



# XVII INTERNATIONAL AIDS CONFERENCE

3-8 August 2008 | Mexico City

CD-ROM Publication

Track C - Prevention programmes for men who have sex with men (MSM)

CDC0844 - 'Gay Sex in the City', validation of a communication strategy to promote access to diagnosis and care services on HIV/AIDS and STIs for gay men (GM) in Bogotá

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**Background:** Based on the study "Access barriers to diagnosis and care in HIV/AIDS in vulnerable groups in Bogota" where GM's personal barriers were identified, including fear of diagnosis, lack of knowledge on how to access services, on health rights and on basic HIV/AIDS information, a communication strategy was designed to address them.

**Methods:** The strategy was designed with GM and validated by peer experts. The methodology used was a group talks to discuss access barriers, the design of the slogan, campaign name and information materials (including a calendar, coasters, magnets, leaflets and a magazine). Participants were contacted through group social networks. Qualitative and quantitative indicators and instruments were designed to measure impact.

**Results:** 174 GM participated in 21 talks. Pre-post evaluations indicated the following changes: HIV is a virus 76,2% pre, 91,3% post,  $p = (0,0000)$ ; a stable relationship is a form of prevention 11,5% pre, 6,8% post  $p=(0,0220)$ ; an HIV positive mother can pass the virus to her baby 20% pre, 50,5% post,  $p=(0,00000)$ ; HIV/AIDS is deadly 59,8% pre, 32,6% post,  $p= (0,0000)$ ; ARV therapy exists 95,7% pre, 96,9% post. 81,4% of participants have been tested at least once; the media for testing per person was 2,6. 97,6% reported intention to get tested in the pre and 99% in the post,  $p=(0,0390)$ . The average evaluation of the quality of the activity was 4,62/5. 15 men (8,6%) informed they were tested after the talks.

**Conclusions:** The increase in the intention to be tested, reduction of fears and improvement in the level of information should reduce barriers to access diagnosis. GM participation in the design was key to success. This strategy can also be an effective tool for prevention. There is a need for friendlier services for GM. The follow up to determine how many participants were tested after the talks was very difficult.

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