

Report - Outreach HIV testing Project in venues frequented by men who have sex with men (MSM) - November 2010 to January 2011

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Introduction

This is the fourth consecutive year that the Outreach HIV testing project at MSM venues was carried out.

The first project was conducted in November 2007 and followed by November 2008 and November 2009.

Each project lasted two and a half months and was conducted by AfA.

Objectives

For the fourth project, the objectives are:

- To provide a proven and innovative outreach method to increase HIV/AIDS awareness by the provision of free and anonymous HIV testing.
- To compare HIV prevalence with the project undertaken in 2007, 2008 and 2009.
- To collect additional data on sexual behaviour and practices.

Method

HIV test kit

The OraQuick rapid HIV-1/2 test kits were used

- The test kit is for single-use
- Time required for test completion & test result is 20 minutes



OraQuick test kit

Venues

9 MSM saunas and 6 MSM bars/clubs participated.
Testing was also offered at 1 MSM event.

Project	Venues	Approached	Participated	Declined
2010	Saunas	9	9	
	Bars/Clubs	6	6	
	MSM events	1	1	
2009	Saunas	9	8	1
	Bars/Clubs	8	8	
	MSM events	3	3	
2008	Saunas	7	5	2
	Bars/Clubs	5	4	1
	MSM events	1	1	
2007	Saunas	6	4	2
	Bars/Clubs	5	4	1
	MSM events	1	1	

With increased awareness of HIV/AIDS and the continuity of this project, there was no difficulty in getting the venue proprietors to participate.

Results from the individual venues are known only to the project coordinators and relevant AfA officers. Aggregated data is presented here.

2010 Results – Tests done (n=1273)

6 bar/clubs participated Total samples: 487	Date commenced: 05 Nov'10 Date concluded: 30 Jan'11 Made 11 visits
9 saunas participated Total samples: 761	Date commenced: 01 Nov'10 Date concluded: 23 Jan'11 Made 38 visits
1 MSM event Total samples: 25	Held on: 04 Dec '10

Figure 1 – Venues (overall)

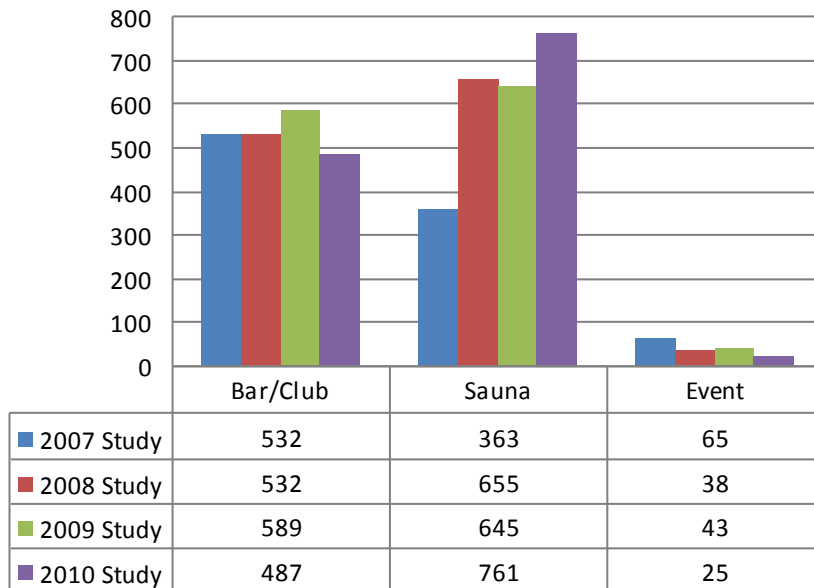
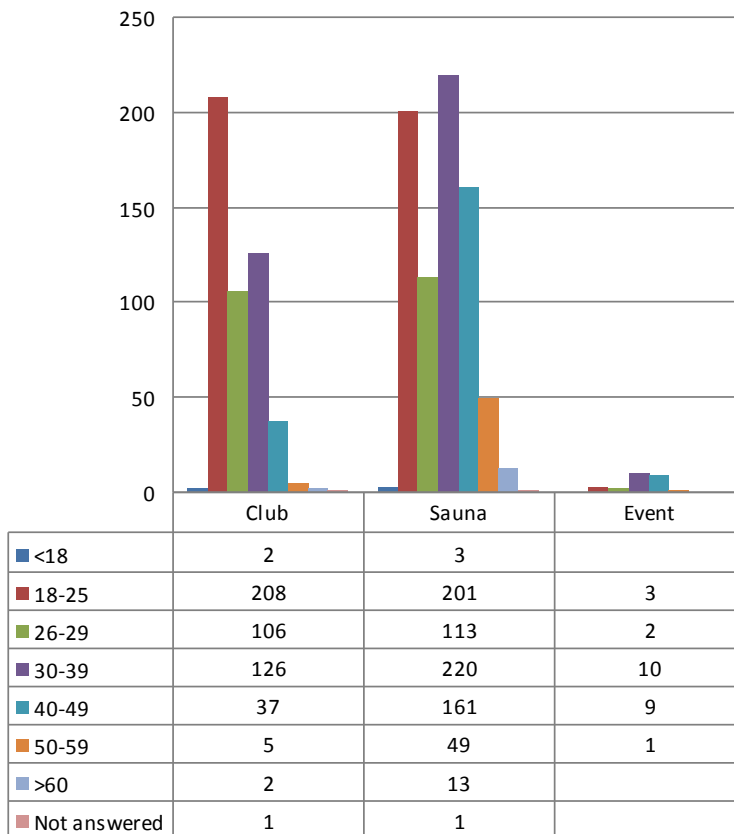
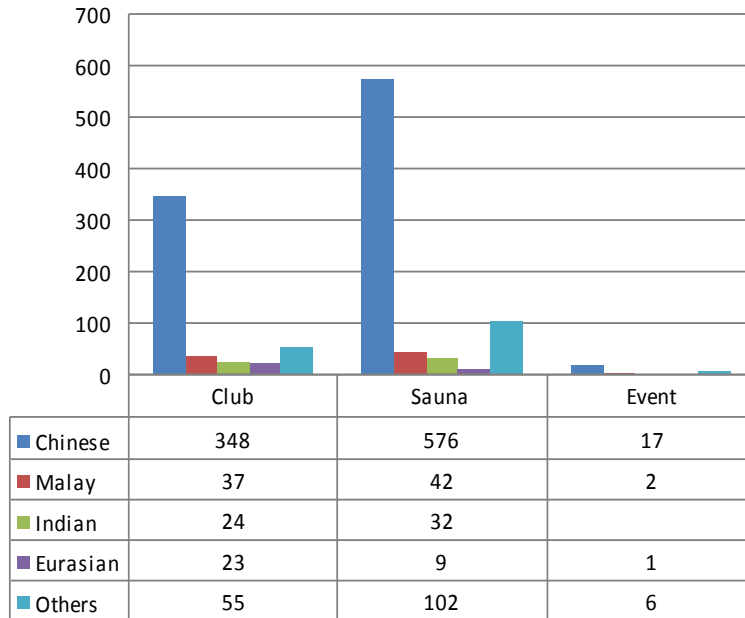


Figure 2 – Age Group by venue



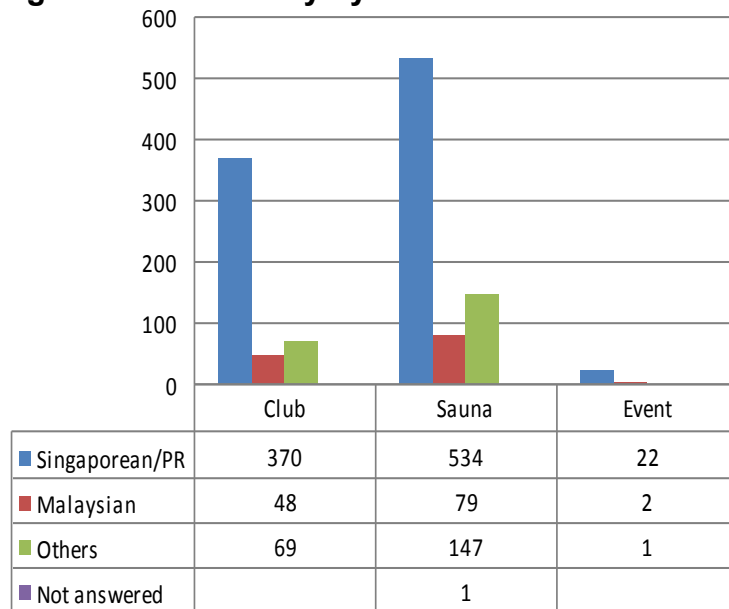
As in the previous projects, bar/club patrons were younger than those in saunas.

Figure 3 – Race by venue



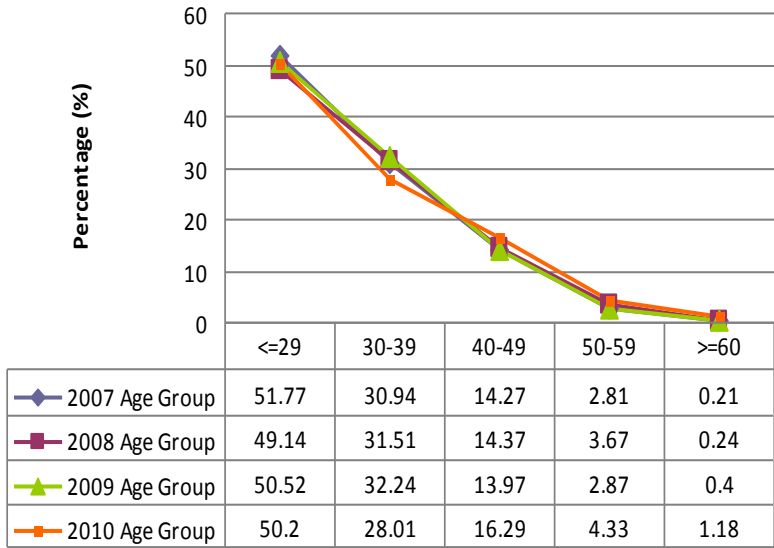
Racial mix was similar in the 2 types of venues.

Figure 4 – Nationality by venue



Saunas have greater proportion of non-Singaporeans than bars/clubs.

Figure 5 – Age Groups by Year



The age groups of participants were similar.

Figure 5a – Age Groups 2010

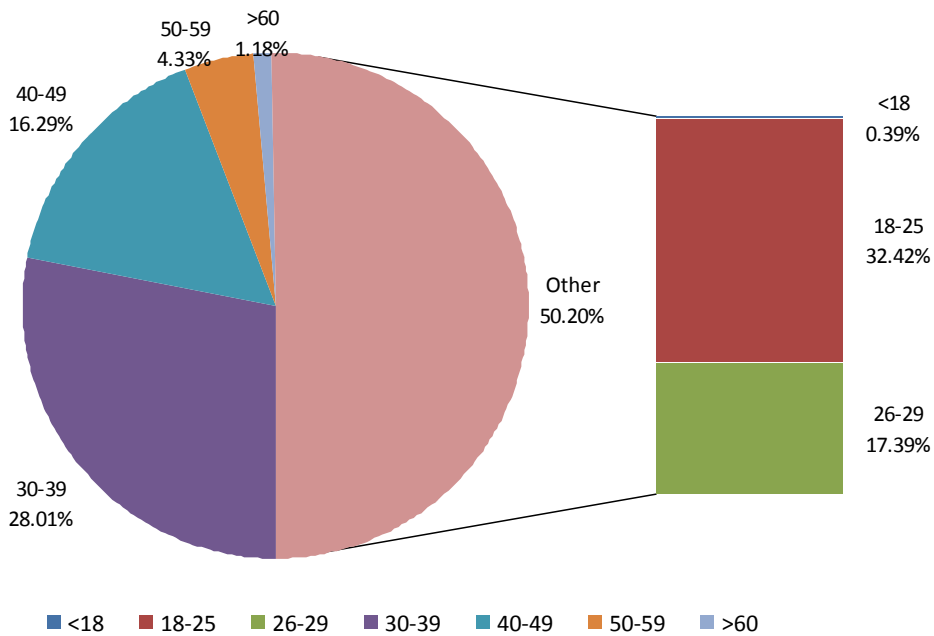
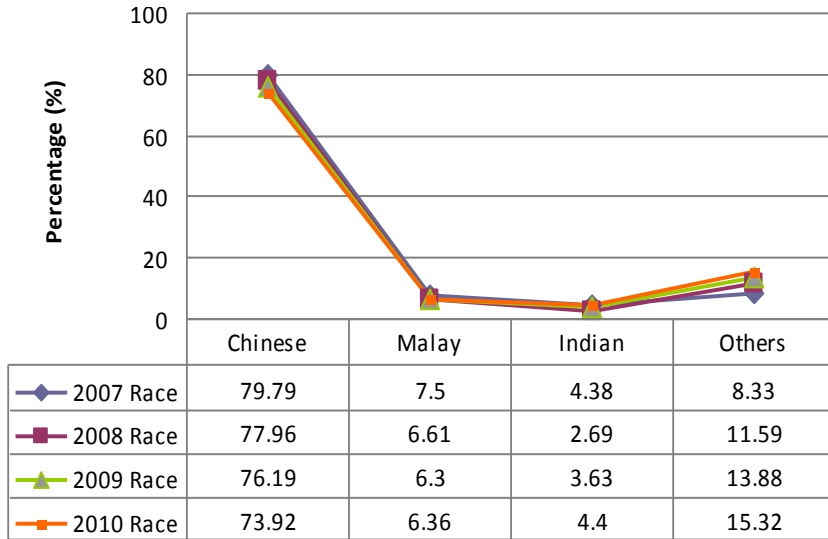
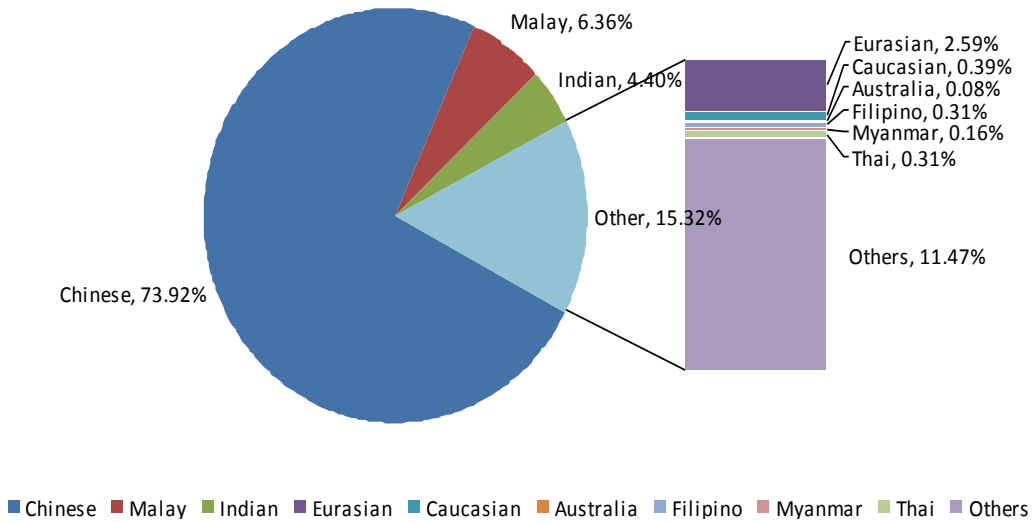


Figure 6 – Race by Year



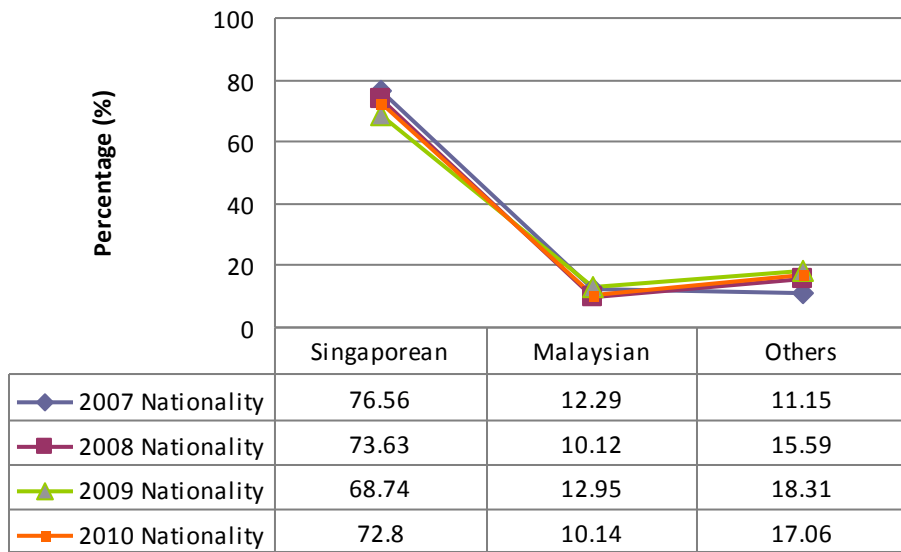
Racial distribution was similar.

Figure 6a – Race 2010



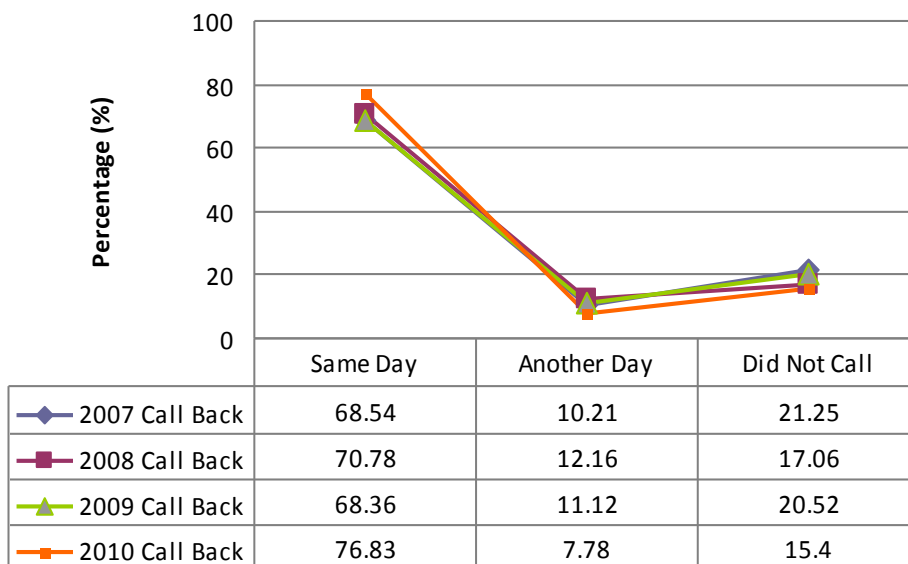
■ Chinese ■ Malay ■ Indian ■ Eurasian ■ Caucasian ■ Australia ■ Filipino ■ Myanmar ■ Thai ■ Others

Figure 7 – Nationality by Year



Nationality distribution was similar over the years

Figure 8 – Called back for results by Year



In 2010 more clients called back for their results than previous years

Figure 9 – First time testers by Age Group and Year

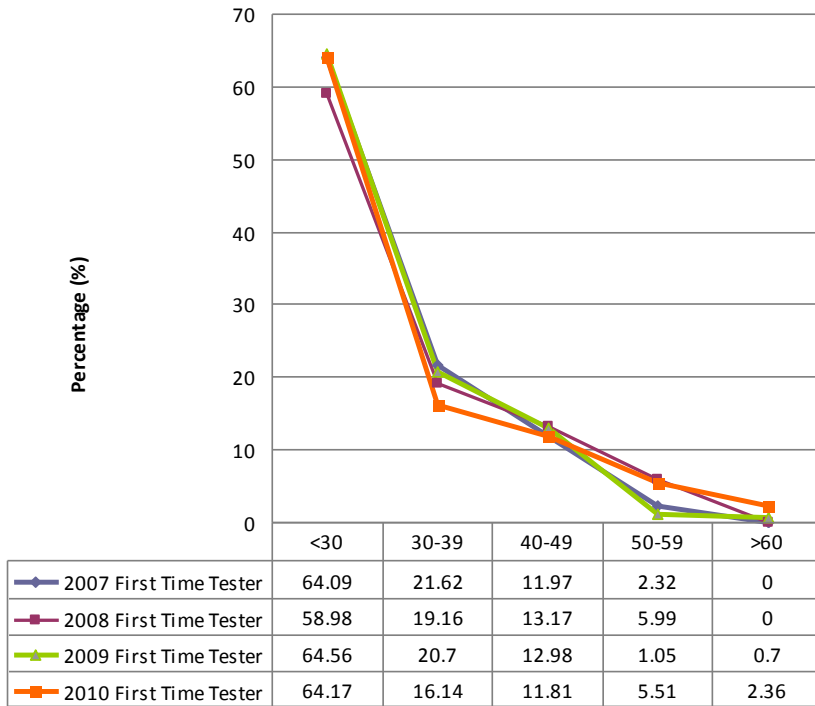


Figure 9a – First time testers by Age group 2010

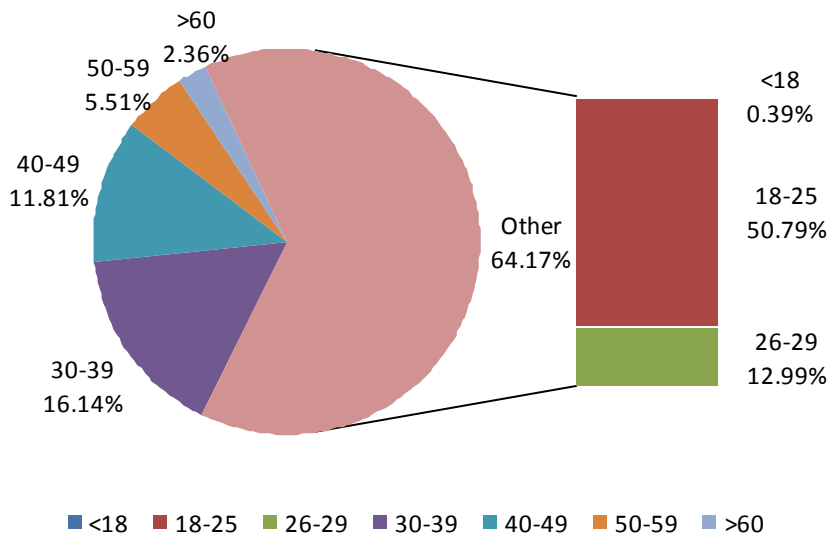


Figure 10 – First time testers by Race and Year

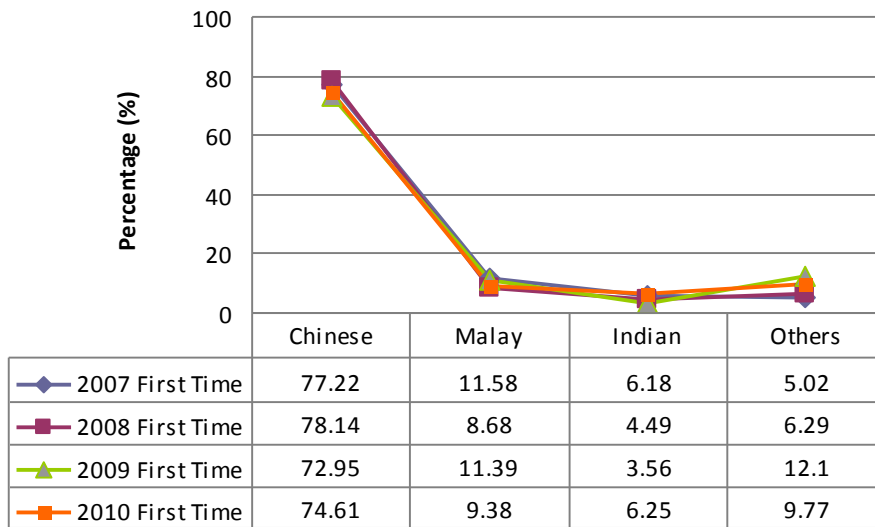


Figure 10a – First time testers by Race 2010

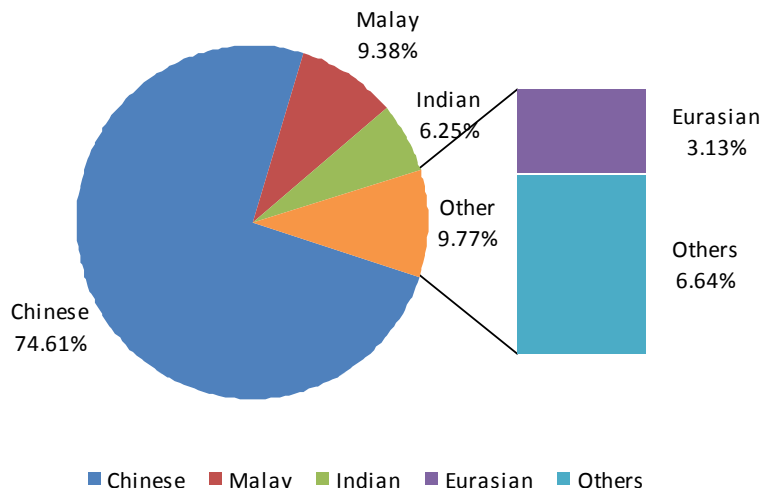


Figure 11 – First time testers by Nationality and Year

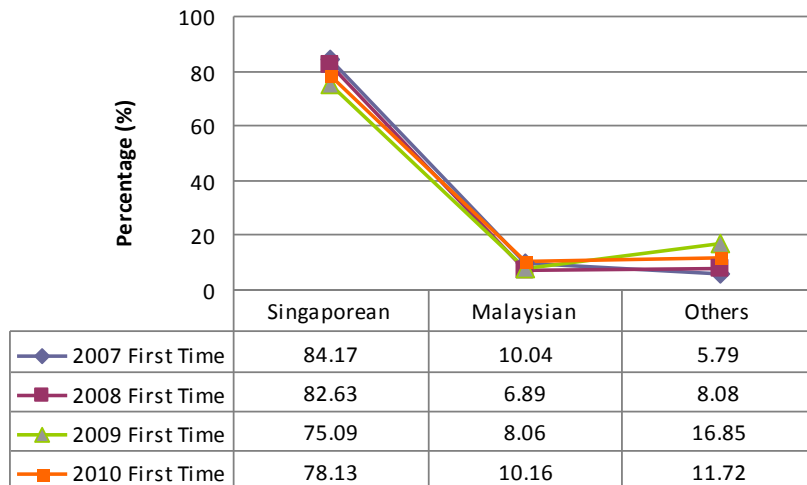
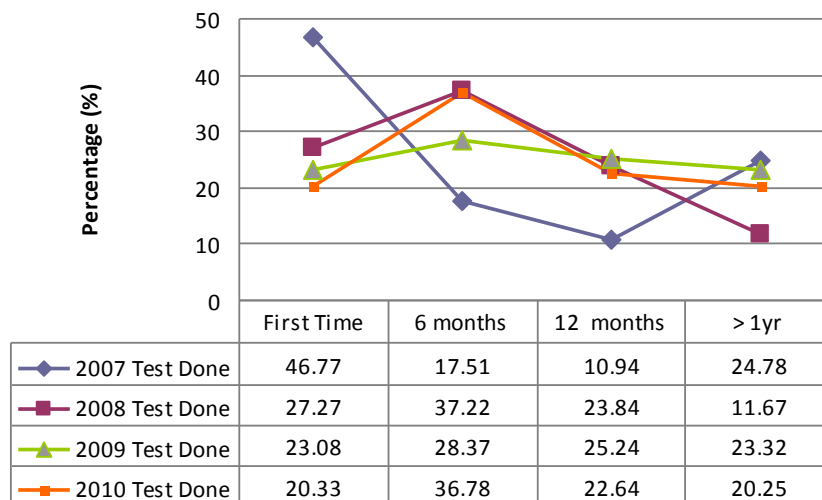


Figure 12 – Last HIV test by Year



In 2010 there were fewer first time testers than in previous years (20.33%) This indicates that more MSM had been tested than previously.

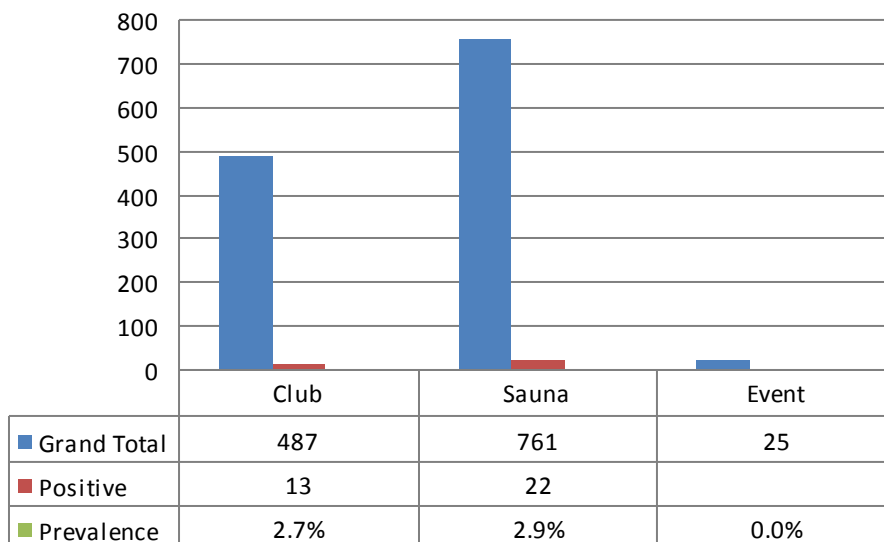
HIV positive

35 participants were tested positive by Oraquick HIV1/2 tests.

Overall prevalence of 2.7% (35 positives)

- Bars/Clubs: Prevalence 2.7% (13 positives)
- Saunas: Prevalence 2.9% (22 positives)
- MSM event: no positive

Figure 13 – Prevalence by Venues



Details of 35 individuals testing HIV positive

- 31 individuals had a previous negative HIV test
- 4 individuals were first time testers
- 4 individuals attended AfA ATS for confirmatory test (as at time of writing)
- 2 known HIV+ve came forth for testing (peer pressure)

Figure 14 – HIV-positive by Age Group and Year

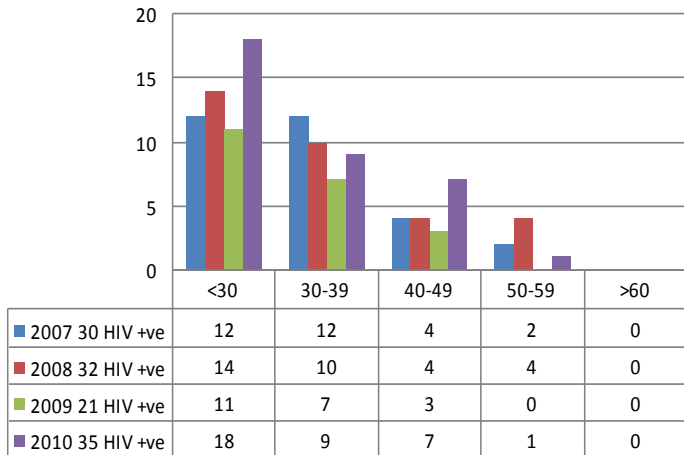


Figure 14a – HIV-positive by Age Group and Year

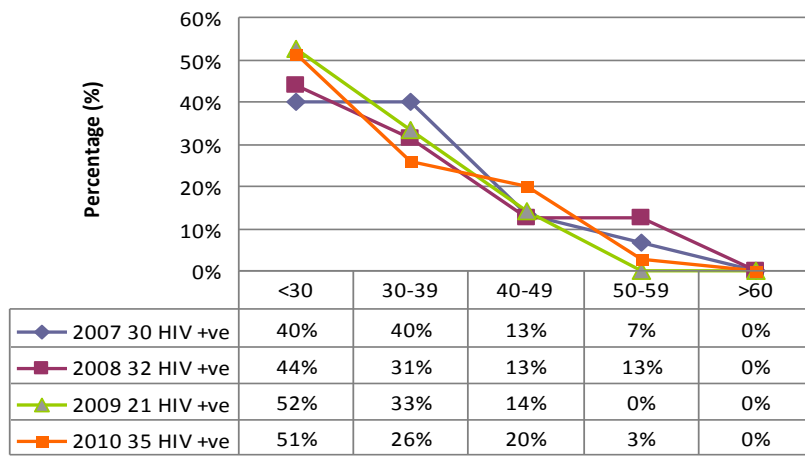


Figure 14b – HIV-positive by Age Group 2009

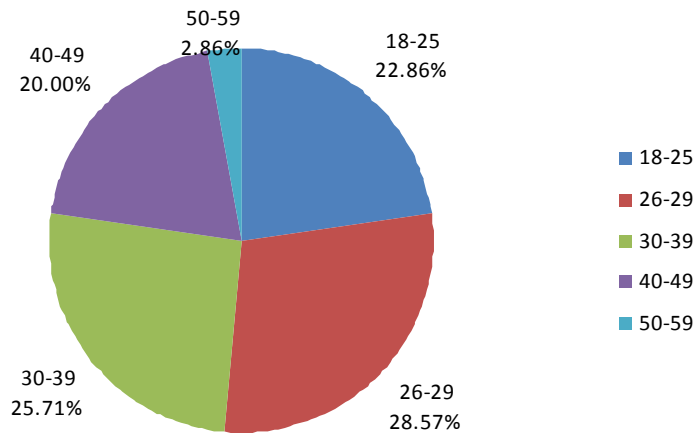


Figure 15 – HIV-positive by Race and Year

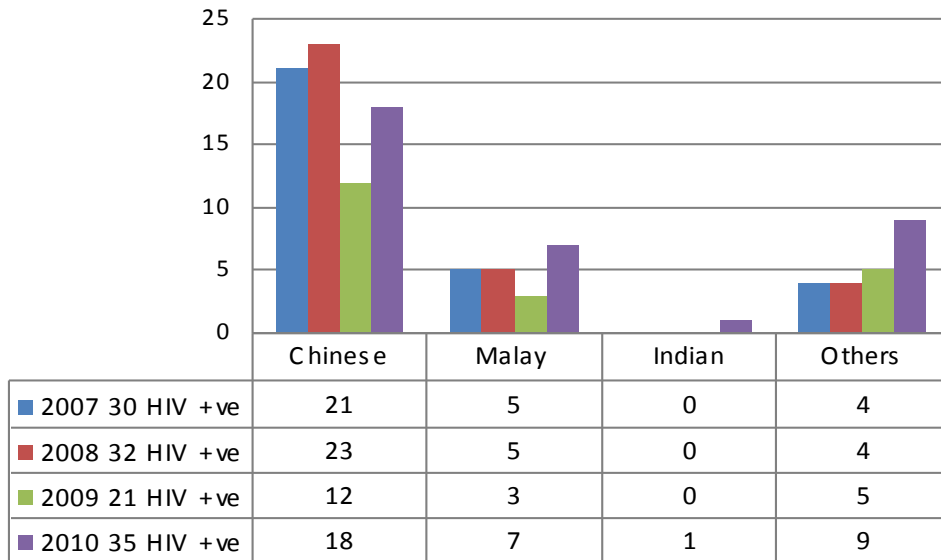


Figure 15a – HIV-positive by Race and Year

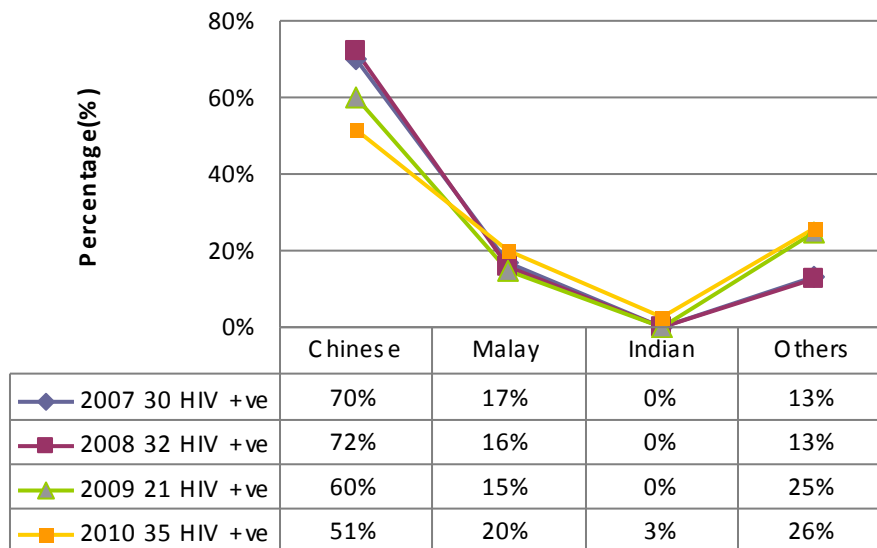


Figure 16 – HIV-positive by Nationality and Year

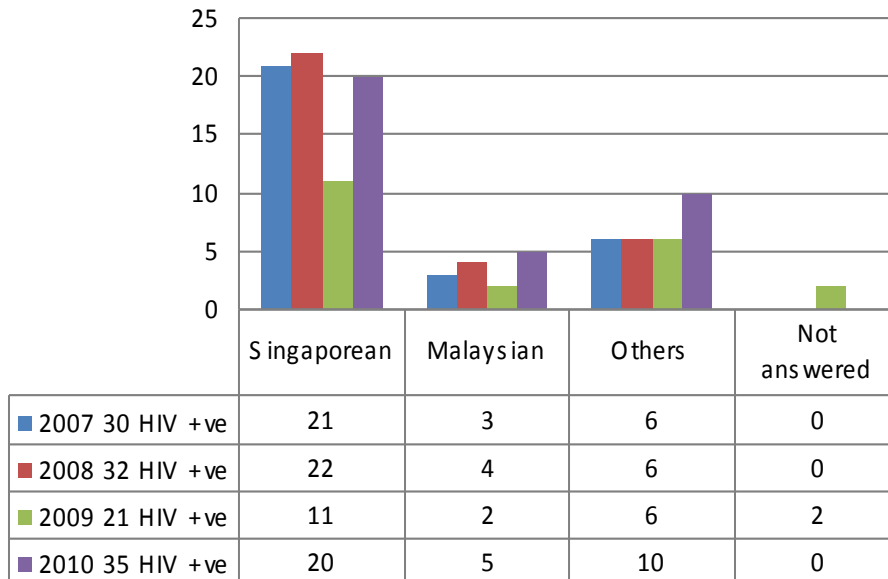


Figure 16a – HIV-positive by Nationality and Year

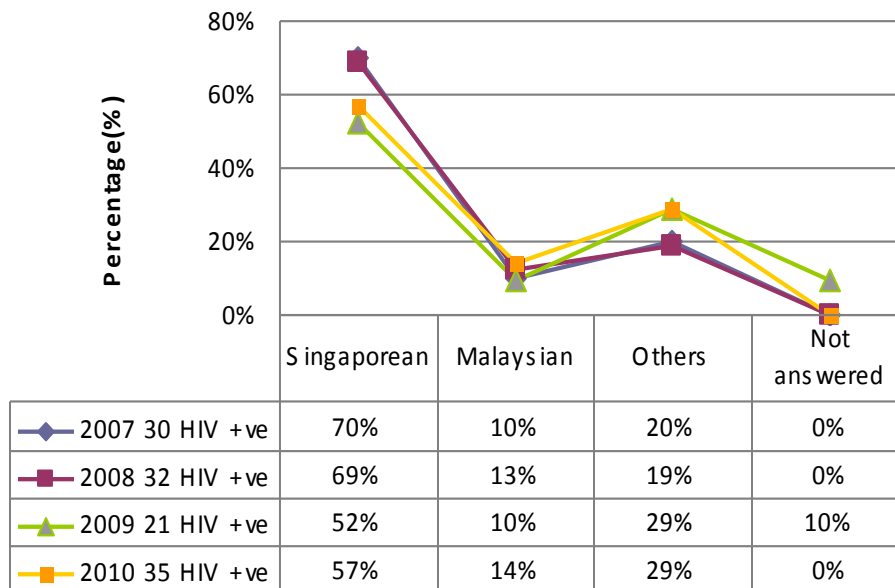
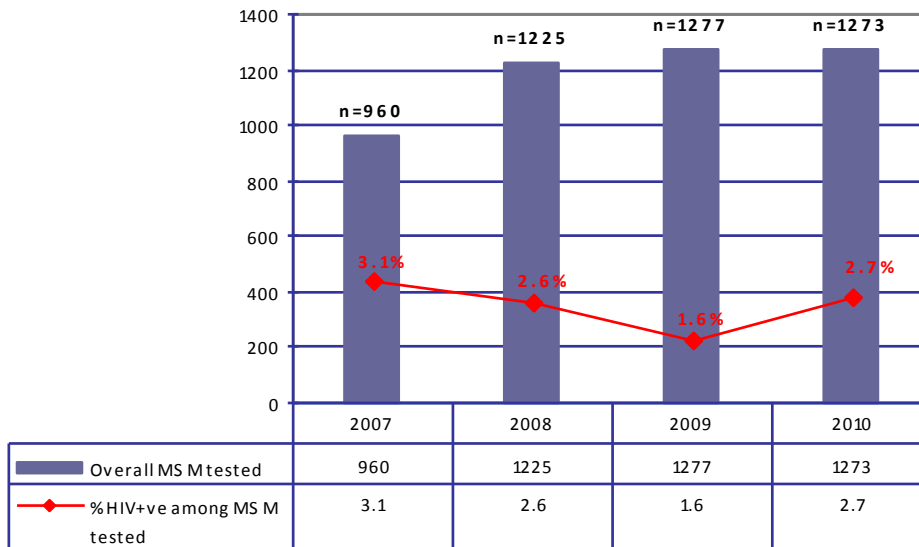


Figure 17 – Overall HIV-positivity by Year



The number of positive cases detected in 2010 increased compared to the previous two years. HIV positivity was 1.6% (21 positive) in 2009 and 2.6% (32 positive) in 2008.

Figure 17a – HIV-positivity in Bars/Clubs by Year

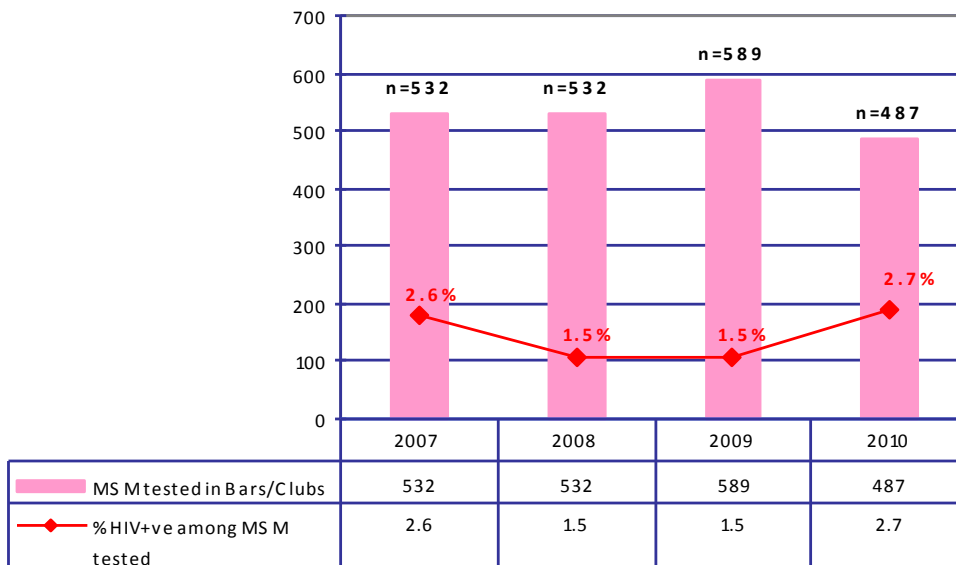
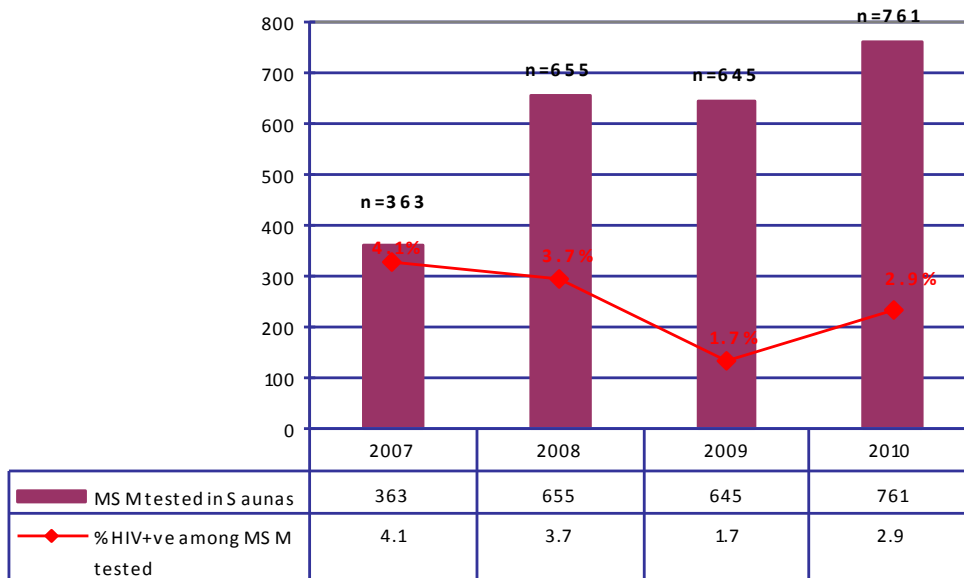


Figure 17b – HIV-positivity in Saunas by Year



Data of survey form

Besides questions on the basic demographics, additional data on sexual behaviour and practices among MSM that patronised the saunas and bars/clubs were also collected with emphasis on condom usage.

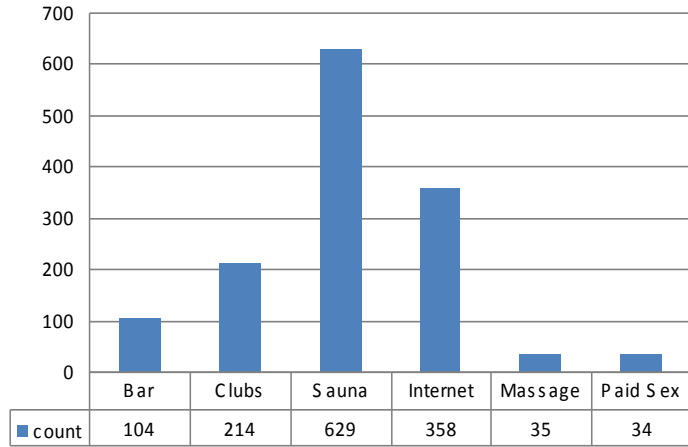
1280 survey forms were collected with the following questions:

1. Where do you meet your sexual partners (last 6 months)
 - Bar
 - Club
 - Sauna
 - Internet
 - Massage parlor
 - Paid sex

2. Do you practice anal sex and condom usage (last 6 months)
 - a. With regular partners
 - b. With casual partners

3. When was your last HIV test?
 - Where have you done the test?

Figure 18 – Where do you meet your sexual partners (survey form n=1280)



Participants can circle more than one option on where they meet their sexual partners.

Figure 19 – Do you practice anal sex (survey form n=1280)

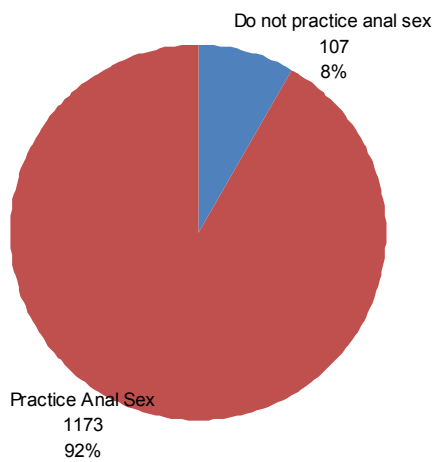


Figure 20 – Condom use in the last 6 months with regular partners (survey form n=1221)

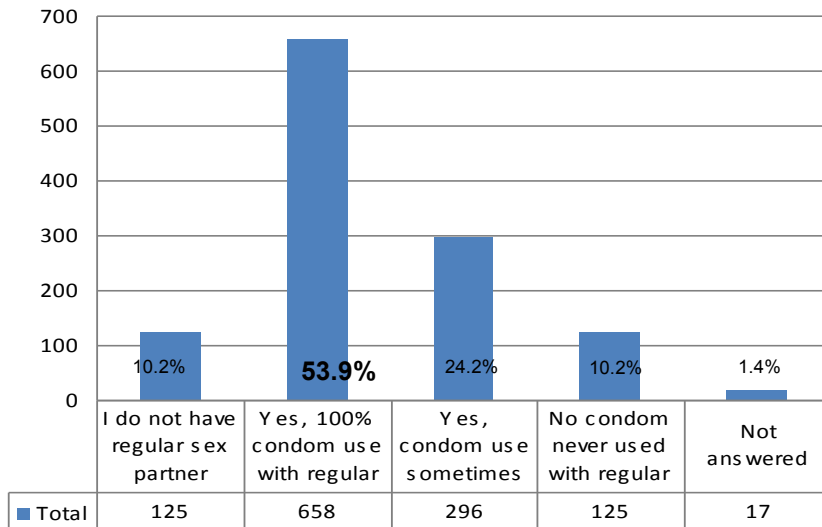


Figure 21 – Condom use in the last 6 months with casual partners (survey form n=1221)

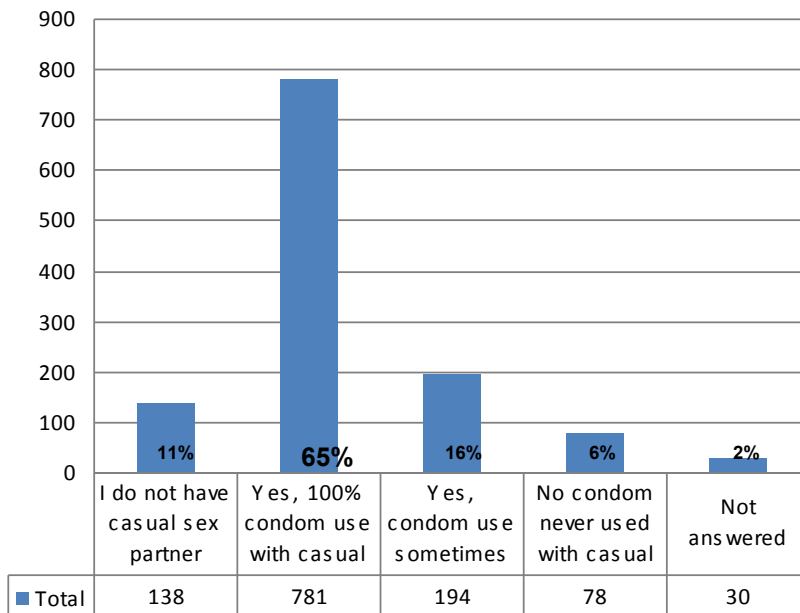
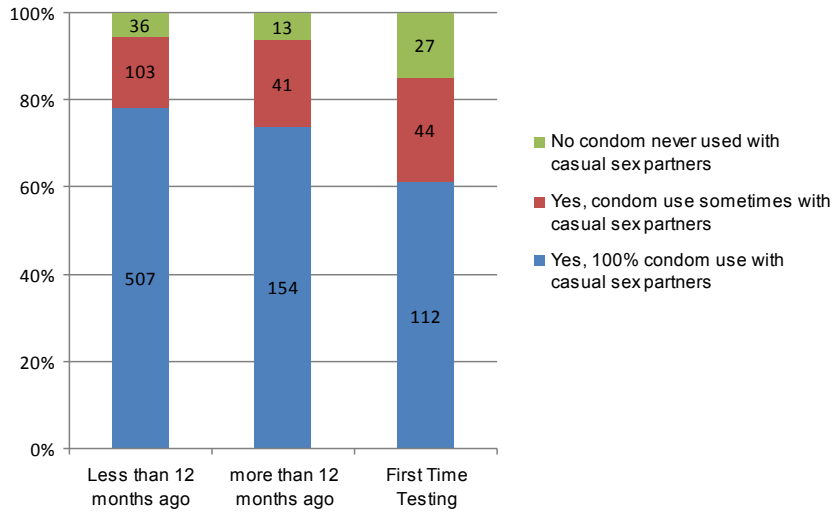


Figure 22 – Condom use and HIV testing among MSM who had casual sex partners (n=1037)



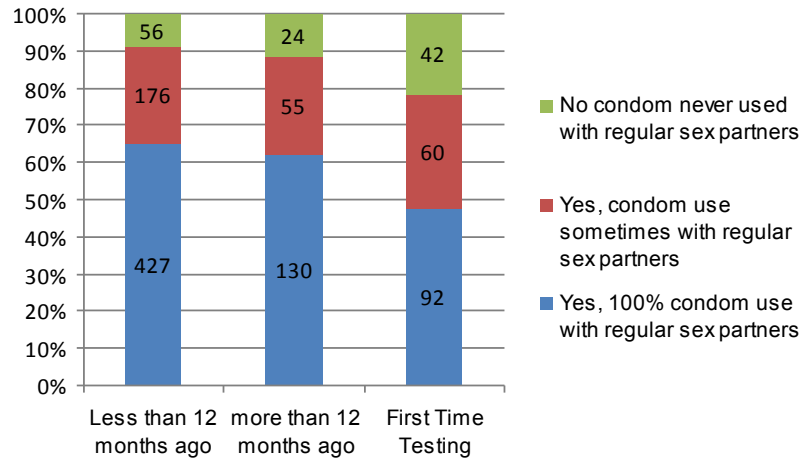
646 tested less than 12months (36+103 = 139, n=646, 22% unsafe sex)

208 tested more than 12months (13+41 = 54, n=208, 26% unsafe sex)

183 first time testers (27+44 = 71, n=183, 39% unsafe sex)

Higher percentage (39%) of first time testers reported unsafe sex with casual partners compared with those who had tested before.

Figure 22a – Condom use and HIV testing among MSM who had regular sex partners (n=1062)



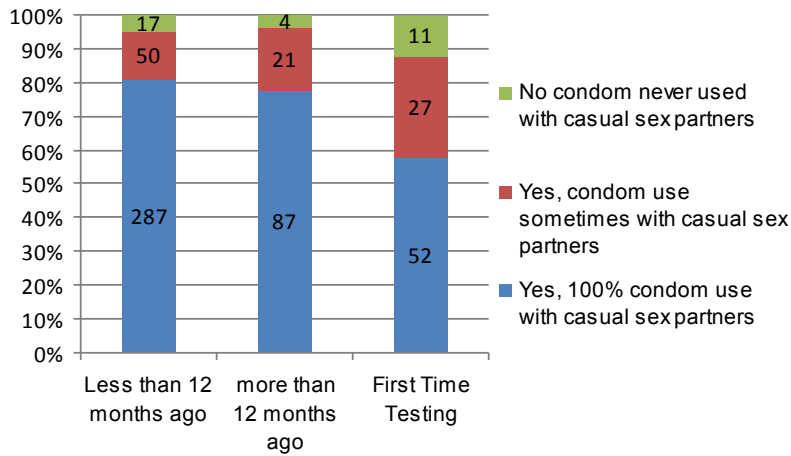
659 tested less than 12months (56+176 = 232, n=659, 35% unsafe sex)

209 tested more than 12months (24+55 = 79, n=209, 38% unsafe sex)

194 first time testers (42+60 = 102, n=194, 53% unsafe sex)

Higher percentage (53%) of first time testers reported unsafe sex with regular partners compared with those who had tested before.

Figure 23 – Condom use and HIV testing among MSM who met sex partners in saunas (n=556)



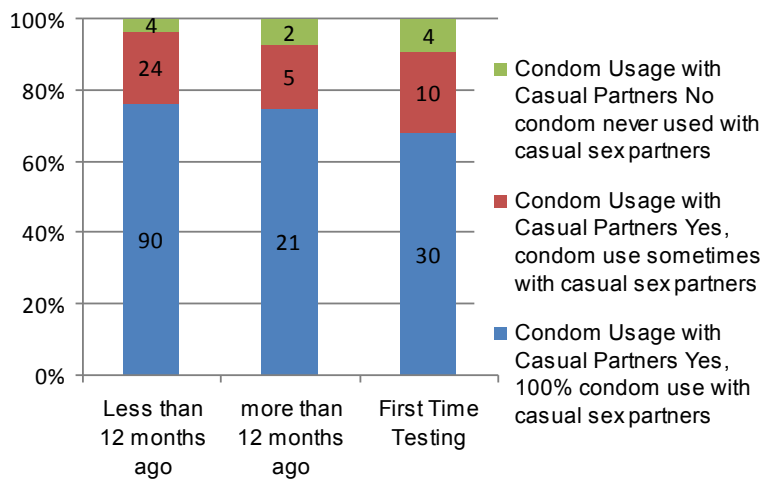
354 tested less than 12months (17+50 = 67, n=354, 19% unsafe sex)

112 tested more than 12months (4+21 = 25, n=112, 22% unsafe sex)

90 first time testers (11+27 = 38, n=90, 42% unsafe sex)

First time testers reported more unsafe sex in saunas comparing to those who had tested before.

Figure 23a – Condom use and HIV testing among MSM who met sex partners in clubs/bars (n=190)



118 tested less than 12months (4+24 = 28, n=118, 24% unsafe sex)

28 tested more than 12months (2+5 = 7, n=28, 25% unsafe sex)

44 first time testers (4+10 = 14, n=44, 32% unsafe sex)

First time testers reported more unsafe sex in clubs/bars comparing to those who had tested before

Discussion

Demographics

The majority of those tested were between 18 to 29 years, similar numbers seen in the 2009 project. Noticeable increase of 200% for those above 60 years (15 samples compared to 5 in 2009).

The main ethnic group is Chinese, followed by Other races, then Malay. A similar clientele pattern was observed as with the other three projects, participants who took the HIV test were different; those from saunas were older and had a greater proportion of non-Singaporeans/PRs than those in clubs/bars

Sexual behaviour (survey form, n=1280)

Saunas are the main venue where participants meet their sexual partners, followed by the internet and then clubs.

Out of the 1280 survey forms collected (Fig.18 to 23)

- 1173 (92%) practice anal sex (Fig.19)
 - Anal sex
 - 1163 participants answered yes to having anal sex either with casual or regular partner (10 did not indicate casual or regular)
 - 660 (57%, n=1163) condom use always
 - 487 (42%, n=1163) no condom use
 - 16 (1%, n=1163) condom use not indicated
 - Condom use with regular partners (n=1221)
 - 1079 participants had anal sex with regular partners (Fig.20)
 - 658 (61%) condom use always
 - 421 (39%) sometimes or never use condoms
 - 125 answered no regular sex partners
 - 17 did not answer this question
 - Condom use with casual partners (n=1221)
 - 1053 participants had anal sex with casual partners (Fig.21)
 - 781 (74%) condom use always
 - 272 (26%) sometimes or never use condoms
 - 138 answered no casual sex partners
 - 30 did not answer this question
 - Last HIV test
 - First time testers show a higher percentage (39%) of no condom use with casual partners comparing to those who have ever tested before (Fig.22), similar pattern seen with regular partners (Fig.22a)
 - First time testers also show a higher percentage (43%) of no condom use in saunas with casual partners comparing to those surveyed in clubs/bars (Fig.23/23a)

HIV testing

A total of 1273 samples were collected.

- 487 samples from clubs/bars
 - 105 (22%) were first time testers
 - 286 (59%) had tested in the last 12months
(19% tested more than 12months ago or did not answer this question)

- 761 samples from saunas
 - 142 (19%) were first time testers
 - 454 (60%) had tested in the last 12months
(21% tested more than 12months ago or did not answer this question)

- 25 samples from MSM events
 - 9 (36%) were first time testers
 - 8 (32%) had tested in the last 12months
(32% tested more than 12months ago or did not answer this question)

HIV positivity

35 tested HIV positive

- 31 individuals had a previous negative HIV test
- 4 individuals were first time testers
- 18 (51%) were below 29 years of age
- Over 50% are Singaporean Chinese
- 2 were known HIV +ve (did test due to peer pressure)

Known HIV positive - Confidential Survey

From past outreach projects we have noticed known HIV+ve patrons in these venues. A separate survey containing questions on basic demographic, ARVs taken, latest CD4 counts and Viral load, and safer sex behaviour was discreetly conducted by volunteers who recognised these individuals. Five were approached and 2 agreed to participate.

Survey HIV+ve case 1	
Nationality	Singaporean
Race	Chinese
Age group	18-25
Number of visit to venue	Once a week
ARV Medication	No
Physician follow up	No
CD4 count	320
Viral load	Not sure
Other STI	No
Sex with regular partner	- No condom for oral - Sometimes condom for anal
Sex with casual partner	No casual partner

Survey HIV+ve case 2	
Nationality	Singaporean
Race	Chinese
Age group	50-59
Number of visit to venue	Once a month
ARV Medication	Truvada and Stocrin
Physician follow up	Overseas
CD4 count	170
Viral load	18,000
Other STI	Syphilis
Sex with regular partner	No regular partner
Sex with casual partner	Hand job

Conclusions

A total of 1273 MSM participated and took the HIV test. Of these 35 tested HIV positive (overall HIV positivity of 2.7%). Number of samples taken were similar, number of positive cases detected increased by 67% (21 positive in 2009, prevalence 1.6%).

HIV positivity figures were almost similar in saunas (2.9%) and in bars/clubs (2.7%).

Higher percentage of first time testers did not use condoms consistently with their casual or regular partners compared with those who had previous HIV test (figure 22).

This repeat project was well received. All the venues gave their full cooperation to the volunteers and feedback that their clients have been asking when the next HIV testing will take place.

The high visibility of this project is effective in reminding the MSM community not to be complacent about HIV/AIDS and has contributed to normalizing HIV testing.

Correct information about the window period and the potential risk for other STIs was always provided in order to prevent clients engaging in unprotected sex on the basis of one negative rapid test result. Participants were also reminded that one cannot be certain about a sexual partner's last sexual exposures or HIV status.

As with every project, we found that it was more conducive to conduct the study in saunas than in bars/clubs. Saunas often have lounge areas, which offer a private relaxing atmosphere, whereas bars/clubs are noisy, cramped, crowded and dark, which makes communication very difficult.

Expenditure

Item	Description	Budget	Used
1	Cost of OralQuick Test (\$12.09 x7%GSTx1300 test kits)	19,474.00	16,817.19
2	Printing of IEC materials (call back cards, questionnaires etc)	1,000.00	630.00
3	Stationeries and sundry items	500.00	259.55
4	Training (workshop)	400.00	283.55
5	Coordinator's allowance – Nov 10 to Feb 11	6,000.00	6,000.00
6	Volunteer's allowance (\$30 per venue) – Nov 10 to Feb 11	10,000.00	5,220.00
7	Incentives to participants (souvenir collar pin)	3,000.00	1,947.40
8	Refreshments for volunteers at venue (including debriefing dinner at end of study)	3,000.00	465.92
9	Confirmation testing at AfA ATS @ \$30 per test (positive cases)	1,170.00	120.00
10	Transport claims	4,500.00	1,040.00
11	Incidentals during mobile testing	500.00	0.00
	Total:	49,544.00	32,783.61
11	20% AfA Admin fee	9,908.80	6,556.72
	Total cost of study	59,452.80	39,340.33