

Young men who have sex with men and HIV

*Cross cutting issues in Asia and the
Pacific*

Presented By

Rob Sutherland

- Defining young MSM as a population
- Evidence and why young MSM are important to the HIV response
- Young HIV positive MSM as a key population
- Key principles of good practice

Who are young MSM?

- The term 'young MSM' masks a huge disparity in physical and cognitive development
- Young MSM are not a homogenous group
- Language and defining our target populations is important but not as important as developing age appropriate policies and programs

Challenges facing young MSM

- Young MSM are within an identified (MSM) population at higher risk of HIV transmission
- Also within a population (youth) that has certain identified vulnerabilities
- The influences that have the greatest impact on young MSMs vulnerability to HIV are varied and complex and require appropriate attention in both country and regional HIV responses

HIV prevalence and risk behaviour

- General lack of age disaggregated data
- Significant rates of HIV prevalence and/or risk behaviour among young MSM in many locations where reliable data exists.
- Sharing many of the same risk behaviours of MSM generally
- Young sample age of many MSM studies

Young HIV positive MSM

- Face the unique challenge of dealing with the stigma relating to HIV plus the stigma relating to being gay/bisexual at a time when they are likely to be dealing with accepting their sexual identity
- Young HIV positive MSM are an important population to engage, both in terms of care and support and HIV prevention

A model for assessing the needs of young HIV positive MSM

1. Peer support
2. Peer leadership training
3. Data collection process:
 - Discussion nights
 - Online survey
4. Data analysis
5. Programmatic response

Key principles

- Reaching young MSM before they become sexually active.
- The need for HIV and STIs to be addressed through a broad health framework
- The importance of peer based education
- Using innovative methodologies to engage a younger population
- Community based organisations as providers

Involving young MSM

- Involvement and building the capacity of young MSM in order to participate in all levels of the response, including:
 - program development and implementation
 - research
 - policy and strategic planning
 - advocacy and representation

ACON, Sydney Australia

- Established in 1985, ACON is Australia's largest community-based gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender (GLBT) health and HIV/AIDS organisation.
- ACON works to improve the health and wellbeing of the GLBT community and people with HIV, and reduce HIV transmission.

www.acon.org.au

Contact Details

Rob Sutherland
Campaigns Coordinator
ACON
+61 2 9206 2106

rsutherland@acon.org.au