Demand for PrEP in Asia
HIV And MSM In Asia

- HIV+ MSM ranges from 6% (in Myanmar, Vietnam, China, Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand) to 14% (in Mongolia)
- Ho Chi Minh, Jakarta, and Kuala Lumpur – 15% of MSM HIV+
- Bangkok – almost 25% of MSM HIV+
- Consistent condom use remains low with less than half of MSM in most major Asian cities using condoms inconsistently – too low to have an impact on reducing HIV transmission among MSM.
- PrEP is urgently needed in Asia, especially if Asia is to meet the UNAIDS fast-track targets.
Current PrEP Availability In Asia

• PrEP programmes available in:
  • **Thailand** (limited access, affordability issues)
  • **Malaysia** (Not for MSM)

• Trials/discussions for PrEP implementation programmes in:
  • **Australia** (trials in several states)
  • **Vietnam** (trial underway)
  • **The Philippines** (trial underway)
  • **Indonesia** (Discussions happening currently)
  • **Laos** (Discussions happening currently)

• Informal procurement of PrEP in **Vietnam, Singapore** and **Taiwan**, mostly black-market drugs off the internet.
Regional Consultation on PrEP for MSM

2015 – APCOM hosted PrEP summit for Asia in Bangkok

*PrEParing Asia* is attended by HIV and community workers, national HIV/AIDS programme managers, development partners and donors across the region to discuss how to increase the pace of PrEP’s roll out in Asia.

Based on consultation outcomes, APCOM produces road map to help partner organisations in Asia navigate the issues and challenges for increasing access to PrEP for MSM across the region.
PrEP Country Consultations

- *PrEParing Asia* used as model for country consultations in Malaysia, Hong Kong, Singapore, Indonesia, Cambodia, Myanmar, Lao PDR, Philippines and Vietnam (all supported by APCOM)

- Consultations assessed level of understanding and readiness that local MSM and TG communities have in relation to PrEP.

- Most countries reported community knowledge about PrEP needs to be enhanced, so accurate information is available and demand for PrEP can be generated.
Surveys on PrEP awareness and use done in China, India, Thailand and Australia + smaller surveys by several other countries + APCOM. Results show:

- Low knowledge about the existence of PrEP but high willingness to use PrEP when made aware of it
- Low belief in efficacy of PrEP and concern about moving away from condom-based messages and prevention.
- Not enough information about PrEP available in local languages.
Increasing Awareness through Community Education

• Several countries have initiated grass-roots education efforts through advertising, social media and community engagement events which:
  • Share up-to-date research
  • Provide information about the availability of PrEP
  • Peer support to help overcome barriers to PrEP access

• APCOM is providing a range education and advocacy resources in various languages including printed materials, videos, and discussions with current PrEP users.
PrEP is like protecting your body against sunburn.

It's better to be ready before you get hot and sweaty.

PrEP is up to 96% effective in preventing HIV infection when taken correctly and consistently.

Source PROUD study.

PrEP is recommended by WHO & CDC for serodiscordant couples, men and transgender women who have sex with men at high risk of HIV.

PrEP is a programme, not just a prescription.

PrEP strategy connects individuals at risk of HIV with health care providers for a regular HIV and STI testing and other follow-up.

PrEP is like taking oral contraception.

Take it or leave it, the option is yours.

PrEP is like wearing a life vest while traveling on a boat.

You hope for the best, but plan for the unexpected.
Increasing Awareness through PrEP Pilot Projects

• PrEP is supplied for a set period of time to a monitored group of participants at high risk of HIV transmission.
  
  • Australia: 8300 participants
  • Vietnam: 200 participants
  • The Philippines: 100 participants
  • Several other countries report significant progress towards establishing pilot programs

• Results from trials crucial in forming evidence base to scale up the provision of PrEP throughout Asia.
Increasing Awareness among Health Providers

• Need to create demand from health workers through education

• APCOM survey of community connected GPs across South and South East Asia shows:
  • Almost all know about and support PrEP as an HIV prevention option for MSM, particularly high risk MSM
  • But under half had not prescribed PreP due to issues around knowledge, access and affordability

• Need to develop and provide training programs and clinical guidelines for all relevant health workers
Increasing Awareness among Policymakers

- Need to create demand among policymakers through education and advocacy.

- Misconceptions about and ideological concerns against PrEP among policymakers in the region is a big hurdle.

- Without relevant policy frameworks in place, national insurance agencies and pharmaceutical regulatory bodies won’t approve PrEP as prevention, severely limiting its availability and potential impact.

- Need to provide up-to-date information about the efficacy, safety and cost-effectiveness of PrEP to educate those who inform policy and make decisions about health spending.
Stop-Gap Measures to Meet Existing PrEP Demand

• Some organisations are facilitating online ordering for clients who wish to purchase the drug from jurisdictions where it can be legally dispensed, such as Thailand and Malaysia.

• Partnerships with local HIV doctors who can supply prescriptions and provide the necessary medical support, such as kidney monitoring and HIV/STI tests, are important.

• PrEP also provided through Thai Red Cross Clinic, Silom Clinic and some private clinics in Thailand.
Next Steps

- APCOM is continuing to work with all our partner organisations across Asia and the Pacific to help them develop or implement their strategies in relation to:
  - Awareness raising
  - Evidence building
  - Policy development

- APCOM is continuing its own advocacy work with:
  - National governments
  - International aid and development organisations
  - Communities across the region
THANK YOU