

**Title: Different HIV infection risk behaviors of Transgender people (TG) and MSM in Thailand**

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**Text:** **Background:** HIV prevalence among transgender people in Thailand is less than 10% in 2010, almost 10 times higher than the national rate. The National AIDS Strategy places MSM and TG in the same category for programming, yet they are very different in terms of needs and risk behaviors. Many data sources do not disaggregate between MSM and TG and many intervention programs put less effort for TG since their prevalence is less than MSM. Having exclusive data for TG will help encourage policy makers and program implementers to better prioritize and design policies and programs for TG.

**Methods:** The data is drawn from the client behavioral monitoring database of the Thai National MSM program under GFATM support. It was collected by outreach workers and peer educators in 30 provinces from mid-2010 to mid-2011. Behavioral monitoring forms were completed after reaching out to clients, who were not identified except for a unique identifier code (UIC) to avoid double counting. The study focuses on transgender people while presenting comparisons between TG and MSM.

**Results:** In the one-year period, data was collected on 47,760 clients who were eligible for the study; 10,669 cases (22.3 %) are transgender. TG significantly use condoms less than MSM and have less access to both VCT and STIs services.

**Conclusions:** Risk behaviors and health seeking behaviors of TG and MSM are different. TG program activities should be specifically designed to respond to their needs and risk behaviors based on evidence. TG peer educators and outreach workers should receive more opportunities for capacity building to understand this population. Gender differences among TG, including those who consider themselves as heterosexual, trans and homosexual should be taken in account, to help maximize the effectiveness of the intervention programs.

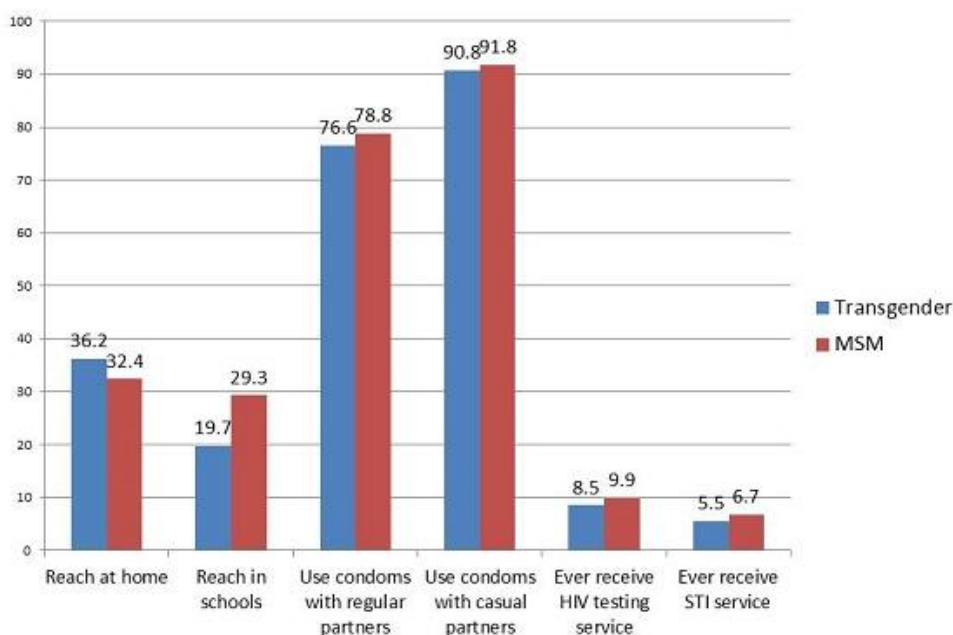


Figure 1: Different risk behaviors between transgender and MSM

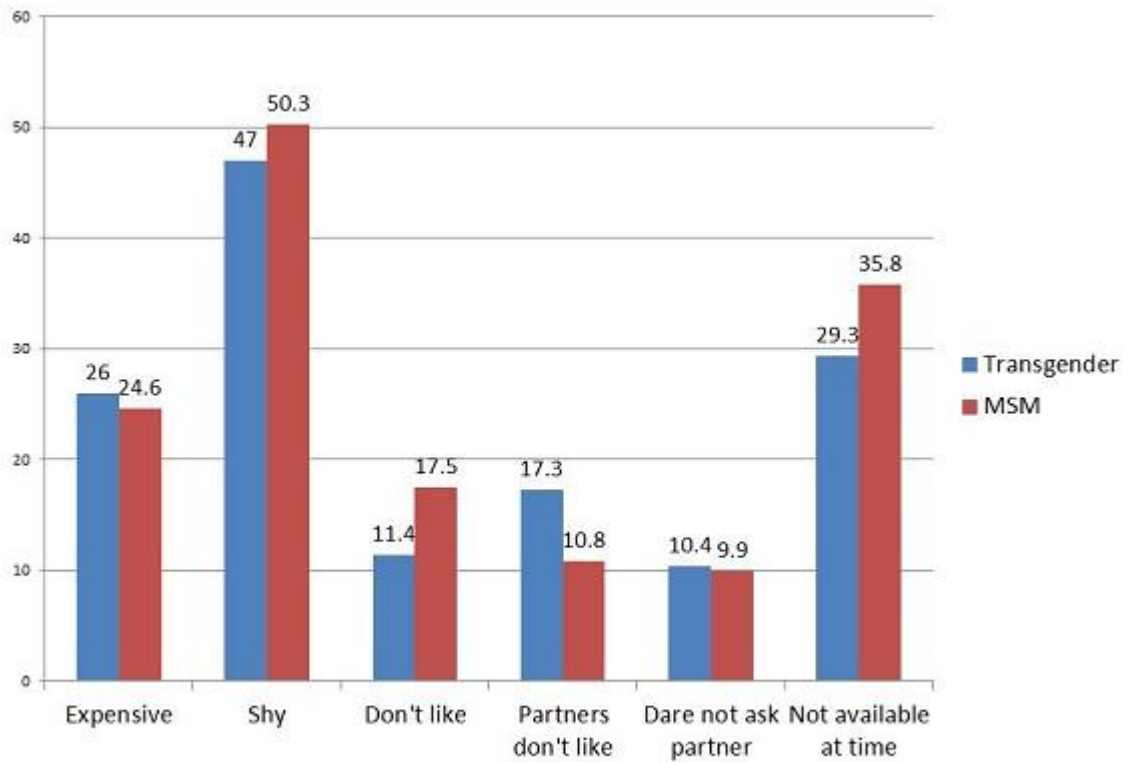


Figure 2: Reasons for not using condoms between transgender and MSM

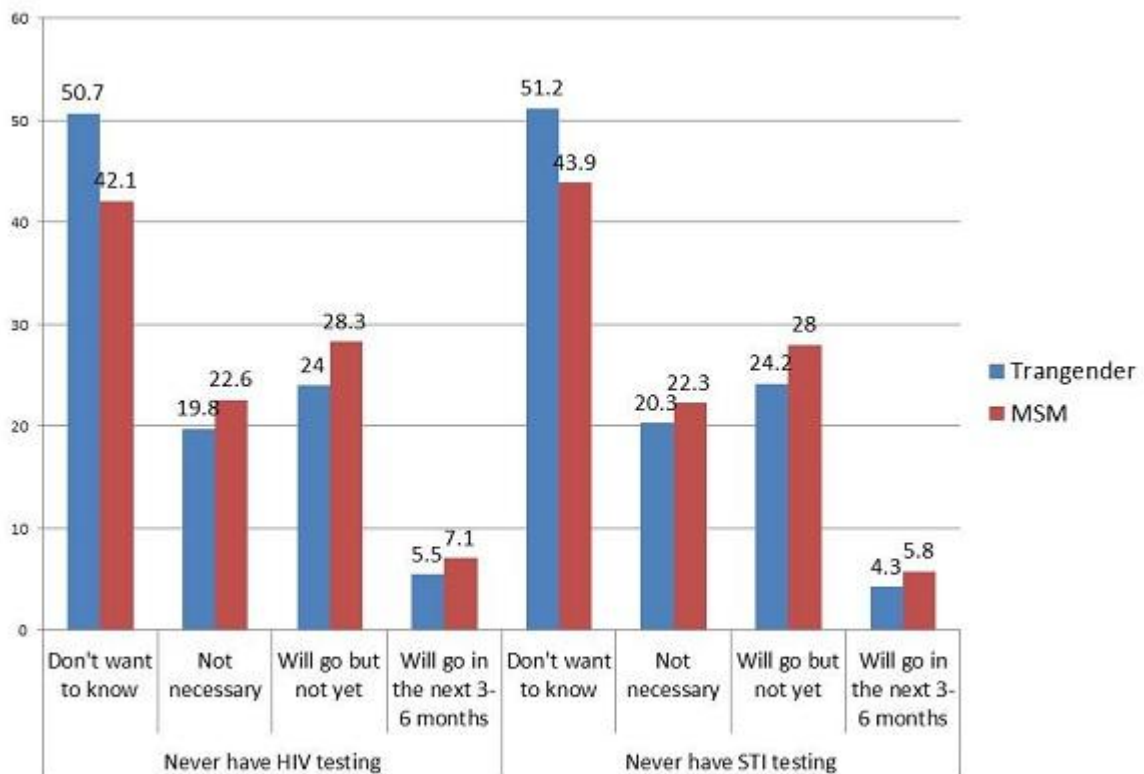


Figure 3: Reasons for never having HIV and STI services between transgender and MSM