I. THE CURRENT SITUATION

Epidemiology

- In 2005-06, the estimated size of the entire MSM population was 70,854 to 155,879. Another rough estimate put the figure at 110,000. These estimates were not based on scientific methods. (References: 3, 25)

- The Korean Government does not publish any official statistics on the size of the MSM and TG population. (3)

- In 2005, the estimated number of people who openly identify as homosexual or bisexual was 10,000 to 34,000. (22)

- The estimated HIV prevalence rate for MSM and TG was 5.5% in 2006. (22)

- The general population prevalence rate is approximately less than 0.1%. (13, 20, 23)

- The HIV prevalence among MSM is at least 55 times higher than the HIV prevalence rate in the general population, and 66 times higher than the HIV prevalence rate in the general population of people who have STIs, which is already considered a high risk group in Korea. (22)

- In 2005 and 2006, 35.8 and 36.6% of known HIV cases were due to male-male sex. (22, 23)

Behaviour, Knowledge and Social Research relating to HIV

- A study in 2005 of 264 people attending VCT sites found that 85% of MSM reported never/inconsistent condom use. (21)

- In 2005, 52.1% had never been tested for HIV. (21)

Legal Situation and Law Enforcement Authorities

- Sex between males is legal. (24)

- Sex work is illegal. (3, 11)

- Legislation aiming to protect the rights of MSM has been proposed. It is unclear whether it has been passed. (24)

- The AIDS Prevention Act, 1987 protects HIV positive individuals from undue discrimination and ensures privacy. However, there are some human rights concerns contained in this law. Positive people must inform their sex partners of their status; they must register with the government; and they must receive treatment (or face prison/a large fine). The law also forbids HIV positive people from certain occupations. (11, 22)

- There is no legal rape protection for MSM or transgender people. (3)

- The legal system has been classified as “protective” for MSM/TG in two UN legal reviews. (4, 24)

MSM Community, other Social Research and Stigma/Discrimination

- There are gay, lesbian and umbrella groups in the Republic of Korea. (3)

- Since 2000, the Queer Cultural Festival – Rainbow Parade – has become an annual event. (3)

- It has been reported that homosexuality is portrayed very negatively in the media, but there have been some more recent positive portrayals. (3)

- Issues with stigma and discrimination against MSM in the military have been reported. (3)

- As of 2006, the Office of Statistics no longer directly ties homosexuality to mental disturbances. (19)

- Stigma and discrimination has been cited as a reason why Korean MSM may not come forward for HIV testing or reveal their sexual orientations when tested. (22)
**II. THE RESPONSE TO HIV**

**Government Response**
- There is no specific program line or budget line for MSM in the national strategic plan (NSP). (10)
- It is not clear if MSM is included in the most-at-risk populations in the NSP. (10)
- The current NSP ends in 2010. (10)
- In 2008, the government reported did not report on any of the 5 UNGASS indicators directly relevant to MSM. (1)

**Community-based Response**
- MSM are formally and informally organised, with CBOs and social networks. (3,24)
- Over 20 organisations joined to form the Lesbian and Gay Alliance Against Discrimination. (24)
- However, it is not clear how many MSM community organisations in Korea focus on HIV.

**Support from local NGOs, multi-laterals and international NGOs**
- Work with MSM is conducted by various NGOs, including the Korean Alliance to Defeat AIDS, the Korean Anti-AIDS Federation, the Salvation Army and the Republic of Korea Red Cross. (22)

**Strategic Information**
- It has been reported that research on MSM in Korea is scarce. (22)

**Health System**
- No information was found concerning MSM-friendly clinics in Korea.
- The government pays for monitoring of immunological status and 100% of ARVs for people living with HIV. (22)

**National and International Networks**
- The Republic of Korea is involved in the newly formed Developed Asia Network.

**III. THE RESULTS**

- No relevant information was identified relating to coverage of prevention; coverage of treatment, care, support; resource estimation and gaps; or effectiveness of prevention efforts.
IV. RECOMMENDED RESPONSES

List of recommended actions

• Remove laws impeding effective HIV prevention, including laws affecting sex workers.

• The to-be-developed National Strategic Plan 2011-2015 should include a costed comprehensive response for MSM and TG.

• More systematic and regular surveillance of HIV rates, risk behaviors and MSM communities.

• Fully fund prevention programs, including condom and lubricant provision, peer education and outreach, community development, mass media, and individual counseling.

• Develop the capacity of MSM community-based organizations to provide advocacy and peer-based programs.

• Scale up MSM-friendly VCT and sexual health screening centers.

• Expand care, treatment and support facilities for HIV-positive MSM and TG.

• Address stigma and discrimination toward PLHIV in MSM communities.

• Specific prevention activities should focus on transgender people.

V. REFERENCES

All references are available at:
www.apcom.org/snapshots2010.html

Other details from UNAIDS can be found at:
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