



Dissemination Workshop on Chemsex-HIV Risk Behavior and Access to Services among Men Who Have Sex with Men and Transgender Women in Phnom Penh

On December 23rd, 2022, NCHADS with the support of KHANA conducted the Dissemination Workshop on “Chemsex, HIV Risk Behavior and Access to Services among Men Who Have Sex with Men and Transgender Women in Phnom Penh.” in Kampong Cham province. The objectives of the workshop are to disseminate key results of the Chemsex Study and to develop strategic action plans based on the key results to support HIV program implementation in responding to MSM and TGW who use the drug for sexual purposes. There were 67 participants from NAA, NCHADS, DMHSA, PASP, NGO partners, and community representatives joined the dissemination workshop. The workshop presided by the Director of NCHADS, Dr. Ouk Vichea, H.E. Dr. Tea Phalla Vice Chair of NAA, Ms. Khiev Mouykea Represent of PASP, Mr. Choub Sok Chamreun Executive Director of KHANA and Ms. Math Toek Migy Represent of Key populations.

The findings show that the risk tracing sampling was successfully employed to recruit 135 active MSM/TGW Chemsex users for study purposes. The finding also revealed that the participants were relatively young (28.1 years) and most not living alone (70.4%). Respondents reported high numbers of sexual partners and frequent attendance of Chemsex events. Crystal methamphetamine (68.8%) and Ketamine (50.4%) were the Chemsex drugs of choice. Some also injected crystal meth (13.3%). Non-condom use during anal intercourse was common (15.6%), despite condoms (71.9%) and lubricants (82.2%) being readily available. Uptake of frequent HIV testing was low (66.7%) and only a few had ever heard of or had used HIV Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP). The internet and social media were most frequently mentioned (85.2%) for identifying and recruiting Chemsex partners. Sexual partners and friends are the most influential. Non-consensual sex (17.7%) and drugging before or during Chemsex (9.7%) were relatively common. Chemsex use was problematic in many cases with almost half (49.6%) showing signs of dependency and addiction. An important role was found in the exchange of Chemsex in return for money and drugs.

In conclusion, HIV risk behavior in Chemsex users was found to be high in combination with limited uptake of HIV prevention and other services. Increased and improved HIV prevention activities and drug management and addiction services, including an innovative strategy to reach virtual and physical, are urgently needed.

A detailed discussion on the development of the action plan will bring to the technical working group of Boosted CoPCT for further input. NCHADS will discuss with relevant stakeholders and donors to implement in developing strategies to support those who are at high risk of HIV/AIDS transmission through using Chemsex in terms of HIV prevention and contribute to national HIV response in Cambodia and to achieve target 95-95-95 by 2025.