

FACT SHEET: HIV among Gay and Bisexual Men and Other Men Who Have Sex with Men

BACKGROUND

Gay and bisexual men and other men who have sex with men are among the small number of remaining groups for which the HIV epidemic remains uncontrolled worldwide. Inability to mount responses based on epidemiologic and published research threatens to undermine gains made in reaching global targets set by UNAIDS.

KEY FACTS

- In most parts of the world outside of Eastern and Southern Africa, HIV prevalence is less than 1% of the general adult population while prevalence among men who have sex with men is well over 10% [1].
- In high-income countries, HIV is most prevalent among gay and bisexual men and other men who have sex with men [2].
- In low- and middle-income countries, men who have sex with men are 19 times more likely to be living with HIV compared with people in the general population and represent an estimated 10% of all new infections each year [3].
- Even when there have been recent and notable decreases in new HIV infections, prevalence and incidence is consistently higher and rising among men who have sex with men compared with other groups [2, 4-6].
- For men who have sex with men, the high probability of HIV transmission from condomless receptive anal sex converges with multiple partner-level and socio-structural factors to heighten disease burden and disparities [7-10].
- Homosexuality is still criminalized in 78 countries [11].
- Criminalization encourages human rights abuses, violence, discrimination, and stigma, which worsen health disparities for men who have sex with men and their communities [12-14].
- Exclusion of men who have sex with men from national AIDS planning processes has contributed to inadequately funded, inaccessible, and poorly targeted programs [15].
- Total global investment in HIV prevention programs for men who have sex with men is less than 2% [16].
- HIV treatment coverage and effectiveness among men who have sex with men is nearly impossible to ascertain since governments remain reluctant to reliably and responsibly collect, disaggregate, and report data [15].
- According to UNAIDS, in 2014, 14 of 45 Sub-Saharan African countries reported any spending for men who have sex with men and only 2 reported any domestic spending [17].
- Provision of safe spaces and social support, and promotion of community coherence, participation, and inclusion can help to reduce the spread of HIV among men who have sex with men [18-21].



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OTHER RESOURCES

Unfinished Business: HIV among gay, bisexual men and other men who have sex with men, 2016.

Rights In Action: Access to HIV Services among Men Who Have Sex with Men, 2015.

