

# Characteristics of MSM who are 'Inconsistent' and 'Non-Condom Users': Findings of the Gay Bar Survey in Fukuoka, Japan



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**[Background]** Gay CBO (Community-Based Organizations), medical staff, and researchers have been collaborating to provide HIV prevention programs for MSM in Fukuoka in southern Japan since 2003, and in 2008 the first gay bar survey was conducted in order to direct better future activities. The aim of this study is to understand **the characteristics of MSM gay bar customers who are 'Always Condom Users,' 'Inconsistent Condom Users,' and 'Non-Condom Users' during anal intercourse.**

**[Method]** Self-administered questionnaires were distributed to 29 of 49 gay bars in Hakata, Fukuoka. Demographic, HIV risk behavior, and exposure to HIV/STI information were analyzed from **397** valid responses (response rate 66%). Respondents were divided into **'Always Condom Users (n=82, 32.4%)'**, **'Inconsistent Condom Users (n=123, 48.6%)'** and **'Non-Condom Users (n=48, 19.0%)'** amongst **MSM (n=253)** who have had insertive and/or receptive anal intercourse in the past 6 months (regular plus casual partners included).

**[Results]**

- 1) **Age:** Among 'Non-Condom Users,' over 40s age group was highly represented ( $p=.005$ ) (Graph 1).
- 2) **HIV testing experience (life time):** Rate of HIV testing (life time) was 46% among survey participants ( $n=397$ ). Experience of HIV testing (life time) across condom use groups showed no significant difference (Graph 2).
- 3) **Gay venue access in past 6 months:**
  1. 'Non-Condom Users' had lower rates of using paid sex venues than 'Inconsistent Condom Users' and 'Always Condom Users' ( $p=.055$ ) (Graph 3).
  2. There was no difference in gay dance party attendance ( $p=.771$ ), gay goods shop visits ( $p=.886$ ), and going to outside courting areas ( $p=.152$ ) in previous 6 months among three groups (Graph 3).
- 4) **Use of dating website in past 6 months:** 'Non-Condom Users' had low rate of using both PC and mobile phone dating sites than the other two groups ( $p=.001$ ) (Graph 4).
- 5) **Knowledge of HIV prevention materials:**
  1. **Gay community center "haco":** 60% of survey participants ( $n=397$ ) knew or have been to community center "haco." Regardless of rate of condom use, knowledge of community center "haco" was not different between condom use groups (Graph 5).
  2. **Gay community paper "season":** 70% of survey participants ( $n=397$ ) knew about "season." Regardless of rate of condom use, knowledge of "season" was not different across three condom use groups (Graph 6).
  3. **Condoms distributed by Gay CBO "LAF":** 80% of survey participants ( $n=397$ ) knew about condoms distributed by LAF. Regardless of condom use, knowledge of "season" was not different among condom use groups (Graph 7).



**[Conclusion]** 'Non-Condom Users' were more likely to be 40 years older, less likely to use paid sex venues, and less likely to use both PC and mobile phones dating sites to meet other MSM than 'Inconsistent Condom Users' and 'Always Condom Users.' Knowledge of HIV prevention materials were consistent across condom use groups. This indicates the need for specific risk perception programs targeting the barriers faced by 'Non-Condom Users.'