

Oleksii Shestakovskiy¹,

Maksim Kasianchuk²,

Alex Garner³,

Sean Howell³,

Vitaly Djuma²,

Paata Sabelashvili²



*Eurasian Coalition
on Male Health*



HORNET

¹Independent scholar, Kyiv, Ukraine; ²Eurasian Coalition on Male Health, Tallinn, Estonia;

³Hornet Gay Social Network, San Francisco, United States

INTERNALIZED HOMONEGATIVITY DECREASES AVAILABILITY OF CONDOMS AMONG MSM IN 10 COUNTRIES OF EASTERN EUROPE AND CENTRAL ASIA



#AIDS2018 | @AIDS_conference | www.aids2018.org



AIDS 2018

Background

Access to free condoms is a core component for HIV prevention among MSM. Condom use is suboptimal in Eastern Europe and Central Asia.

Internalized homonegativity (negative attitudes on own same-sex attractions) can be an underestimated factor hindering free condoms receipt among MSM.

Background

Internalized homonegativity (internal homophobia, IH) arises when MSM assimilate predominant negative attitudes and assumptions about homosexuals and homosexuality (Ross et al., 2013; Szymanski, Kashubeck-West, & Meyer, 2008).

IH is related to lower effectiveness of HIV prevention in general (Huebner, Davis, Nemeroff, & Aiken, 2002), and access to condoms in particular (Berg, Ross, Weatherburn, & Schmidt, 2013). We know of only study in the region (Kasianczuk, Trofymenko, Bilous, & Sazonova, 2017) that explicitly tested the link between IH and condoms distribution in Ukraine.

For the first time in the region, we estimate effect of IH on receipt of free condoms in 10 EECA countries.

Methods

Data: online survey of MSM, August–October, 2017. Convenience sampling via Hornet, Bluesystem.org, Grindr, partner websites, and MSM organizations. Analytical sample is 5775 respondents.



Figure 1.
Analytical
sample by
country

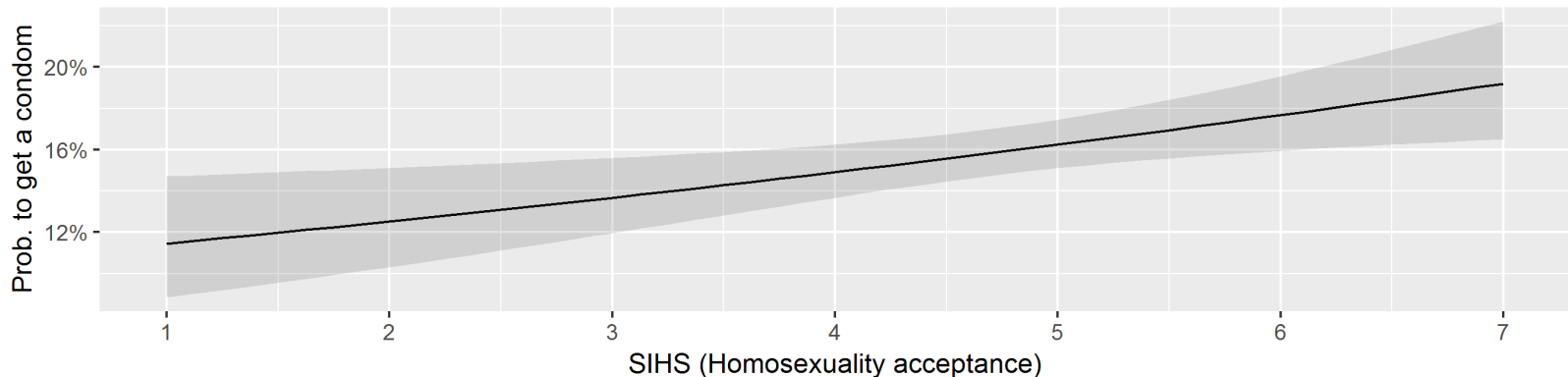
Methods

- **Outcome:** receiving free condoms from a MSM organization in the last 6 months ('Yes' = 22%).
- **Main independent variable:** 8-item Short Internalized Homonegativity Scale (SIHS, Smolenski, Diamond, Ross, & Simon Rosser, 2010).
- **Confounders:** country, domicile, age, MSM organization, education, sexual orientation, cohabitation, and 'being closeted' to others as MSM.
- **Method of analysis:** binary logistic regression

Results

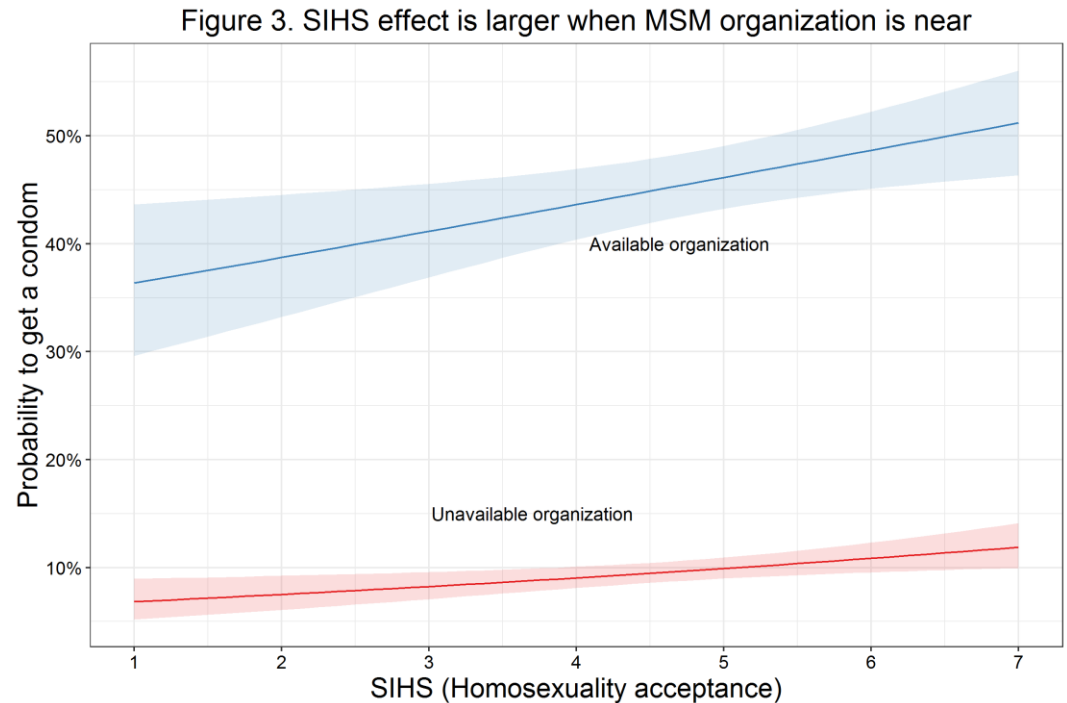
- MSM with self-acceptance (i.e., with lower internalized homonegativity) are more likely to get free condoms, although effect size is moderate.
- Odds to receive a condom from an organization increase 1.1 times ($p < 0.01$) by every additional point of self-acceptance by the SIHS scale.
- Expected probability of this outcome changes from about 11 to 19% holding other factors at their averages (Fig. 2).

Figure 2. Getting free condoms is more likely when self-acceptance is higher



Results

- Availability of MSM organizations has the biggest effect at chances to get free condoms, increasing them 7.8 times!
- But it also increases internalized homonegativity impact (Fig. 3).

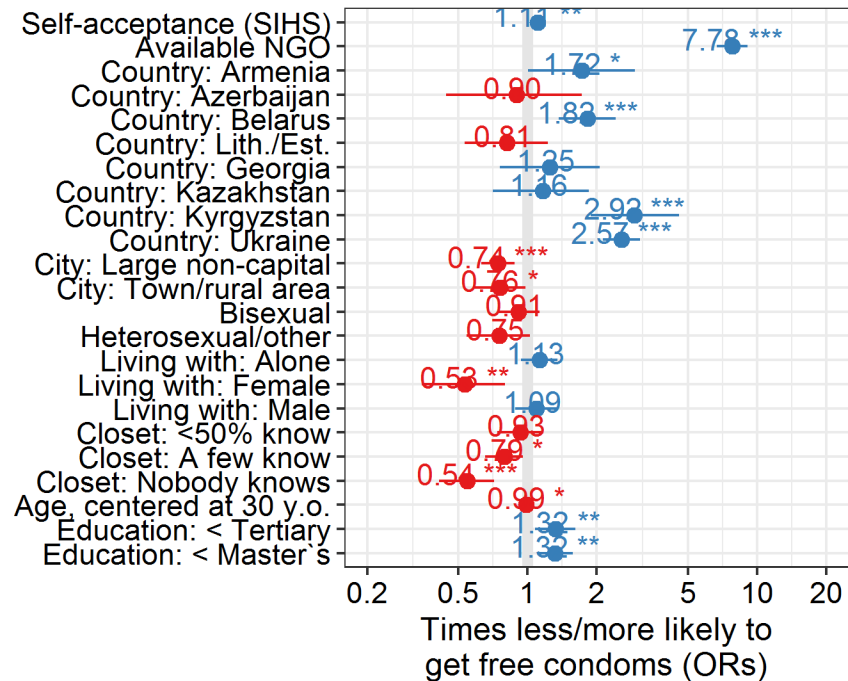


Results

Other significant factors:

- **Countries:** condom receipt is more likely in Ukraine, Kyrgyzstan, and Belarus.
- **City:** MSM out of capitals are less likely to get free condoms.
- **Cohabitation with others:** MSM living with a female sexual partner are less likely to get condoms.
- **Being in a closet:** receipt of condoms is less likely if only a few or no one knows that one is MSM.
- **Age.**
- **Education.**

Figure 4. Predictors of receiving free condoms (binary logistic regression)



Conclusion

- Internalized homonegativity among MSM moderately reduces their access to condoms distributed by HIV-service organizations in EECA.
- Availability of organizations for MSM does not diminish, but reinforces this tendency.
- MSM self-rejection makes an additional rarely tackled barrier impeding adequate HIV prevention among gays and bisexuals.

Conclusion

- Necessary interventions to reduce homonegativity among MSM at a wider society level:
 - Legal prohibition of discrimination by sexual orientation in all spheres is necessary, as well as monitoring its implementation in practice.
 - This should be supported by campaigns to reduce sexual prejudice in society.
 - HIV service and LGBT human rights movements in EECA region should consolidate their efforts and resources for joint advocacy actions against homonegativity and heterosexism.
- For IH reduction at individual level, widespread psychological consulting for acceptance of own sexuality is needed.

Further information

- Full report on Internalized Homonegativity Study will be available soon at <http://ecom.ngo/>. **Check it out!**
- Don't hesitate to contact Oleksii Shestakovskiyi (o.shest@gmail.com) and/or Maksim Kasianchuk (maxim@ecom.ngo) if you have any questions.



*Eurasian Coalition
on Male Health*



HORNET

References & Acknowledgements

References

- Berg, R. C., Ross, M. W., Weatherburn, P., & Schmidt, A. J. (2013). Structural and environmental factors are associated with internalised homonegativity in men who have sex with men: Findings from the European MSM Internet Survey (EMIS) in 38 countries. *Social Science & Medicine*, *78*, 61–69.
- Huebner, D. M., Davis, M. C., Nemeroff, C. J., & Aiken, L. S. (2002). The impact of internalized homophobia on HIV preventive interventions. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, *30*(3), 327–348.
- Kasianczuk, M., Trofymenko, L. V., Bilous, Y., & Sazonova, Y. (2017). *Monitoring of Behavior and HIV Prevalence among Men Who Have Sex with Men: Analytical Report (National Part)* (p. 80). Kyiv: ICF "APH."
- Ross, M. W., Berg, R. C., Schmidt, A. J., Hospers, H. J., Breveglieri, M., Furegato, M., & Weatherburn, P. (2013). Internalised homonegativity predicts HIV-associated risk behavior in European men who have sex with men in a 38-country cross-sectional study: some public health implications of homophobia. *BMJ Open*, *3*(2), e001928.
- Smolenski, D. J., Diamond, P. M., Ross, M. W., & Simon Rosser, B. R. (2010). Revision, Criterion Validity, and Multi-group Assessment of the Reactions to Homosexuality Scale. *Journal of Personality Assessment*, *92*(6), 568–576.
- Szymanski, D. M., Kashubeck-West, S., & Meyer, J. (2008). Internalized heterosexism: Measurement, psychosocial correlates, and research directions. *The Counseling Psychologist*, *36*(4), 525–574.

Acknowledgments

VirtualExS.ru kindly hosted our online questionnaire for free. The survey was funded by the Global Fund through ECOM "Right to Health" project. Staff members of ECOM and its network were of a tremendous help during data collection and other stages of the study.