

Prevalence of Consistent Condom Use with Various Types of Sex Partners and Associated Factors among Money Boys in Changsha, China

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ABSTRACT

Introduction. Money boys with inconsistent condom use (less than 100% of the time) are at high risk of infection by human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) or sexually transmitted infection (STI), but relatively little research has examined their risk behaviors.

Aim. We investigated the prevalence of consistent condom use (100% of the time) and associated factors among money boys.

Methods. A cross-sectional study using a structured questionnaire was conducted among money boys in Changsha, China, between July 2012 and January 2013.

Main Outcome Measure. Independent variables included socio-demographic data, substance abuse history, work characteristics, and self-reported HIV and STI history. Dependent variables included the consistent condom use with different types of sex partners.

Results. Among the participants, 82.4% used condoms consistently with male clients, 80.2% with male sex partners, and 77.1% with female sex partners in the past 3 months. A multiple stepwise logistic regression model identified four statistically significant factors associated with lower likelihoods of consistent condom use with male clients: age group, substance abuse, lack of an “employment” arrangement, and having no HIV test within the prior 6 months. In a similar model, only one factor associated significantly with lower likelihoods of consistent condom use with male sex partners was identified in multiple stepwise logistic regression analyses: having no HIV test within the prior six months. As for female sex partners, two significant variables were statistically significant in the multiple stepwise logistic regression analysis: having no HIV test within the prior 6 months and having STI history.

Conclusions. Interventions which are linked with more realistic and acceptable HIV prevention methods are greatly warranted and should increase risk awareness and the behavior of consistent condom use in both commercial and personal relationship. Wang L-H, Yan J, Yang G-L, Long S, Yu Y, and Wu X-L. Prevalence of consistent condom use with various types of sex partners and associated factors among money boys in Changsha, China. *J Sex Med* 2015;12:936–945.

Key Words. Money Boys; Human Immunodeficiency Virus; Sexually Transmitted Infection; Consistent Condom Use

Introduction

The originally drug-driven human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) epidemic in China has transformed into one that is sex-driven in nature [1]. As sexual transmission is now the main route for the spread of HIV, the number of people infected with HIV through sexual transmission is increasing, especially in recent years. China has been called to respond to increasing HIV or sexually transmitted infection (STI) transmission through homosexual activities [2].

Money boys are male sex workers who engage in same-sex sexual activities for economic benefits. Money boys are likely to be internal migrants within China who, in traveling to other cities, have less access to social support and health-care benefits [3,4]. Their clients are mainly men who have sex with men. Several previous studies reported HIV-related risk behaviors among men who have sex with men in China, such as unprotected sex, anal intercourse, bisexual activities, lack of knowledge and awareness of HIV, and lack of access to testing and other health-care services [5–7]. There is significant evidence that money boys in particular are of concern in the Chinese HIV and STI epidemics [8–12] due to their large numbers of sexual partners, powerlessness to negotiate condom use with their customers, sexual activities with men and women as well as non-commercial and commercial partners, high rates of anal sex, and inconsistent condom use (i.e., less than 100% of the time). However, as a hidden and marginalized group, money boys have not yet been extensively studied in China.

Previous research has reported that correct and consistent use of condoms can reduce HIV transmission by approximately 85–90% [13,14]. One study of street-based male sex workers in Manhattan indicated that men reported the least sexual risk with paid clients, greater risk with male partners for pleasure, and the highest risk with female partners for pleasure [15]. However, these studies did not explore contextual factors accounting for the observed differences in sexual risk among these different types of partners.

Therefore, it is very important to investigate the prevalence of consistent condom use (i.e., 100% of the time) with different types of sex partners. Understanding factors that could affect consistent condom use among money boys during anal sex is critical for effective interventions of HIV/STI. The aim of this study was to describe the prevalence of consistent condom use with different

types of sex partners, including male clients (i.e., paying male sexual partners), male sex partners (i.e., nonpaying male sexual partners), and female sex partners (i.e., nonpaying female sexual partners), and to identify risk factors affecting consistent condom use among money boys in Changsha, China.

Materials and Methods

Study Population and Sampling

Inclusion criteria included male who were 18 years or older, had been living in Changsha for more than 3 months at the time of the survey, and had sex (anal) to another man for more than 6 months at the time of the interview.

Money boys are hidden and inaccessible populations. Therefore, a respondent-driven sampling (RDS) system (Figure 1) was used in the present study based on its success in similar populations such as substance abusers, HIV patients, and homosexuals [16–18]. The initial step of RDS was to look for “seeds” or the initial contacts for money boys on a gay-dating website (<http://www.ixxqy.org>); nine gay clubs were found through the contact information provided. It was recommended that 6–15 “seeds” be collected [19,20]. We chose seven “seeds” from the different gay clubs, who were the “Wave Zero” participants. Each “Wave Zero” participant then recruited between two and four peers, who themselves were eligible to recruit a second wave of two to four participants, with 50 RMB provided to them for each participant they recruited into the study. Sample size calculation

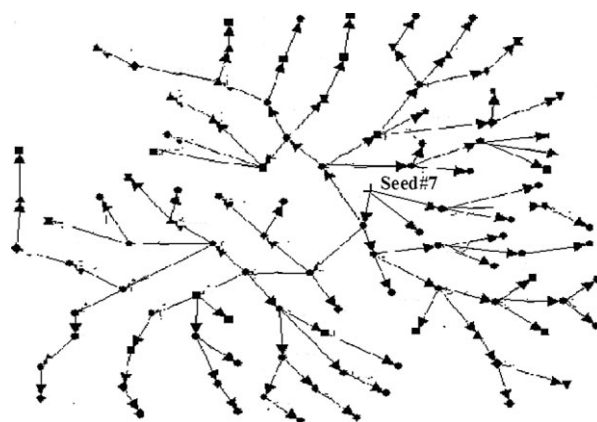


Figure 1 Example of a recruitment network in a respondent-driven sample, starting with a gay seed (seed no. 7, $n = 222$)

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