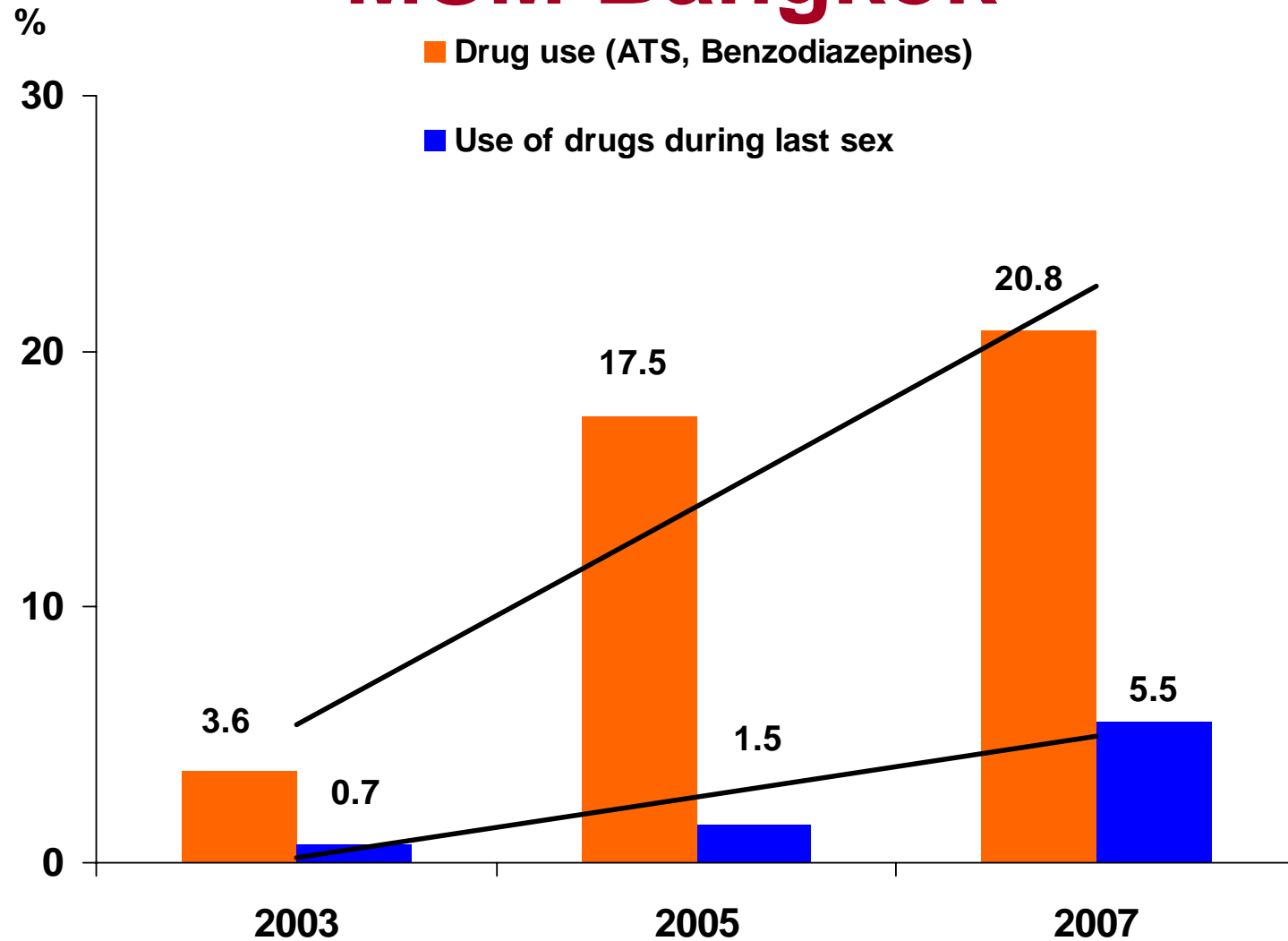
Drugs + Sex



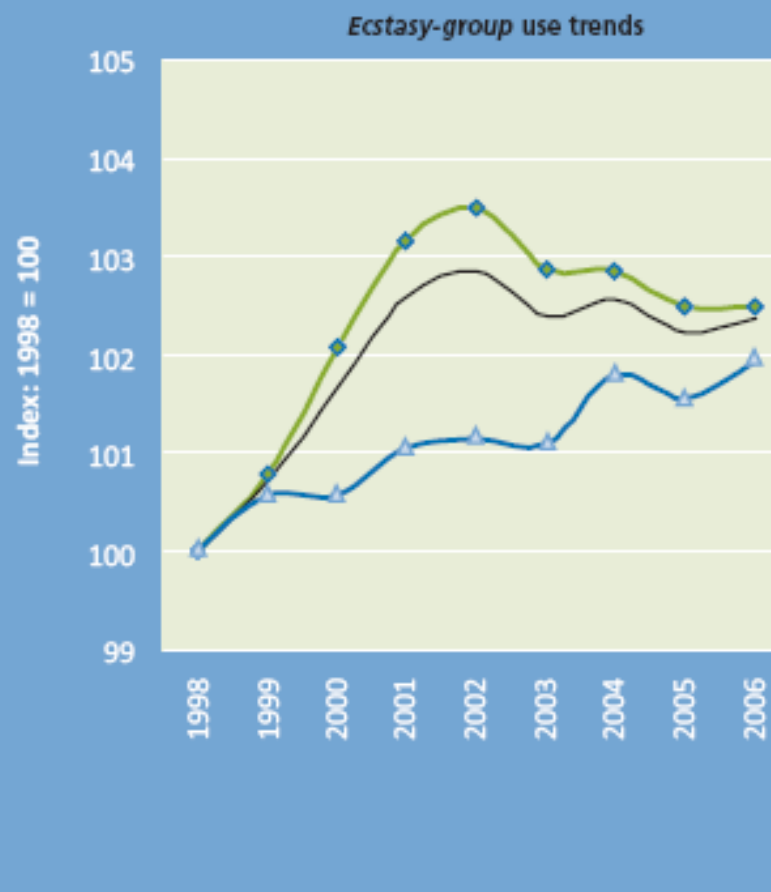
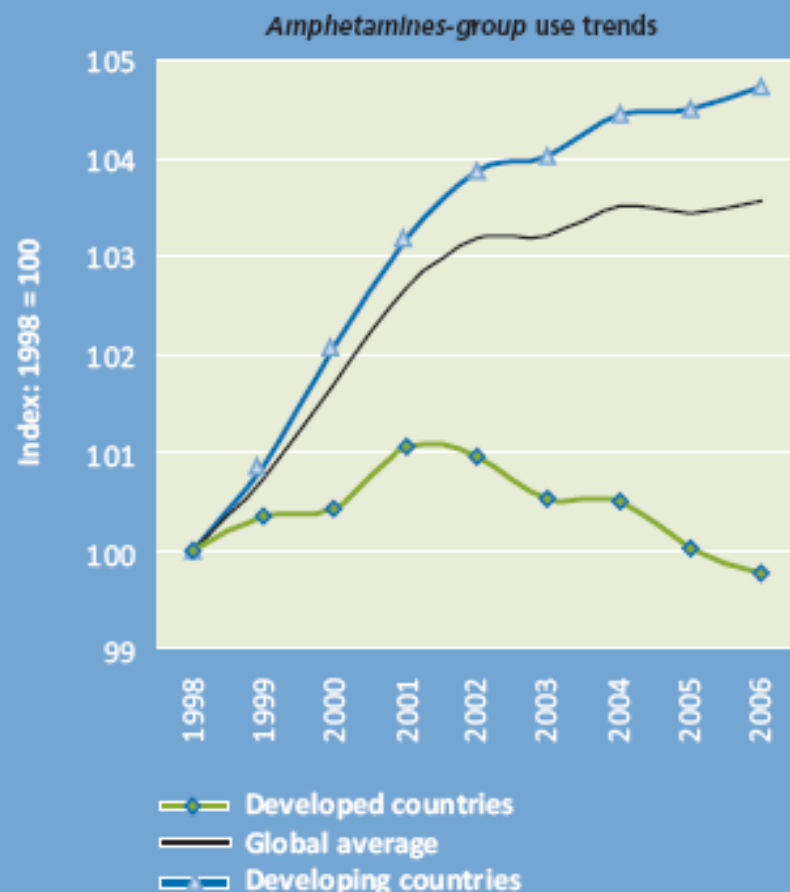
Data from IBBS/National Surveillance



Upward Trends in Thailand MSM Bangkok



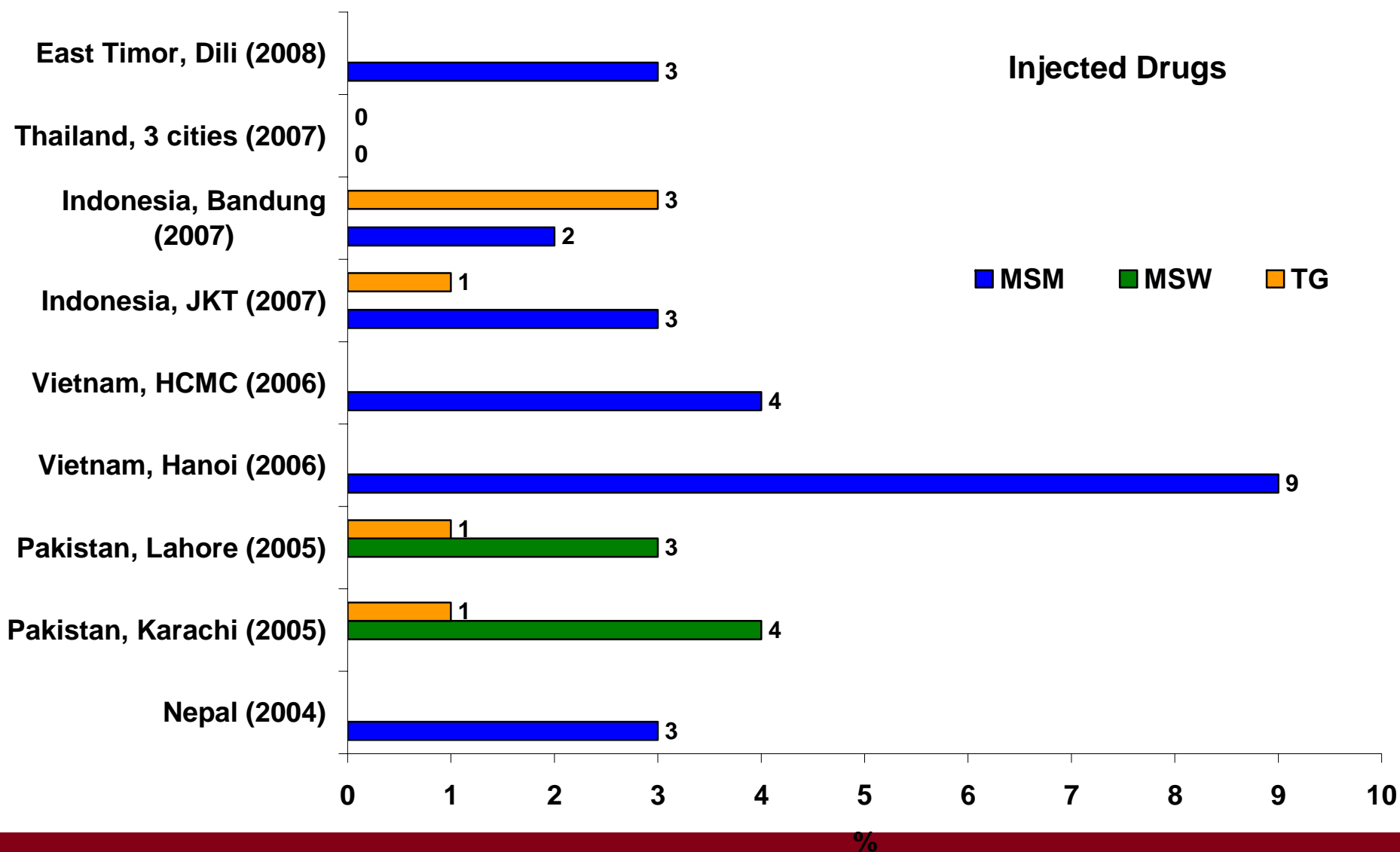
ATS use trends as perceived by experts, by substance, developed* and developing** countries 1998-2006



* OECD countries
 ** Non-OECD countries

Sources: UNODC ARQ; UNODC Field Offices; Drug Abuse Information Network for Asia and the Pacific (DAINAP); UNODC, Global Assessment Programme on Drug Abuse (GAP); Govt. reports; EMCDDA; CICAD; HONLEA reports and local studies

Injecting Drugs in Selected Countries



Reasons of Using Drugs

- Energy
- Sexual enhancement: better sex, more sex, more anal sex
- Social connection: more sociable and fit-in in other MSM
- Coping with stressors
- More focus on work, higher productivity
- Decrease appetite
- Feelings of invulnerability

Drug Use and Sexual Behaviors

- Increasing sexual desire and decreased inhibitions
 - Interfere with the ability and desire to practice safer sex → leading to UAI and STI/HIV infection / transmission
 - Multiple partners
 - Prolong intercourse

Drug Use and Medical & Psychological Issues

- Cardiovascular issues: increased heart rate and blood pressure, tachycardia...
- General medical issues: skin problems, dental diseases...
- Overdose with severe hyperthermia and convulsions, stroke...
- Psychological issues: euphoria, anxiety, insomnia, hypervigilance, paranoia...

Drug Use and HIV

- Decrease adherence to ARV treatment
- Decrease the effectiveness of ARV therapy:
interactions with certain ARV:

Drug -Resistance

Other Impacts

- Stigma
- Impact of law enforcement
- Traffic accidents

Conclusion

- Supportive evidence of emerging epidemic of drug use among MSM
- Lack of data explaining patterns of drugs which are needed to develop relevant interventions addressing these issues
- Interventions reaching this specific MSM segment are lacking
- Current laws in this region are not favorable for accessing specific prevention and treatment services

Recommendations: *Strategic Information*

- Systematic review of the issue in the region
- Surveillance system (MSM): systematic inclusion of questions on drug use (both injected and non-injected drugs, and types of drug)
- Formative research and/or focused ethnographic study

Recommendations: *Behavioral Interventions*

- Guided by harm reduction principles (decreasing the risks) and integrated in MSM CBOs/NGOs program
 - Buddy system in places where drugs are used (circuit party, rave, disco, group sex...) with availability of condoms and lube
 - For injecting drugs: needle exchange whenever is possible, or bleach cleaning kit

Recommendations:

Behavioral Interventions

- Referral for substitution treatment (when available and applicable), and clinical services
- Behavioral interventions such as counseling, contingency management, and support-group
- Targeted multimedia campaign reaching this specific segment

Recommendations: *Advocacy and Policy*

- Collaborating with existing national and regional harm reduction networks vs. working in isolation or reinventing the wheel
- Regional and sub-regional MSM networks should also involve technical experts and “activists” from harm reduction networks as advisers

Thanks!



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