



RESEARCH ARTICLE

APPEARANCE AND BEHAVIOR OF GAY RELATED SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED INFECTIONS AND HIV IN CENTRAL JAVA INDONESIA

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ABSTRACT

Gay, bisexual, and other men who have sex with men (MSM) are at increased risk for sexually Transmitted Infections (STI). Because STI, and the behaviors associated with acquiring them, increase the likelihood of acquiring and transmitting HIV infection, STI incidence among MSM may also be an indicator of higher risk for subsequent HIV infection. This research is observational, as sample are gays living in Central Java Indonesia in September-October 2016. The sample size was 50 gay obtained randomly. The data collection in this research is done through Interviews, questionnaires, and Focus Group Discussion. The results obtained mean age of gay ranged 19 years. The everyday appearance of gays is always fashionable and well-groomed face, loves to seduce men, wear perfume that smells, gestures and attitudes like women, homophobic male, and likes gossip. Respondents who suffered from STI syndrome, namely urethral discharge 80%, genital ulcer 42%, genital vegetation 56%, scrotal swelling 14%, gay bowel syndrome 88%. The conclusion in this study that the majority of gays have a history of sexually transmitted infections and at risk of contracting HIV.

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INTRODUCTION

Gay, bisexual, and other men who have sex with men (MSM) are at increased risk for sexually Transmitted Infections (STI) including antimicrobial resistant gonorrhea, when compared to women and exclusively heterosexual men (Brewer *et al.*, 2011; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2008; Suet *al.*, 2011; Kirkcaldy *et al.*, 2013). Because STI, and the behaviors associated with acquiring them, increase the likelihood of acquiring and transmitting HIV infection, STI incidence among MSM may also be an indicator of higher risk for subsequent HIV infection (Fleming and Wasserheit, 1999). The epidemic situation of HIV and AIDS in Indonesia until the end of 2020 will continue to increase in prevalence, still concentrated in the most at risk populations. This study aims to see how appearance and behavior of gay related to STI and HIV in Central Java, Indonesia.

METHODS

This research is observational, with reference population are gays, as sample are gays living in Semarang city, Kendal,

Ungaran, Demak, Purwodadi and Salatiga in September-October 2016. The sample size was 50 gay obtained randomly. The data collection in this research is done through Interviews, questionnaires, and Focus Group Discussion. Data on the characteristics, appearance, and behavior gays, and historical data suffered from some STI syndromes in the last 3 months are presented descriptively.

RESULTS

Respondents who have a sexual orientation as gay in the city of ex karesidenan Semarang in Central Java, which became the sample of research, namely Semarang, Ungaran, Kendal, Demak, Purwodadi, and Salatiga (Table 1). Gay age that became the respondents of this research ranged 19 years. Their education is mostly graduates of senior high school and university. Their jobs are mostly self-employed or laborers. The average respondent is not married. Gays in this study who consumed drug only 4% (Table 2). The everyday appearance of gays is always fashionable and well-groomed face, loves to seduce men, wear perfume that smells, gestures and attitudes like women, homophobic male, and likes gossip (Table 3).

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Table 1. Respondents who have a sexual orientation as gay in the city of ex Karesidenan Semarang in Central Java, in September-October2016, with a sample size of 50 people which became the sample of research

Cities	frequency	%
Semarang	11	22
Ungaran	9	18
Kendal	8	16
Demak	7	14
Purwodadi	5	10
Salatiga	10	20

Table 2. Characteristics of the gay community in Central Java Indonesia, in September-October2016, with a sample size of 50 people

Variable	Frequency	%
Age (year)Mean±SD	19.6±1.7	
Education :		
University	10	20
Senior high school	32	64
Junior high school	6	12
Primary school	2	4
Occupation :		
Government employees	2	4
self-employed	23	46
Labor	20	40
Male sex worker	3	6
etc	2	4
Marital status :		
Married	5	10
Unmarried	43	86
Widower	2	4
Use drugs :		
Yes	2	4
No	48	96

Table 3. The everyday appearance of the gay community in Central Java Indonesia, in September-October2016, with a sample size of 50 people

Variables	frequency	%
Fashionable and well maintained		
Yes	48	96
No	2	4
Likes to praise men		
Yes	40	80
No	10	20
Fragrant perfume scent		
Yes	36	72
No	14	28
Gestures and attitudes like women		
Yes	46	92
No	4	8
Homophobic male		
Yes	26	52
No	24	48
Likes gossip		
Yes	39	78
No	11	22

Gays complement their performance by wearing earrings, especially earrings on the right ear. They also have the identity of a ring on the little finger or on the thumb. The gays also are men who have sex with men wearing handkerchiefs tucked in a pants pocket as an identity, green handkerchief means ready to do anal sex and red handkerchief means that only active anal sex (Table 4). Other gay identities can be seen from observations during the FGD, there are some customs in the gay community that respondents will display their identity as gay, for example when the topic of conversation is related to support for gay rights, they will support the spirit.

Table 4. Gays complement their appearance in Central Java Indonesia, September-October2016, with a sample size of 50 people

Variables	Frequency	%
Earrings		
On the right ear	6	12
On the left ear	0	0
No earrings	44	88
Ring on finger		
The little finger	20	40
Thumb	16	32
Without a ring	14	28
Handkerchief in pants		
Green color	11	22
Red color	13	26
Other colors	6	12
Without a handkerchief	20	40

Most respondents do not like to discuss matters relating to women, the majority of them do not have girlfriends. They spend most of their time together with the gay community, living in homes with fellow gays. They have a majority of facebook profiles around gay.(Table 5)Results of interviews and FGDs in the last 3 months of respondents who suffered from STI syndrome, namely urethral discharge 80%, genital ulcer 42%, genital vegetation 56%, scrotal swelling 14%, gay bowel syndrome 88% (Table 6).

Table 5. Other gay identitiesin Central Java Indonesia, in September-October2016, with a sample size of 50 people

Variables	Frequency	%
How the person reacts to the topic of gays?		
Very committed and supportive of gay rights	50	100
Not committed and not supportive of gay rights	0	0
Have a girlfriend, talk to women, or show an interest in women		
Yes	3	6
No	47	94
Often teasing, making friends, spending lots of time hanging out, often staying in gay places		
Yes	48	96
No	2	4
Does his facebook profile lead to gay sexual orientation?		
Yes	40	80
No	10	20

Table 6. History of having suffered STI on gay in Central Java Indonesia, in September-October 2016, with a sample size of 50 people

Variables	Frequency	%
Urethral discharge		
Yes	40	80
No	10	20
Genital ulcer		
Yes	21	42
No	29	48
Bubo inguinale swelling		
Yes	1	2
No	49	98
Genital vegetation		
Yes	38	56
No	12	24
Scrotal swelling		
Yes	7	14
No	43	86
Gay bowel/proctitis		
Yes	44	88
No	6	12

DISCUSSION

The characteristics of gays in this study are not much different from those of US cities (Su *et al.*, 2011; Kirkcaldy *et al.*, 2013; Fleming and Wasserheit, 1999). Gay age that became the respondents of this research ranged 19 years, their age is very young. Their education is mostly graduates of senior high school and university. Their jobs are mostly self-employed or laborers. The average respondent is not married. The everyday appearance of gays is always fashionable and well-groomed face, loves to seduce men, wear perfume that smells, gestures and attitudes like women, homophobic male, and likes gossip. Gays complement their performance by wearing earrings, they also have the identity of a ring on the little finger or on the thumb. The gays also are men who have sex with men wearing handkerchiefs tucked in a pants pocket as an identity, green handkerchief means ready to do anal sex and red handkerchief means that only active anal sex. The American Psychological Association defines sexual orientation as "an enduring pattern of emotional, romantic, and/or sexual attractions to men, women, or both sexes, "ranging" along a continuum, from exclusive attraction to the other sex to exclusive attraction to the same sex. "Sexual orientation can also be" discussed in terms of three categories: heterosexual (having emotional, romantic, or sexual attractions to members of the other sex), gay/lesbian (having emotional, romantic, or sexual attractions to members of one's own sex), and bisexual (having emotional, romantic, or sexual attractions to both men and women)."

According to Rosario, Schrimshaw, Hunter, Braun (2006), "the development of a lesbian, gay, or bisexual (LGB) sexual identity is a complex and often difficult process. Unlike members of other minority groups (e.g., ethnic and racial minorities), most LGB individuals are not raised in a community of similar others from whom they learn about their identity and who reinforce and support that identity. Rather, LGB individuals are often raised in communities that are either ignorant of or openly hostile toward homosexuality (Rosario *et al.*, 2006). Results of interviews and FGDs in the last 3 months of respondents who suffered from STI syndrome, namely urethral discharge, genital ulcer, genital vegetation, scrotal swelling, gay bowel syndrome. STI have been rising among gay and bisexual men, with increases in syphilis being seen across the country. In 2014, gay, bisexual, and other men who have sex with men accounted for 83% of primary and secondary syphilis cases where sex of sex partner was known in the United States. Gay, bisexual, and other men who have sex with men often get other STI, including chlamydia and gonorrhea infections. Human papillomavirus (HPV) the most common STI in the United States, is also a concern for gay, bisexual, and other men who have sex with men. Some types of HPV can cause genital and anal warts and some can lead to the development of anal and oral cancers. Gay, bisexual, and other men who have sex with men are 17 times more likely to get anal cancer than heterosexual men. Men who are HIV-positive are even more likely than those who do not have HIV to get anal cancer (Fleming and Wasserheit, 1999). The fact is that people infected with STI have 2-5 times more susceptibility to HIV than uninfected people (Huang *et al.*, 2015). There is a close relationship between STI and HIV. People who have STI facilitate the transmission of HIV virus into the body ("What causes a person to have a particular sexual orientation?"; Huang *et al.*, 2015).

Lesions and genital and anal ulcers are the entrance of virus particles to the body. Genital and anal inflammation can increase viral load in its genital secretions, which ultimately makes HIV transmission easy (Arnold and Steward, 2016). Increase targeted leucocyte production and HIV goals to mature. Genital inflammation causes microscopic lesions that cause HIV to enter the body easily (Xue *et al.*, 2015).

Conclusion

The appearance and behavior of MSM are at high risk of contracting STI. Gay majority in this study had suffered from STI.

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