



# Community Engagement from the Researcher's Perspective

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# Outline

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- HSRP research experiences & community engagement
  - HIV assessment among men who have sex with men (MSM) in Bangkok since 2003
  - Silom Community Clinic (SCC)
  - MSM cohort study
  - Clinical and behavioral studies at SCC
- MCAB: Multiple-sexuality person Community Advisory Board

# HIV prevalence and associated risks among MSM in Thailand since 2003

- Prior to 2003, there were no HIV data available for MSM and transgendered women (TG) in Bangkok
- TUC initiated 1<sup>st</sup> HIV assessment among MSM in Bangkok
- Collaboration with Ministry of Public Health (MoPH), Thai Red Cross Society (TRC) and the Rainbow Sky Association of Thailand (RSAT)
- Study design:
  - Venue based assessments with community outreach as field-staff
  - Anonymous with informed consent
  - Non-invasive, self-collection of oral fluid for HIV testing
  - Handheld computer-assisted self-interviews
  - Bar code card to get HIV test results
  - Thai male, at least 15 years old and sex with another male



## Preparatory meetings

- Community consultation
- Community representative meeting, including gate keepers and venue owners
- Meeting with Law enforcement representatives
- Meeting with BMA officials



# Thai MSM assessment: sequence of activities

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- May 2003: Completion of HIV prevalence and risk behavior assessment in Bangkok
- Sept 2003: Dissemination of 17.3% HIV prevalence result to national sources
- May 2004: National workshop hosted by MOPH to plan preventive intervention to alleviate the spread of HIV among MSM epidemic
- Dec 2004: National workshop regarding the inclusion of MSM in the National Plan for the Prevention and Alleviation of HIV/AIDS and sexually-transmitted infections (STI) in Thailand, hosted by MOPH
- Early 2005: Add on intervention, voluntary counselling and testing (VCT), STI and access to care components to the MOPH strategic plan
- 2005: Repeat cross-sectional MSM HIV prevalence survey, add on Phuket, Chiang Mai, MSW and TG
- Sept 2005: Silom Community Clinic starts operation with HIV VCT service
- Oct 2005: 1<sup>st</sup> MSM Community Advisory Board (MCAB) meeting
- Apr 2006: Start of MSM cohort study
- 2007: MSM surveillance transferred to MoPH

# Silom Community Clinic

Since October 2005 : Reaching out to the Community and creating an entry-point into research

## Our Goals:

- Provide HIV and STI services to MSM as outreach to the community and as an entry-point into scientific studies
- Serve as a model clinic for HIV prevention and research in Thailand and the region
- Conduct biomedical HIV prevention research, such as research on vaccines, pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP), and microbicides—as well as other viable prevention methods
- Conduct cohort evaluations to provide critical information on HIV and STI prevalence, incidence, trends, and qualitative and epidemiologic factors associated with HIV & STIs in MSM & TGW

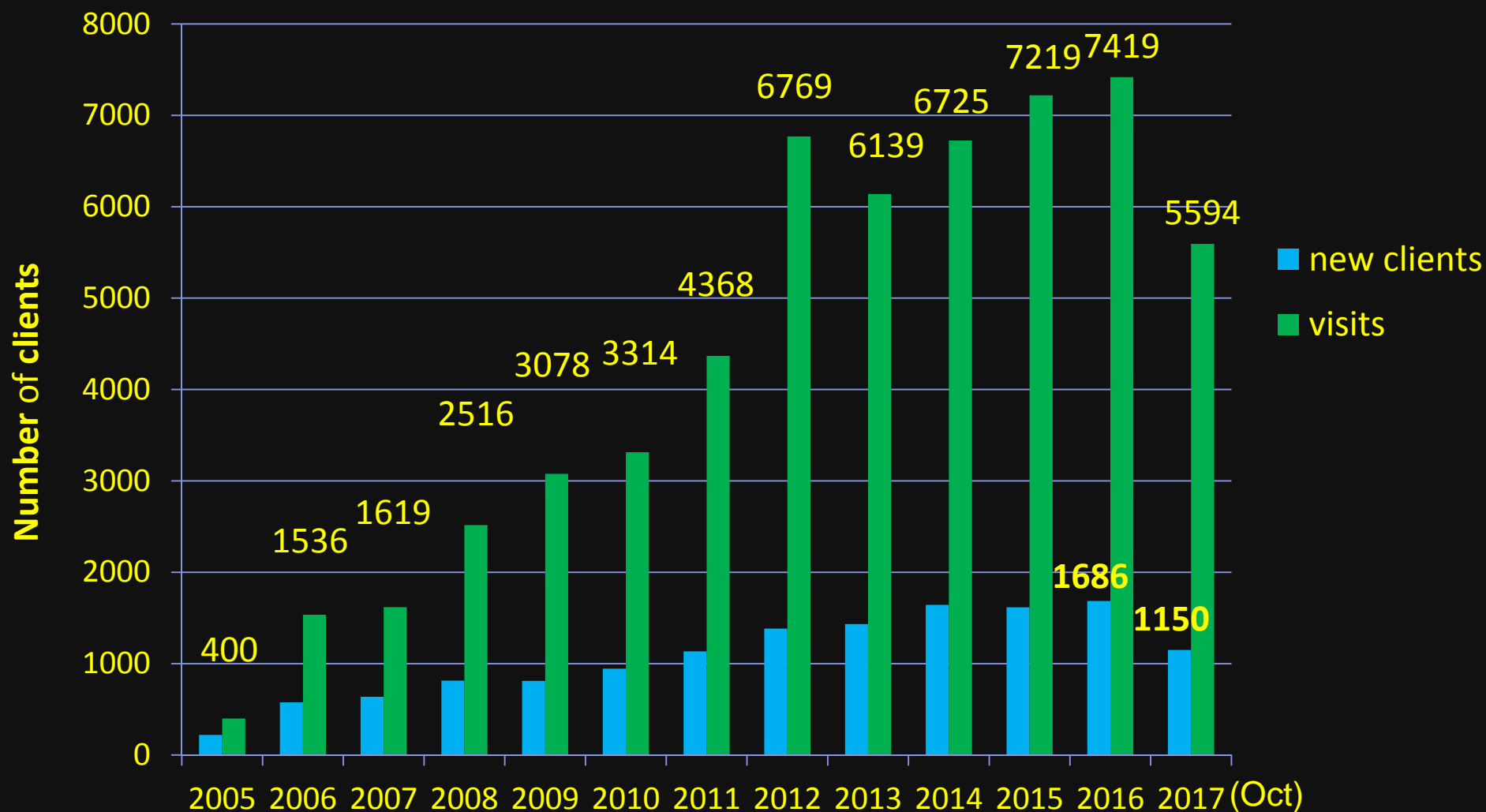


# Silom Community Clinic – Since October 2005 Reaching out to the Community and creating an entry-point into research

- Integrated in health care facility, not immediately recognizable
- Located in the MSM hotspot, easy access
- Convenient hours of operation (16:00-22:00, Tue – Fri)
- Private and confidential, relaxed atmosphere
- Friendly and understanding staff with client-based counseling (non-judgmental, professional and supportive atmosphere)
- No questions asked: No ID needed, no questionnaires, no interviews, no inquisitive counseling
- One-stop, comprehensive services with rapid HIV testing, free-of-charge
- Extra:
  - ❑ Syndromic STI evaluation
  - ❑ Hepatitis A and B (HAV and HBV) testing; HBV vaccine for those eligible
  - ❑ If HIV+: CD4 count and tuberculosis (TB) evaluation
  - ❑ Referral into public health care system



# SCC @TropMed - HIV VCT 2005–2017 (Oct)



Year

**Total = 14,055 clients have been served between 2005-2017 (Oct)**





**M**ultiple-sexuality person **C**ommunity **A**dvisory **B**oard

Advises and promotes rights and sexual health for  
Thai multiple-sexuality persons

Consists of partners from government agency, private business, community-based organization, medical research institute, and public media in Thailand

Since 2005

## What is M-CAB?

### M-CAB is not just some CAB

- In **2005**, we found high HIV prevalence (28%) among MSM in Bangkok.
- We need to involve community in stopping this epidemic.
- **MSM Community-Based Organizations** (activists), policy makers, public health services/researches, business owners, and media sector joined forces.
- We called to all partners in the field of MSM and HIV care and support to come together to form the M-CAB. (not established and run by institutions or clinical studies)
- The **1<sup>st</sup> M-CAB Meeting** was held on **Oct 11, 2005**; fifteen organizations from different sectors attended.
- We are currently working on the **6th term** (two-year membership) starting from **Nov 2015-2017**.



## Slide 8

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You might consider moving this slide earlier after Slide 5 "Silom Community Clinic: since 2005" so that you can explain more about the M-CAB before discussing our clinic.

Author, 29/11/2560

# Community Engagement Activities

- M-CAB 10<sup>th</sup> Year Anniversary (Symposium & Thank You Party)  
Theme: Over 10 Years of Success and Shaping our Community's Future
- HIV Forum  
Celebration of 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of MoPH and TUC on HIV/STI Research and Program Implementation
- Community Forum: PrEP Update
- VCT Day (1 July)
- World AIDS Day (1 Dec)





## The Bangkok MSM Cohort Study (BMCS), 2006 – 2016

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- Preparatory cohort study of HIV prevalence, incidence, follow-up rates and risk behavior among MSM
- Duration 3 to 5 years, study visits at 4-monthly intervals (36-60 months or 10-16 visits, including baseline)
  - Two periods of enrollment Period 1 (5 Apr 2006 – 31 Jan 2008) and Period 2 (17 Sep 2009 – 30 Nov 2010)
- Thai MSM, residing in Bangkok, at least 18 years of age and have had penetrative oral and anal sex with another man in the past 6 months
- Oral fluid HIV testing and STI evaluation, computer-assisted self-administered questionnaire and risk reduction counseling at every 4 month visit



# Bangkok MSM Cohort Study

Origin of recruitment: 1,744 MSM recruited, 1,292 during 2006 –2008 (cohort 1) and 452 during 2009 – 2010 (cohort 2)

## Recruitment Origin of Participants in the Bangkok MSM Cohort Study, 2006-2010

	Cohort 1 05/06 – 12/08	Cohort 2 09/09 – 12/10	Total 05/06 – 12/10
Source	n (%)	n (%)	N (%)
Internet	91 (7.0)	21 (4.4)	112 (6.4)
HIV VCT	162 (12.5)	2 (0.4)	164 (9.4)
MSM CBO	296 (22.9)	101 (21.4)	397 (22.8)
Viva Voce	743 (56.0)	328 (73.8)	1071 (61.4)
Total	1292 (100)	452 (100)	1744 (100)



# Bangkok MSM Cohort Study

Origin of recruitment (reported referral approaches)





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## Conclusions

- Over time, the proportions reporting CBO referrals remained substantial, suggesting community outreach is a good way for initial population access
- However, the high and increased rate of personal referrals throughout the study may indirectly reflect increasing community interest and trust
- Demographics of participants were consistent despite larger numbers recruited in the second period
- To maximize MSM recruitment, programs should pursue personal, website, and CBO referrals at initiation with VCT referral as back-up method



# Current and future studies @SCC

	<b>COPE4YMSM</b> – Phase I	Combination HIV Preventive Interventions for Young Thai MSM (COPE4YMSM): Qualitative Assessment and <b>Community Engagement</b>
	<b>COPE4YMSM</b> – Phase II	Effectiveness and Cost Effectiveness of a Combination HIV Preventive Intervention with and without daily oral Truvada® pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) with adherence support among young men who have sex with men (YMSM) and transgender women (TGW) aged 18-26 in Bangkok and Pattaya, Thailand
	<b>HPTN 083</b>	A Phase 2b/3 Double Blind Safety and Efficacy Study of Injectable Cabotegravir Compared to Daily Oral Tenofovir Disoproxil Fumarate/Emtricitabine (TDF/FTC), For Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis in HIV-Uninfected Cisgender Men and Transgender Women who have Sex with Men
	<b>YMSM</b>	Young Men Who have Sex with Men (YMSM) Cohort Study
	<b>MTN 026</b>	A Randomized, Double Blind, Placebo-Controlled, Phase 1 Safety and Pharmacokinetic Study of Dapivirine Gel (0.05%) Administered Rectally to HIV-1 Seronegative Adults



# Current and future studies

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- Community engagement as part of the “Combination package” for HIV prevention

“Community engagement in research may enhance a community’s ability to address its own health needs and health disparities issues while ensuring that researchers understand community priorities.” (Am J PubHealth, Aug2010)

## Lessons learned from community-led Test & Treat and PrEP project

- CBO can be successfully trained as HIV counselors, HIV testers and HIV care providers
- CBO are eager and proud to have their capacities built up beyond just being outreach worker and recruiter for the research projects. Now they can be community research sites.
- CBO is an essential partner in scaling up HIV prevention and care in the country
- More sensitive (4<sup>th</sup> generation) self-test (finger prick, oral fluid, urine) is urgently needed
- STIs are common among MSM/TG. Asymptomatic screening and treatment of STI are essential components for successful overall HIV prevention

**Source:** Phanuphak P, Future HIV Prevention. 18<sup>th</sup> Bangkok International Symposium on HIV Medicine, 13 Jan 2016



**THANK YOU**

