

Internalized homonegativity and HIV epidemic among MSM in CEECA countries

II Regional Consultation on HIV among MSM and Trans People in EECA

May 31 – June 1, 2018, Tbilisi

Internalized Homonegativity (IH)

Negative attitude to own homosexuality that MSM acquire in a homophobic society.

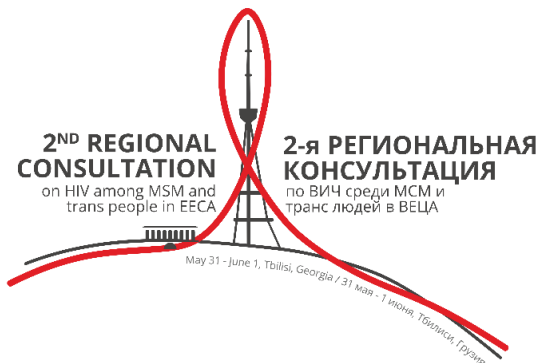
A key topic for MSM health factors, including HIV/AIDS epidemic context





Key idea of presentation

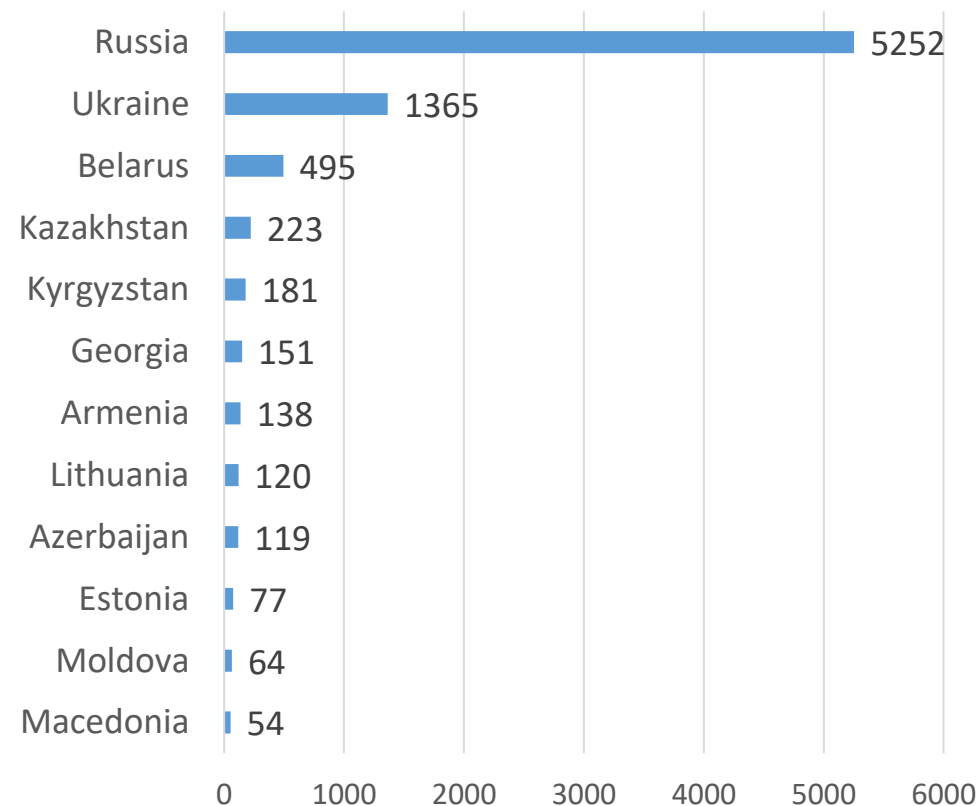
Rejection of own sexuality is a distinct and underestimated barrier for HIV prevention among MSM in the region.



IH Survey in the region

- Online survey, August – October, 2017
- 12 countries
 - (Lithuania and Estonia were jointly analyzed)
- Convenience sample, not representative statistically
- Promotion: Hornet app, Bluesystem.org, Grindr, partner NGOs and web-sites
- Financed by the Global Fund within ECOM's Right to Health project

8239 surveyed MSM in total

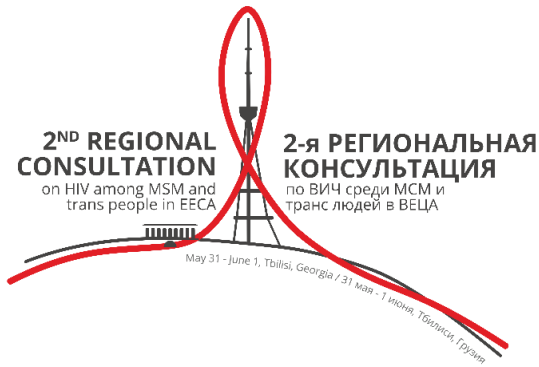


Extended report in Russian and English is in preparation for publishing

Most of the surveyed are:

- Gays and bisexuals
 - 64% and 27% respectively
- Young
 - Median age is 30 years old
- Highly educated
 - 72% - have some level of higher education
- Employed
- Irreligious
- Residents of capitals and big cities





Short Internalized Homonegativity Scale (SIHS)

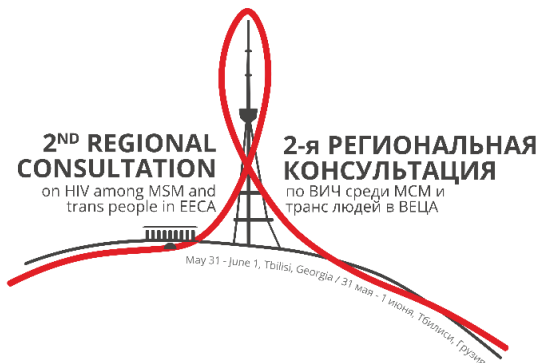
- SIHS estimates a degree of homosexuality (in)acceptance by 1–7 scale
- Eight statements, mean score
- Measure is adapted for several languages of CEECA countries.

Feel free to use!

1. Obviously effeminate homosexual men make me feel uncomfortable^{Reversed}.
2. I feel comfortable in gay bars.
3. Social situations with gay men make me feel uncomfortable^{Reversed}
4. I feel comfortable being seen in public with an obviously gay person.
5. I feel comfortable discussing homosexuality in a public situation.
6. I feel comfortable being a homosexual man.
7. Homosexuality is morally acceptable for me.
8. Even if I could change my sexual orientation, I wouldn't

Scale: 1=«Strongly disagree» – 7=«Strongly agree»

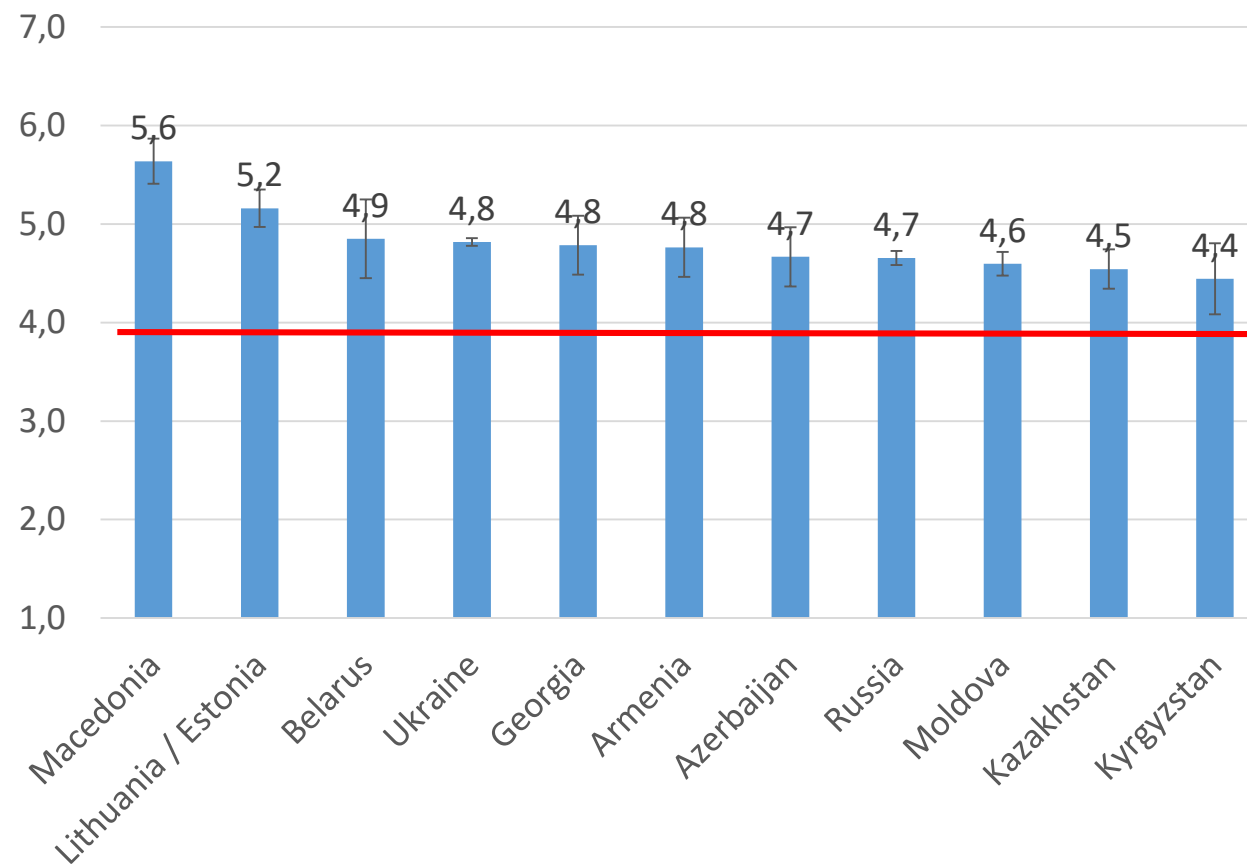
Sources: Ross & Rosser, 1996; Smolenski et al., 2010; Tran et al., 2017.



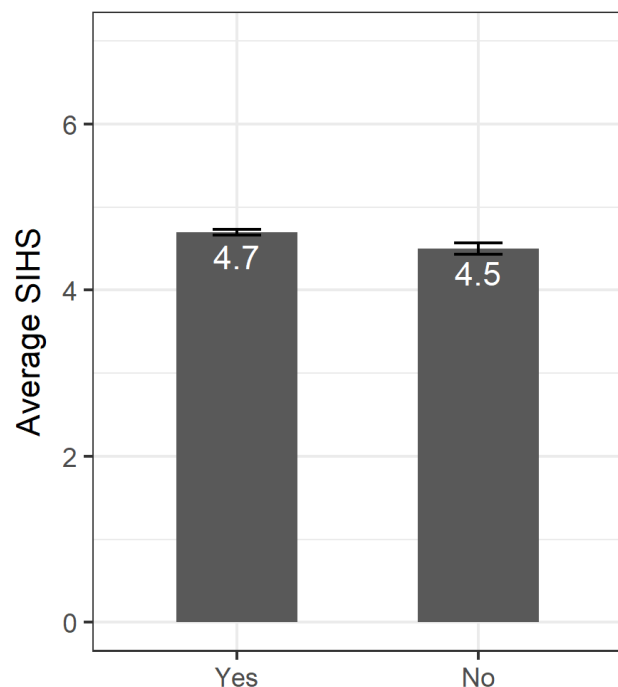
Average IH

- Most of surveyed MSM accept own homosexuality in all countries (i.e. IH is low)
- There is significant difference between some countries.
 - Macedonian and Lithuanian / Estonian MSM have the lowest IH
- IH is likely to be higher among general MSM population (see the sample)

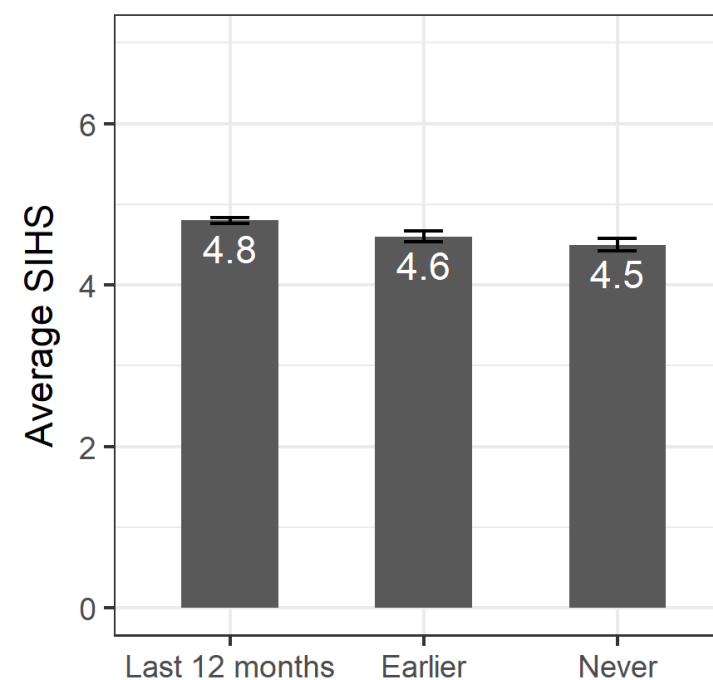
Average SIHS scores



IH and HIV testing



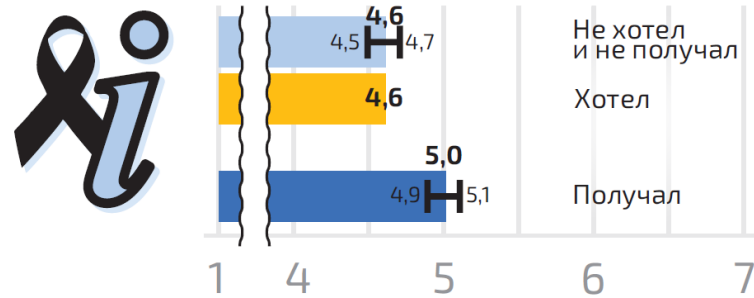
Do you know where you can get tested for HIV in your place?



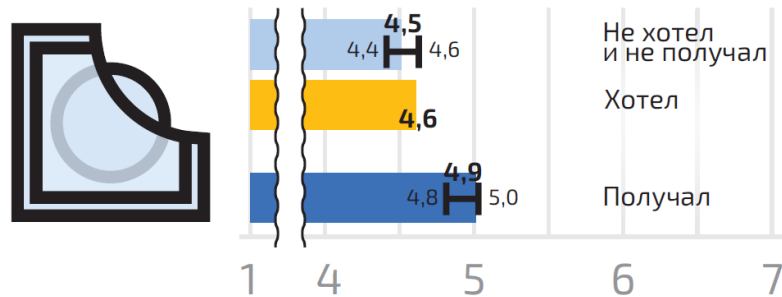
When did you get tested for HIV last time? (among not HIV+)

IH and getting prevention services (in the last 6 months)

Информация о ВИЧ и ИППП

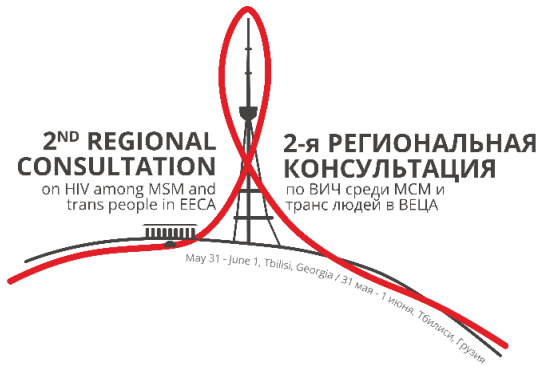


Презервативы



• Similar regularities for:

- Free HIV testing
- Free testing for other STIs
- Communication with other MSM
- Joint events
- Information about sexual health
- Psychologist
- Lawyer
- Medical doctor
- Free antiseptics
- Free lubricants



Conclusions

- Own sexuality unacceptance among MSM is an additional, but rarely accountable barrier for HIV testing and prevention in CEECA
 - The effect is not removed by mere access to programs (e.g. free condoms distribution)
- Given the sample of the survey, IH impact could be even stronger in general MSM population

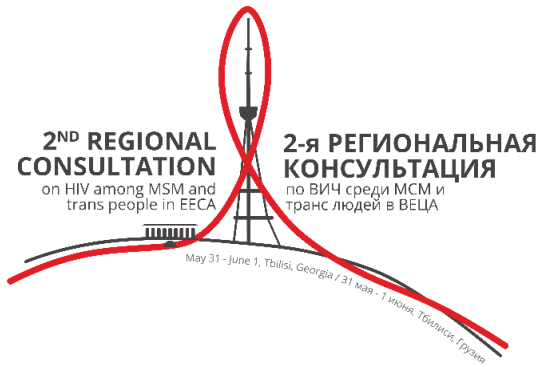


Recommendations

- Counteraction to IH among MSM
 - Individual and group consulting for sexuality acceptance
 - Implementation of MSM-services that could potentially reduce IH (e.g., psychologist, meeting others, legal counselling).
- Counteraction to structural causes of IH (societal homophobia and heterosexism)
 - Joint advocacy by HIV-service and LGBT human rights movements
 - Pressing for a legislative prohibition of discrimination by sexual orientation, and for its practical implementation. In a longer term, pushing for same-sex marriage.
- Additional studies of IH as a factor of MSM health in the region.

Your suggestions and alternatives?





Thanks for your attention!

Questions? Ideas? Suggestions?

Share them here, or e-mail to:

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