

Institution: University of Brighton		
Unit of Assessment: C20 Social Policy and Social Work		
Title of case study: Increasing access to HIV testing and prevention for Gay, Bisexual, and other Men who have Sex with Men (MSM)		
Period when the underpinning research was undertaken: 2008 – 2020		
Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:		
Name(s):	Role(s) (eg job title):	Period(s) employed by submitting HEI:
Nigel Sherriff	Principal Research Fellow (2013 – 18), Professor of Public Health and Health Promotion (2018 – to date).	2007 – to date
Elizabeth McDonnell	Research Officer	2009 – 2010
Christina Panton	Research Officer	2010 – 2015
Period when the claimed impact occurred: August 2013 – 2020		
Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014? N		
<p>1. Summary of the impact</p> <p>Men who have Sex with Men (MSM) account for more than half of the 1,700,000 annual new HIV/STI infections globally. University of Brighton (UoB) research into HIV and other sexually transmitted infections (STIs) has spearheaded prevention methodologies for MSM in Slovakia and Japan. Informed by the research findings, a new Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Trans (LGBT) community organisation was funded by national government in Slovakia, which implemented new prevention activities and HIV/STI testing, linked to access to care for those at risk of infection. In Japan, UoB research informed the development of a nationally coordinated HIV prevention campaign reaching over 58,000 people annually, and a new national HIV testing and prevention programme resulting in an 8-fold increase in testing and diagnosis compared to conventional healthcare testing.</p>		
<p>2. Underpinning research</p> <p>2.1 Research context</p> <p>HIV is a major public health concern claiming more than 33,000,000 lives globally since the start of the epidemic. In 2019, approximately 690,000 people died from HIV-related causes globally and approximately 38,000,000 people are living with HIV, with 1,700,000 people becoming newly infected in 2019. Whilst HIV is now considered a chronic disease and preventable, significant transmission continues throughout the European Union (EU) and the World Health Organization (WHO) European Region. Although the epidemic patterns and trends are complex and vary widely, in general MSM continue to be disproportionately affected by HIV/STI.</p> <p>2.2 Development of early research</p> <p>Research with LGBT populations including MSM and those living with HIV, has been a key focus at the UoB since 2007 following intersectoral collaborations with the public sector (local government, NHS, universities, other public health administrations), the third sector (NGOs), multilateral organisations (eg World Health Organization and the United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), and the private sector (gay businesses). In the UK, early research by Professor Nigel Sherriff generated new knowledge about the mental, physical, and emotional, health and safety needs of young LGBT communities in Sussex, including the dearth of specialist services for young people and necessary practitioner training to meet those needs [reference 3.1]. Building on this learning, a European-wide</p>		

research consortium of 17 partners from eight European countries led by Sherriff through the *Everywhere* project (between 2008 and 2011), focused on a lack of HIV/STI prevention and support activities for MSM frequenting gay businesses (eg sex venues) in gay tourist destinations across Europe [3.2]. The study was developed in the context of increasing HIV prevalence and transmission amongst MSM. Together with high sexual mobility and tourism within and between countries of the European Union (EU), the study was grounded on the principle that interventions addressing major health threats with a cross-border or global impact such as HIV/STIs should involve the cooperation of multiple countries to be most effective [3.2]. The *Everywhere* project created a pan-European visual and value-based identity to guide HIV/STI prevention activities via gay businesses in 8 EU countries. The results showed a need to target MSM communities outside of formal health settings (such as clinics) and engage with gay businesses such as bars, clubs, and sex venues as important settings for HIV/STI prevention. Moreover, the study highlighted the key role of outreach workers being trained in social mediation techniques to initiate dialogues, build relations, and implement HIV prevention activities for and with MSM populations [3.2].

2.3 Expanding and further developing the research

Following *Everywhere*, Sherriff directed the UK arm of the *Sialon II* research project (2011-2015), a formal WHO collaborating study co-funded by the European Commission's (EC) Second Programme of Community Action in the Field of Health. This was the largest European study of its kind geographically (13 countries) and in terms of participant enrolment (n=4,901). *Sialon II* conducted a complex multi-centre bio-behavioural cross-sectional survey across 13 European cities with a concomitant collection of behavioural data and biological data (oral fluid or blood specimens) via different types of gay businesses (eg bars, clubs, cafes, and sex venues such as gay saunas) selected in partnership through formative research with venue owners and local gay communities [3.3]. Strategically, the project aimed to: i) collect behavioural and biological data as well as assess the prevention needs of MSM in line with the WHO and UNAIDS' recommendations on implementing Second Generation Surveillance Systems (SGSS); ii) address the need for effective responses in priority regions such as the EU Member States most affected by HIV; and iii) complement the EC's 2010 Health Programme, by targeting MSM specifically as a (sub)population at high risk of acquiring HIV and other STIs.

Sialon II data created new knowledge by showing widely varying HIV prevalence estimates for MSM populations across participating EU cities with some of the highest in Bucharest, Romania (18.0%) and the lowest level reported in Stockholm, Sweden (2.4%) [3.4]. Moreover, the research revealed that one third of the study participants living with HIV were unaware of their infection. Almost two-thirds (65%) of those with undiagnosed HIV appeared to have acquired the infection recently, emphasising an urgent need for more frequent testing and targeted prevention [3.5]. In Bratislava, Slovakia, the *Sialon II* data was particularly striking showing that a very low proportion of MSM had been tested for HIV in the last 12 months (35.5%) together with a very high proportion of undiagnosed HIV amongst MSM infrequent testers (60%). Moreover, most MSM in Bratislava did not have access to sufficient information regarding HIV/STIs or easy access to condoms and lubricants with less than one quarter reporting being 'reached' by prevention programmes (22.6%) [3.4].

2.4 Adapting the research to new contexts; the case of Japan.

Drawing on learning from *Everywhere* and *Sialon II*, outcomes were utilised to develop an international dimension (outside of Europe) by examining potential adaptability of both projects to other contexts. The *Everywhere in Japan* project (between 2012 and 2014) was co-funded through sources including the Daiwa Foundation and the Japanese Foundation for AIDS Prevention (JFAP). The study conducted qualitative research to explore whether it would be feasible, acceptable and desirable to build on the *Everywhere* and *Sialon II* projects for adaptation and implementation in Japan. The results provided new insights showing that given the high degree of sexual mobility between and within countries in Asia, there was significant potential for these projects (or their Japanese variants) to be expanded and adapted to other countries within the Asia-Pacific region including Japan [3.6].

3. References to the research

[3.1] Sherriff, N.S., Hamilton, W., Wigmore, S. & Giambrone, B. (2011). What do you say to them?' investigating and supporting the needs of lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, and questioning (LGBTQ) young people. *Journal of Community Psychology*, 39(8), 939-955. <https://doi.org/10.1002/jcop.20479> [Quality validation: article in leading peer-reviewed journal].

[3.2] Sherriff, N.S. & Gugglberger, L. (2014). A European seal of approval for 'gay' businesses: findings from an HIV prevention pilot project. *Perspectives in Public Health*, 134(3), 150-159. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1757913913481540>. [Quality validation: article in leading peer-reviewed journal].

[3.3] Gios, L., Mirandola, M., Toskin, I., Marcus, U., Dudareva-Vizule, S., Sherriff, N.S., Breveglieri, M., Furegato, M., Folch, C., Ferrer, L., Montoliu, A., Nöstlinger, C., Vanden Berghe, W., Kühlmann-Berenzon, S., Velicko, I., Dias, S., Suligoj, B., Regine, V., Stanekova, D., Rosińska, M., Caplinskas, S., Klavs, I., Alexiev, I., & Rafila, A. (2016). Bio-behavioural HIV and STI surveillance among men who have sex with men in Europe: the SIALON II protocols. *BMC Public Health*, 16(212). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12889-016-2783-9>. [Quality validation: article in leading peer-reviewed journal].

[3.4] Mirandola, M., Gios, L., Sherriff, N.S., Marcus, M., Toskin, I., Rosinska, M., Schink, S., Kühlmann-Berenzon, S., Suligoj, B., Folch, C., Nöstlinger, C., Dias, S., Stanekova, D., Klavs, I., Caplinskas, S., Rafila, A., Marin, C., Alexiev, I., Zohrabyan, L., Noori, T., Menel-Lemos, C., & the SIALON II Network (Short list) (2018). Quantifying unmet prevention needs among MSM in Europe through a multi-site bio-behavioural survey. *Euro Surveillance*, 23(49): pii=1800097. <https://doi.org/10.2807/1560-7917.ES.2018.23.49.1800097>. [Quality validation: article in leading peer-reviewed journal].

[3.5] Marcus, U., Noestlinger, C., Rosińska, M., Sherriff, N. S., Gios, L., Dias, S., Gama, A. F., Toskin, I., Alexiev, I., Naseva, E., Schink, S., & Mirandola, M. (2018). Behavioural and demographic correlates of undiagnosed HIV infection in a MSM sample recruited in 13 European cities. *BMC Infectious Diseases*, 18(368). doi.org/10.1186/s12879-018-3249-8. [Quality validation: article in leading peer-reviewed journal].

[3.6] Sherriff, N. S., Koerner, J., Kaneko, N., Shiono, S., Takaku, M., Boseley, R., & Ichikawa, S. (2017). Everywhere in Japan: an international approach to working with commercial gay businesses in HIV prevention. *Health Promotion International*, 32(3): 522-534. <https://doi.org/10.1093/heapro/dav096>. [Quality validation: article in leading peer-reviewed journal and published in a Japanese publication].

Key research grants

[3.7] Nigel Sherriff [PI], European Commission, 2008 – 2011, Everywhere: A methodological model of HIV prevention amongst MSM. Total project budget: EUR817,950. EC contribution: EUR490,770. UoB allocation: EUR185,017.44, GBP164,295.

[3.8] Nigel Sherriff [PI], European Commission DG Sanco, 2011 – 2015, Sialon II: Capacity building in combining targeted prevention with meaningful HIV surveillance among MSM: A bio-behavioural survey. Total funding: EUR989,960. UoB allocation: EUR41,635.

[3.9] Nigel Sherriff [PI], Daiwa Foundation, 2012 – 2014, Everywhere in Japan: A feasibility study to explore adaptability of the HIV Everywhere Project to Japan. UoB allocation: GBP 4,000.

4. Details of the impact

UoB's multi-country research into HIV and other STIs has advanced prevention methodologies for MSM populations in Slovakia, and then adapted and evolved into the first ever 'settings-based' approach to disease prevention and public health in Japan. This settings approach is novel and crucial to effective HIV/STI prevention as it embraces informal spaces (eg gay bars, saunas, LGBT community centres) that support the implementation of health initiatives outside of formal health settings such as clinics. Through large-scale collaborative HIV prevention and bio-behavioural research with MSM communities, as well as the public and private sectors, Sherriff's research pushed forward alternative understandings of how prevention for vulnerable groups at high risk of HIV/STI infection can be targeted specifically through informal settings in collaboration with members

of the (sub) population(s). Moreover, this research is valuable beyond Japan and Slovakia. It has demonstrated and informed how prevention activities and wider prevention campaigns can be developed and implemented to increase access to, and take-up of, HIV/STI testing, prevention, and linkage. This will improve care and protection for MSM populations who account for more than 50% of annual new HIV/STI infections globally and experience HIV-related stigma and discrimination that impacts negatively on HIV prevention efforts including testing, leading to poor health and social outcomes.

4.1) Implementing new HIV/STI prevention and increased testing activities for the LGBT (including MSM) community in Bratislava, Slovakia

As a direct result of *Sialon II* research findings, a new NGO was established rapidly in Bratislava, Slovakia, in order to provide prevention services for MSM as well as the wider LGBT community(ies) across the city. Duhove srdce or 'The Rainbow Heart' was funded by the Slovak Ministry of Interior for all LGBT communities including MSM in Bratislava and launched on the 15th March 2013 [source 5.1]. Drawing on Sherriff's research, Duhove srdce worked directly in and with LGBT communities to raise awareness of HIV/AIDS and other STIs, and implement, and increase access to, new HIV/STI prevention and testing activities, including increasing condom availability and encouraging take-up. This new NGO aimed to increase access to anonymous and comprehensive testing and linkage to appropriate care for HIV (including rapid testing), viral hepatitis (hepatitis B and C), and syphilis in partnership with the National Reference Centre for HIV/AIDS at the headquarters of the Slovak Medical University (SMU) in Bratislava. Other harm-reduction based activities designed and implemented by Duhove srdce to meet the needs of MSM as well as the wider LGBT community/ies, between 2013 and 2017 included distributing over 3,000 free condoms/lubricant sachets as key 'conversation starters' for HIV prevention gay venues and settings as use of condoms in this community is very low; holding three annual Rainbow Ball events; holding regular public advocacy forums regarding increasing community-based HIV/STI testing for key populations such as MSM; developing HIV/AIDS prevention materials which were distributed across the city's LGBT locations, including over 1500 informational leaflets [5.2, 5.3].

4.2) Changing how HIV prevention campaigns are implemented locally and nationally

A new national safer-sex campaign, 'ALL JAPAN', targeting highly sexually mobile MSM (including foreign tourists) to increase the take-up of HIV testing as well as to promote condom use was launched as a direct result of the *Everywhere* and *Sialon II* research. Following a series of study visits (January 2012, June 2012, December 2014, January 2018) by Sherriff to Japan to meet with NGOs, the Japanese MSM study group, and other stakeholders involved in the *Everywhere in Japan* project, the 'ALL JAPAN' campaign was launched in 2016 by the gay community centre Akta (Tokyo). The campaign is founded on the principles and practices developed in *Everywhere* [5.3, 5.4]. Previously, HIV prevention and their related NGOs and community centres supporting MSM, operated independently across different prefectures in Japan and did not consider the role of sexual mobility and gay tourism [5.5]. As a result of the *Everywhere* framework HIV prevention activities in Japan are now harmonised through ALL JAPAN creating a common visual and value-based identity maximising potential reach to MSM from different Japanese prefectures, and from different countries. The campaign links together seven regional NGOs which operate gay community centres providing coordinated HIV information and activities to over 8,000 centre visitors per year. These community centres include spaces in many of Japan's largest cities including Osaka, Tokyo, Nagoya, Okinawa, Matsuyama, Sendai, and Yokohama. A further 50,000 MSM are estimated to be reached nationally via additional internet/web traffic and the distribution of hardcopy prevention materials [5.4]. Findings from a community-based survey in 2016 found that 26% of gay venue users knew of the 'ALL JAPAN' campaign, which suggests that approximately 10,000 MSM are impacted by the campaign [5.4, 5.6]. This suggests a high level of awareness of the 'ALL JAPAN' campaign amongst MSM compared to the previous national HIV prevention and awareness programme (2009-2012) in which a survey in 2012 reported that only 2.3% of MSM respondents had awareness of [5.7].

4.3) Increasing access to, and take-up of, HIV/STI testing, prevention, and linkage to care.

Following the presentation of *Sialon II* research during study visits to Japan, the design of the HIV Check 2.0 programme, a national HIV testing and prevention research programme (funded by the Japan Ministry of Health, Labour, and Welfare), was built directly on the *Sialon II* methodology. This programme is a joint initiative with the community-based organisations involved in the ALL JAPAN campaign. In Japan, HIV/STI behavioural surveys of MSM ('HIV Check'; 2016 – 2017) were not previously linked to biological samples because of concerns that MSM would not accept such linkage and lacked knowledge of its relevance and/or strategic importance [5.5]. Lack of linkage causes significant problems because methodologically it becomes impossible to exclude multiple test users, and impossible to compare behavioural status by infection status. By linking together, it becomes possible to understand behaviours associated with serostatus and identify important issues for developing HIV support and prevention opportunities for policy and programme development. This enables the research to be used for early detection and prevention programmes tailored to MSM who are at high risk of infection [5.5].

In Japan between 2017 and 2020, the HIV Check 2.0 programme created, for the first-time, linkage of biological samples with behavioural data, alongside increased access to HIV testing (and linkage to care) and to prevention (condoms) through gay community settings. Between February and May 2018, initial data revealed such linkage is acceptable with 98.5% of 1,004 MSM participants agreeing to link their behavioural survey response to HIV testing results. 23 previously undiagnosed positive cases have been identified resulting in appropriate care being provided for these MSM. In addition, 22% of MSM who had never undergone HIV testing previously were tested [5.8]. The HIV Check 2.0 data showed an 8-fold increase in testing and diagnosis compared to conventional healthcare facility-based testing indicating that the UoB research has played a central role in a developing a programme that is transforming HIV/STI research, testing, and care for those affected in Japan [5.8].

5. Sources to corroborate the impact

[5.1] Testimonial from Slovak Medical University on the creation of Dúhové srdce and its outcomes.

[5.2] Nöstlinger, C. & Berghe, W.V., (2015). The Sialon II Prevention Report. The outcomes of Dúhové srdce are described, pg. 22.

[5.3] Testimonial from an Honorary Professor at Nagoya City University that confirms the connection between the Everywhere project and the ALL JAPAN campaign.

[5.4] Testimonial from an Associate Professor at the Graduate School of Nursing, International Health Nursing, Nagoya City, that confirms the direct connection between the Everywhere project and new HIV prevention programmes in Japan. This includes the creation of the ALL JAPAN campaign and its outcomes.

[5.5] Testimonial from an Associate Professor at the Graduate School of Nursing, International Health Nursing. This confirms how both the Everywhere and Sialon II methodology has had a significant impact on the new targeted prevention programmes as well as the HIV Check 2.0 programme.

[5.6] Kaneko, N. et al. (2019). Correlates of lifetime and past one year HIV testing experience among men who have sex with men residing in urban cities in Japan. *The Journal of AIDS Research*, 21, 34-44.

[5.7] Kaneko, N., et al. (2017). HIV Testing and Related Factors among Japanese male adults-Comparison of Survey Results in 2009 and 2012. *The Journal of AIDS Research*, 19(1), 16-23. Survey results highlight figures relating to awareness.

[5.8] Iwahashi et al. (2019). Dry blood spot-based HIV testing 'HIVCheck.jp' is a new testing opportunity for men who have sex with men in Tokyo, Japan. Poster presented at Fast Track Cities, London, UK, confirming outcomes of the programme.