

Abstract

Backgrounds: Gay bathhouses have been identified as public venues where MSM are more likely to engage in risky sexual behaviors and have been the targets of public venues for the transmission of HIV and STIs among MSM.

Study Aims: This study aimed to 1) investigate the inner gay bathhouse environments, 2) develop structural intervention for gay bathhouses, and 3) test the feasibility of conducting the structural intervention.

Methods: An ecological study was conducted at eight gay bathhouses, including 16 staffs and 118 bathhouse attendees.

Results: The eight bathhouses provided condoms and anonymous HIV testing to attendees. However, distribution of lubrications and HIV/STD prevention education needed to be improved in gay bathhouses. The places where HIV/STD prevention intervention distributed in gay bathhouses are different to sexual venues where bathhouse attendees conducting sexual activities. Only three bathhouse owners knew the updated bathhouse regulation policy to mandate free condom for all bathhouses consumers provided by bathhouses. The pilot study indicated that seroprevalence rates of anti-HIV-1 antibody and specific *Treponema pallidum* antibodies detected by haemagglutination assay, were 7.6% (9/118) and 16.9%(20/118), respectively. The percentage of condom use in this study is higher than last year. Study showed that 18 men (17.3%) reported having oral sex exclusively with condom use, and 67 (66.3%) had anal intercourse exclusively with condom use.

Conclusion: This study is the first collaborative study with gay bathhouse owners and NGOs to develop a structural intervention for gay bathhouses in Taiwan. The pilot study findings indicated promising future for conducting structural intervention in other gay bathhouses across the three major cities next year in Taiwan.

Keywords: structural intervention, STD/HIV prevention, and gay bathhouse