





Science and community in the response to HIV, STIs and co-infections in Asia and the Pacific

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PrEP, STI and the community in Vietnam

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Lighthouse is one of the first LGBTQ community led organization in Vietnam working to improve the sexual, reproductive health and rights of LGBTQ people; one particular focus is reduction of new HIV and STI infections.





Lighthouse is working in:

1. Implementing HIV prevention and intervention programs to reduce HIV new infection

- Being-a-friend models
- Service delivery (HIV lay test, self test, counseling, PrEP, PEP etc)
- Commodities distribution (condom, lubricants)
- Communications (social media, event, meeting, seminar etc)

2. Advocacy

- Raise community voice through collaboration with Global Fund (CCM), PEPFAR COP process)
- Transgender law
- Rights of People living with HIV
- Community testing acceptance policy



3. Researches

- Sexuality, stimulant and health of men who have sex with men in Viet Nam – 2014
- Stigma and discrimination against MSM and TG in healthcare setting in Viet Nam – 2016
- The barriers in accessing rights of LGBTQ people in Viet Nam
- Transgender Needs assessment in accessing healthcare services and other supporting services in Viet Nam (In process)
- Structural-community and individual-level barriers and facilitators affecting access to HIV services among men and trans women who have sex with men in Viet Nam (In process).



4. Capacity building

- Organize several capacity-building workshops on organizational development, HIV services delivery, counseling skills, advocacy skills, sexual and reproductive health knowledge, communication and mobilization etc. for other community-based organization.
- Organize sensitize healthcare providers training.
- Organize understanding on LGBTQ, SOGIE and gender diversity for the press and private company.



What do community based organizations in Vietnam look like?

- 70 MSM organizations and 30 TG organizations.
- Most funding have been cut down.
- High involvement but weak voice.
- Lack of capacity in many field.
- Social Enterprise is a trend for sustainable development of CBOs in Viet Nam.



What is the HIV, PrEP and STI context in Vietnam?

- HIV is increasing rapidly among MSM and TG community.
 - (7,36% among MSM)
 - (17% among transgender women)
 - Hanoi is highest city of HIV new infection in 2017.
- HIV lay and self testing ran by CBOs is effective
 - HIV positive detected is 6,8% among MSM via lay testing
 - HIV positive detected is 7,2% among MSM and TG via self testing



What is the HIV, PrEP and STI context in Vietnam?

- PrEP is available in Viet Nam
 - Healthy Market/USAID/PATH (From Feb – Sep 148 MSM used PrEP)
 - PrEP Viet/UNC (Start on 2018)
 - PrEP/UNAIDS (Starting recruitment)
- STI is a high burden but non-priority with donor and CBOs
 - Syphilis (18% among TG, 33,17% among MSM))
 - Chlamydia (19,02% among MSM)
 - Gonorrhoea (17% among MSM)
 - General STIs prevalence is 17,8%
- STI prevalence is very high, easy to re-infected and raise co-infection risk.



PrEP is an additional part of a comprehensive HIV prevention package, and it works for HIV.

But

“PrEP doesn’t work for STIs infection”

We are concerned that STIs will increase among MSM and transgender community after the introduction of PrEP.



Changes in STI prevalence in other countries after introduction of PrEP.

- Pathela et al. (2016) documented significant increases in condomless sex and STI risk among black MSM
- Lal et al. (2017) also found a significant decrease in condom use and increase in STIs among Australian PrEP users
- At a 12-month follow-up, past studies have shown up to 50% of PrEP users having an STI infection (Truong et al. 2006; Liu et al., 2015)



How CBOs can work to decrease anticipated STI increase?

From Lighthouse experience and ideas.

- Organize community meeting, event to change sexual health narratives around STIs.
- Raise awareness of STI alongside PrEP to encourage increased STI testing.
 - Sexual health seminar
 - Social media
 - Community events
 - Videos
 - Games online
- Create reliable, accessible, and comprehensive information for the community.



How CBOs can work to decrease anticipated STI increase?

From Lighthouse experience and ideas.

- Sensitize healthcare providers to provide friendly service
- Provide counseling on PrEP alongside STI risk.
- Follow-up and support adherence for PrEP users and build a PrEP user community.
- Link a comprehensive service package for PrEP use, which include STIs.
- Increase demands on PrEP use and STIs test.
- Perform STI lay and self test by the community.



What CBOs in Viet Nam need to tackle this problem?

1. Capacity training on PrEP and STI knowledge, lesson learnt, counseling skills, communication and community mobilization.
2. Community participatory research on PrEP and STIs.
3. Funding to organize community outreach and prevention activities.
4. Tools/materials available for CBOs.
5. STI self and lay test is available for CBOs.
6. Meaningful involve in PrEP research or programs as a partner to implement.
7. Develop a STI prevention guideline



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