I. THE CURRENT SITUATION

**Epidemiology**

- There is no official size estimate for MSM and TG in Singapore.

- The estimated HIV prevalence rate for MSM was 4.2% in 2007. (References: 12,27)

- In the Action for AIDS Singapore (an NGO) testing centre, the prevalence among MSM patients rose from 3.5% in 2003 to 6.4% in 2006. Since then it has been decreasing with a prevalence of 5.7% in 2007, 4.7% in 2008 and 2.8% in 2009. (3,23,31)

- In 2009, an internet-based study of 1994 MSM, where 62% were aged between 21-35 years old, 3.8% of MSM reported being HIV positive. (23)

- Out of 463 newly reported cases of HIV in 2009, 166 were in MSM, which was 36% of the total. In 2008, there were 185 cases and in 2007 there were 145 cases among MSM. The 2010 UNGASS report stated that 28% of HIV transmission is homosexual or bisexual. (27,30,31)

- In a 2008-09 study, MSM recruited into the study from saunas had a prevalence of 4.13%, while the prevalence among men recruited from bars was 2.63%. (23)

- In 2008, the HIV prevalence among MSM was estimated to be 21 times higher than the general population prevalence rate of 0.2%. In 2010, the general population HIV prevalence was reported as 0.09. (12,25,30)

- In 2008, statistics from the only public STI clinic in Singapore showed that 36.4% of MSM had rectal Chlamydia, 30.3% had urethral gonorrhea, and 23.4% had syphilis. Over 80% had anal warts (HPV). (23)

**Behaviour, Knowledge and Social Research relating to HIV**

- In 2009, at the last occasion of anal sex with a regular partner, 55% of MSM in a large internet-based study used condoms. At the last occasion of anal sex with a casual partner, 83% used condoms. (23)

- In 2006, 51% of MSM did not regularly use condoms with partners or boyfriends in the previous 3 months, and 33% did not regularly use condoms with casual partners in the previous 3 months. (1)

- In 2006, 50% of MSM had multiple sex partners in the last 3 months. (1)

- In 2006, 70% of MSM had been tested for HIV and knew the result. In 2009, the internet study of 1994 MSM showed that 49% had had an HIV test in the last 12 months. (1,23)

**Legal Situation and Law Enforcement Authorities**

- Sex between males is illegal under Section 377A of the Penal Code. The Prime Minister has stated that this law will not be enforced. (26)

- MSM can also be prosecuted under other laws, and freedom of assembly and association is limited for sexual minorities. (26)

- In 2006, it was reported that MSM and HIV workers did not face harassment from law enforcement authorities. However, in 2009, it was reported that CBOs have been asked to stop distributing materials, and that police interventions at gay venues have interrupted HIV prevention programs. Venue owners reported being scared to provide condoms. (21,25,28)

- Transgender (TG) people who have sex reassignment surgery are permitted to marry someone of the opposite sex. (26)

- The Health Ministry makes it mandatory to inform spouses of HIV patients, and if an HIV positive individual is unwilling or unable to notify partners, physicians or the government may be legally authorized to do so. (9,18)
SINGAPORE

MSM Country Snapshots – Country Specific Information on HIV, men who have sex with men (MSM) and transgender people (TG)

II. THE RESPONSE TO HIV

Government Response

- There is a specific program line and budget line for MSM in the national strategic plan (NSP 2006-2010). (21)
- The NSP includes: HIV prevention, peer outreach, STI services, and condom distribution. (11,21)
- The current NSP ends in 2010. (11)
- In 2008 and 2010, the Government of Singapore did not report on any of the 5 UNGASS indicators directly relevant to MSM. (2,30)
- In 2006, it was reported that there is MSM-related leadership in Singapore. (21)

Community-based Response

- MSM are formally and informally organised, with CBOs, and social networks. (21)

Strategic Information

- It has been reported that research on MSM in Singapore is not ongoing. (21)
- However, MSM are included in the surveillance system, which also includes behavioural surveillance. (21)

National and International Networks

- Singapore is part of the newly formed Developed Asia Network.

• The Singapore National Employers’ Federation allows an HIV positive employee to be fired if a large number of colleagues are unwilling to work with them. (28)
• HIV status is not necessarily considered private information in the workplace. (16)

MSM Community, other Social Research and Stigma/Discrimination

• Singapore has gay bars, saunas and dance events. (23)
• There is little published information about the MSM community in Singapore.
• In a representative sample of 1004 Singaporean citizens, 68.6% expressed negative views toward lesbians and gay men, and were intolerant toward media portrayals of lesbians and gay men. (8)
III. THE RESULTS

- No relevant information 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 criminalizing male-male sex and 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: