

Research on Values, Sexual Self-identity and Sexual Behaviour among Men Have Sex with Men in Northern Chinese Cities: Implications for Intervention

Peng Tao

*Research and Education Centre in Sexual Health,
School of Public Health, Harbin Medical University, China
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Background and Justification

- Estimated homosexual population of China is 27,000,000 among over 14 year olds, males 17,800,000 and 8,000,000 urban gays.
- Some research shows increasing HIV prevalence among MSM in China.
- Chinese government and society begin to pay more attention to the gay community, as a result of the HIV epidemic, in recent years relevant education and interventions have been introduced as a part of HIV prevention strategies.
- On the other hand, MSM suffer discrimination and social stigma, living on the edge of the society, research on sexualities in the MSM community in China is still limited as is research on effective behavioural interventions for HIV/AIDS prevention among MSM.
- More research focuses on KAB related to HIV/AIDS and condom use advocacy, but intervention outcome can be ineffective, as is indicated by a very high level of knowledge related to HIV/AIDS among MSM with correct understanding of sexual risk, but condom use is still low.

Problem statement

- What we know about MSM values and what factors influence them is limited.
- How do MSM people develop their values?
- What characterises different states of self-identification among MSM when dealing with sexual issues, what about the social correlation of sexual values?
- Is there correlation between sexual values and sexual behaviour and what is it?

Purpose of the Research

The purpose of this research is to analyse the values, sexual self-identity and sexual behaviour among MSM, and

To provide evidence in order to adjust and improve the strategy of HIV prevention in the Chinese context.

Objectives of the Research

- to make profound analysis on individual values, sexual self-identity and sexual behaviour among MSM;
- to examine individual differences in sexual identities and their relationship to values;
- to explore individual differences in values and their relationship to sexual behaviour among MSM;
- to contribute to understanding complexities and crucial implications of effective intervention and education campaigns for HIV prevention among MSM.

Theoretical Conceptual Framework

- Research will carefully deconstruct various (not mutually exclusive) sub-categories of individuals under the umbrella of 'MSM' by four main categories: (1) Identity; (2) Gender; (3) Behaviour; (4) Profession
- In China, many MSM are married or will have to marry to fulfil societal, cultural and religious necessity. Many have to prove their masculinity by procreating children. Moreover, some MSM like to have sex with females; observations show that bisexuality is common among MSM.
- In addition, values are defined as guiding principles of a person or other social entity, developed and shaped by individual experiences and understandings, and learned from families, cultures, religion, school, media, etc.
- Values model can be categorized in two dimensions: (1) Openness to change versus Conservatism; and (2) Self-transcendence versus Self-enhancement.

What question will be discussed?

- What characterises the structure of values among MSM?
- How do family expectations, pressure to marry and gender roles impact on MSM feelings about themselves (self-esteem, depression, worry, fear, etc.)? and their sexual risk-taking behaviour?
- What are the sexual behaviour values among MSM?
- What is the relationship between values and health belief related to HIV (including willingness to take an HIV/STI test) among MSM?
- What characterises sexual self-identity among MSM, and how do these men describe themselves sexually? How do family expectations, pressure to marry, and gender roles impact on sexual self-identity formation for MSM?
- What is the relationship between sexual self-identity and sexual behaviour?
- How are substance use (alcohol and drug use) and internet use perceived as values and how does this affect sexual risk-taking behaviour among MSM?
- What characterises the sexual partner network among MSM?
- What factors hinder or facilitate HIV prevention in MSM from the perspective of values and sexual self-identity?
- What are implications for effective counselling and intervention for reducing risk behaviour among MSM?

Research methodology: sample

This research will be implemented in two sampling cities (Wei Hai and Harbin) in north China. As to sampling of MSM, the strategy will be based on:

- mapping settings where MSM congregate together in the target cities
- confidence building at meetings of gay communities (or organizations) and distributing leaflets at gay bars
- cooperation with AIDS service organization in the two cities
- recruitment of additional participants through the personal networks of the researchers themselves

Total estimated sample size of MSM: 300 - 400 people.

Research methodology: measurement

- Semi-structured questionnaire related to MSM's baseline information to include their demographic profile, cultural background, sexual identity, relationship status, age, social class, and educational level,
- also include sexual behaviour, condom use, substance use, health belief and health-seeking behaviour etc.
- In addition, all participants will complete the scale measuring values as assessed using a version of Schwartz's Portrait Values Scale.

Also ...

- qualitative technique is to be implemented through semi-structured interviews and focus groups with participants. Criterion of selection of MSM for in-depth interview is their extent of enthusiasm during interaction at time of survey and willingness to participate in further discussions.
- However, principles of Declaration of Helsinki will be followed, participants are made aware of their right to discontinue participation at any time without consequences.

Research methodology: data management

- In order to maintain data collection and error check, questionnaires are checked every day and edited
- all data information from questionnaire and interview will be managed according to principle of confidentiality.
- As for the quantitative data, Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) will be used for analysis, and qualitative information will be categorized, coded and analyzed by qualitative analysis method.

Research Team

- Research executive, Peng Tao, as full-time Associate Professor, Executive Director at Research & Education Centre in Sexual Health, Harbin Medical University.
- Research team is composed of different professionals, with five people from public health, mental health and social science.
- Cooperation with different organizations such as HIV/AIDS prevention, academic institutes, mass media and NGO.
- All research activities will be guided by the Research & Education Centre in Sexual Health, Harbin Medical University, China.

Expected Research Outcome

- To state the characteristics of values of MSM community;
- To provide a profound understanding of the relationship between values, sexual self-identity and sexual behaviour of MSM community in the current Chinese context;
- To contribute to the improvement of interventions for MSM community in China.

All of these will be helpful for the assumption of this research, which is the effective, different and concrete HIV/AIDS preventive measures made according to the status of values and sexual self-identity among MSM.

Budget: US\$ 12, 500 (US\$ 1 = 7.15 RMB)

Budget

Research Activity	Cost(US\$)
Conceptual and Methodological Framework of Research	
- materials (book, journal and reference etc)	500
- Design and Translation of Instruments	1,000
- Bibliographic Review	500
Training and Pre-testing	1,000
Equipments and necessary materials for indepth-interview (voice recorder, stationery, etc)	500
Interviewers' Fieldwork (make survey and interview, and personnels for qualitative assessments etc)	4 persons * 30 days * 4 months * 15US\$/per-one and per-day = 7,200
Pay for Interviewee	40 persons * 2 times * 10US\$/ per-one and per-times = 800
Result Analysis and Report Writing	1,000
Total	12, 500

Thanks

