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## CD-ROM Publication

### Track C - Population-based surveys with HIV testing

#### CDC0264 - High HIV/ STI prevalence among self-identified men who have sex with men in South India

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**Background:** Men who have sex with men (MSM) are a critical high-risk group covered by HIV intervention programs. Between 2006 and 2007, an Integrated Behavioral and Biological Assessment was conducted among self-identified MSM in 11 districts of Andhra Pradesh (AP), Maharashtra (MH), Karnataka (KA), and Tamil Nadu (TN) as part of an evaluation for Avahan, the India AIDS Initiative.

**Methods:** A cross-sectional survey of MSM was conducted using two-staged probability-based sampling design. Men or Hijra (transgenders) 18 years and older having had sex with a male in the last month were sampled using time-location sampling (TLS) method. After questionnaire, blood and urine specimens were collected to measure prevalence of HIV and STIs.

**Results:** Among 4,198 MSM, HIV prevalence ranged from 9.3% to 24.7% in AP, 10.2% to 17.4% in MH, 4.8% to 22.3% in TN, and 19.5% in KA. Prevalence of reactive syphilis serology, with positive confirmatory test, ranged from 3.5% in AP to 17.8% in TN. Prevalence of Gonorrhoea (<1%) as well as Chlamydia (<5%) was very low across all districts. MSM having regular male partners ranged from 41% in KA to 100% in AP, while those having regular female partners ranged 8% in TN to 66% in AP. MSM who bought sex from any male partner ranged from 12% in TN to 49% in MH; those who bought sex from any female partner ranged from 6% in TN to 64% in AP. Consistent condom use among MSM with all types of partners was low across many districts; it was as low as 0% with regular female partners, 1% with paid male partners, and 2% with regular male partners in AP.

**Conclusions:** HIV prevalence among self-identified MSM was very high in many districts. Consistent condom use with all types of partners, syphilis screening and treatment need to be significantly improved in the immediate future.

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