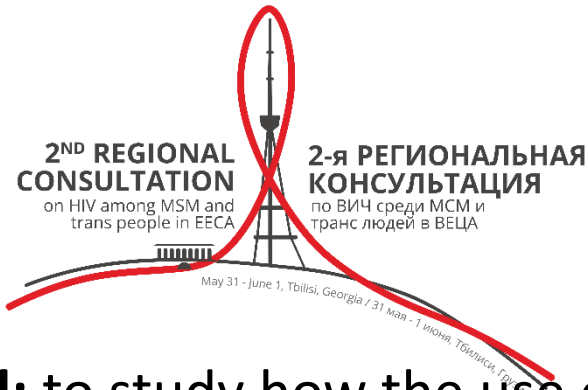


Chemsex and drug use among MSM in Kiev

2nd Regional Consultation on HIV among MSM and trans people in EECA

Tbilisi, 31.05-01.06.2018





Research goal and objectives

Goal: to study how the use of narcotics, psychotropic substances, and/or other individual medicines affects the sexual behavior and mental health of MSM, and how to minimize the risks of the transmission of infections, particularly HIV.

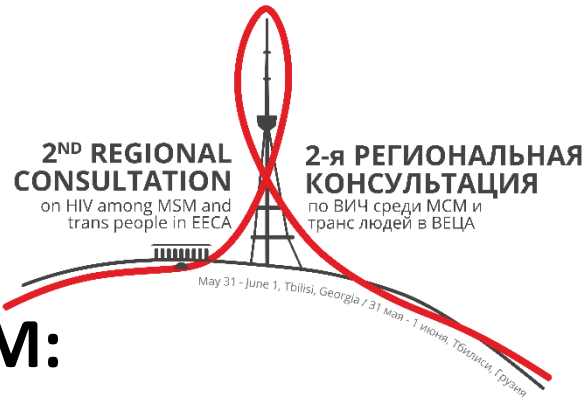
Objectives:

- to study the behavior of MSM above the age of 18, living in Kiev or its suburbs, using chemical substances, and who may have engaged in chemsex;
- on the basis of the data obtained, to develop recommendations to reduce the risk of harm from the consumption of chemical substances by men who have sex with men, and to reduce the risk of the transmission of infections, particularly HIV, resulting from chemsex among MSM.

Target groups



- ✓ 100 MSM, using chemical substances who may have engaged in chemsex, to participate in a “face-to-face”, oral survey (quantitative study),
- ✓ 5 key informants (KI) to participate in in-depth interviews (IDI), and
- ✓ 10 MSM, using chemical substances and who may have engaged in chemsex, to participate in IDI (qualitative study).



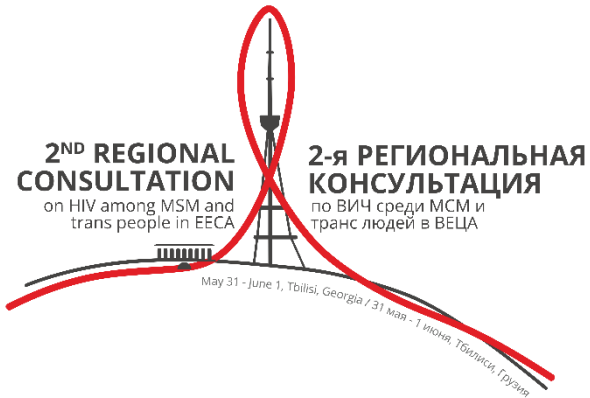
Criteria for inclusion

MSM:

- Age: no less than 18 years old;
- Resident of Kiev or its suburbs;
- Use of chemical substances no less than 1 time every 6 months;
- Sexual contact with men in the last 6 months.

Key informants:

People with knowledge of or their own experience with chemsex, and who have a wide network of social contacts among other MSM.

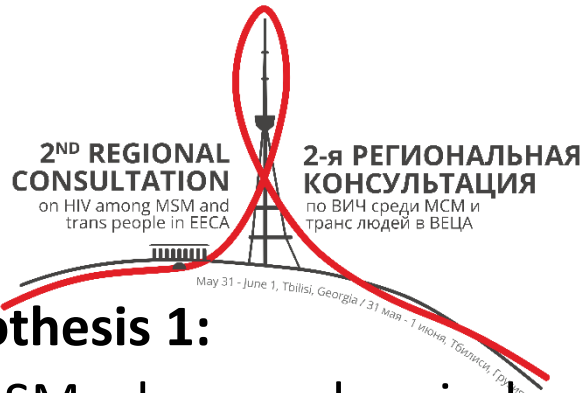


Recruiting respondents

1. Through the Internet:

- on specialized dating sites: Qguys, Bluesystem, Gay Romeo;
- through social networks: Vkontakte and Facebook;
- through mobile applications for MSM: Hornet and Grindr.

2. Through the network of personal relationships of the interviewers and staff of the organization “Alliance.Global”.



Research hypotheses

Hypothesis 1:

- ❖ MSM who use chemical substances engage in sex without condoms.

Hypothesis 2:

- ❖ Self-control is lost when one is under the influence of chemical substances, and therefore, the risk of infection by HIV, viral hepatitis, and other STIs is significantly higher.

Hypothesis 3:

- ❖ Regular use of non-injecting drugs, psychotropic substances, and/or individual medicines, often leads to a transition to injecting drug use.

Hypothesis 4:

- ❖ Problems related to depression, mental disorders, suicide, and sexual violence may appear or worsen among MSM using chemical substances.



Main results (1)

- ❖ The overwhelming majority of respondents (88%, n = 100) never used injecting drugs;
- ❖ Chemsex often entails group sex or extreme sex as well;
- ❖ The simultaneous or sequential use of various types of chemical substances (87%) or the use of chemical substances with alcohol (91%) are common; 31% of respondents used chemical substances together with stimulant drugs;
- ❖ 46% of MSM respondents experienced overdoses;
- ❖ 31% of respondents experienced physical injuries as a result of chemsex (cuts, bruises, other wounds, anal trauma, burns of the mucous membranes, bites, and scratches) some of which may have also resulted from extreme sex;



Main results (2)

- ❖ Chemsex is most often practiced at one's home (96%), or another's home (94%) and in night clubs (58%); consuming chemical substances in nature is also popular (55%), however, users generally go to a more comfortable place to actually have sex;
- ❖ MSM most often consume marijuana (99%), amphetamine (85%), poppers (83%), ecstasy (76%) and MDMA (64%);
- ❖ During the last 6 months only 26% of MSM have always used a condom during chemsex;
- ❖ 24% of respondents have had problems at work, in business, at school, as well as financial problems, as a result of consuming chemical substances;
- ❖ The main side-effects of chemical substances include spatial or temporal prostration (46%), bouts of excessive arousal (41%), periods of aggression (31%).



Recommendations for stakeholders (1)

1. Take into account the specific needs of MSM who consume chemical substances and engage in chemsex, in the package of medical and social services for MSM and in other activities aimed at MSM, including:
 - Preparation and dissemination of informational materials;
 - Peer counseling;
 - Medical, legal, and psychological support for MSM;
 - Rapid testing of chemical substances before consumption;
 - Provision of emergency medical care (including at home) for MSM in cases of overdoses.



Recommendations for stakeholders (2)

2. Plan and implement an on-going advertising and informational campaign on prevention and on other aspects related to chemsex and the consumption of chemical substances among MSM.
3. Develop a national web resource dedicated to the issue of chemsex.
4. Conduct educational activities for peer counselors, employees of MSM-service NGOs, medical staff of institutions providing services to MSM, local authorities, law enforcement agencies, etc. in order to increase awareness about the phenomenon and practice of chemsex, and to prevent stigma and discrimination towards MSM using chemical substances.



Recommendations for stakeholders (3)

5. Recommend HIV-negative MSM engaging in chemsex to join a pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) program being piloted by the public organization “Alliance.Global” since December 2017.
6. Become acquainted with best practices from around the world on working with MSM using chemical substances and engaging in chemsex.
7. Carry out advocacy work on revising the nomenclature and maximal permissible amounts of chemical substances, whose circulation is banned or restricted in Ukraine, taking into account best practices from around the world and recommendations of relevant international organizations.
8. Conduct national research on the issue of chemsex among MSM in order to obtain information about the situation in other cities of Ukraine.



Current situation of the pilot project

As of 15.05.2018:

Total involved in the project: 121 MSM, of whom the following number tested positive for:

HIV- 8; HBV- 5; HCV- 4; syphilis- 14; gonorrhea and chlamydia - 17.

Already received PrEP 96 (+2 – syphilis detected).

Number of HIV infections while taking PrEP : 1 (during the window period).

Number who refused to continue PrEP after being included in the program (who already received 1 month of PrEP medication): 2.



Eurasian Coalition
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Presentation of the research at the 2nd Chemsex Forum in Berlin 22-24.03.2018

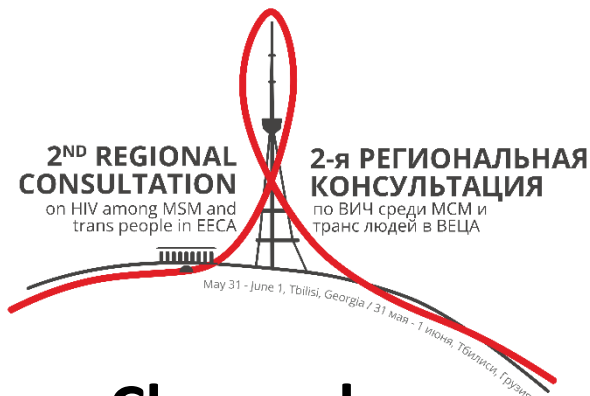
2nd European
ChemSex
Forum
22-24 March 2018
Mercure Hotel MOA Berlin



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