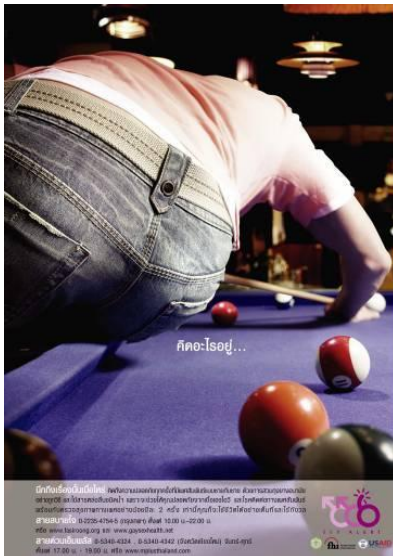




SUCCESS STORY

MSM Multimedia Campaign Hits Its Targets



Family Health International

To encourage responsible behavior among men who have sex with men (MSM), Family Health International launched a promotional campaign with an unusual approach:

Three posters – photographed from behind – of a man either bending over to pick up his mail, plugging in his computer or making a pool shot, each with the tag line, “What are you thinking about?” The campaign, which ran from February 2006 to December 2006, was a success among MSM, advancing the Thailand Ministry of Public Health’s efforts to reduce new HIV infections by at least 50% over the next three years.

Released in Bangkok and Chiang Mai and seen by an estimated 35,000 men, the campaign stressed consistent condom and water-based lubricant use, and regular HIV testing and sexually-transmitted infection (STI) check-ups. The ads ran in magazines, on the Internet, were posted at call centers, broadcast via SMS, printed as leaflets and booklets, and distributed with condoms and lubricant packaging. FHI’s implementing agencies, Rainbow Sky and SWING in Bangkok and Mplus in Chiang Mai, helped distribute campaign materials at events and venues frequented by MSM.

A midterm review found the campaign had reached a high proportion of MSM, with 73% of respondents in Bangkok and 83% in Chiang Mai saying they had been exposed to at least two channels of communication used for the campaign. Some 83% thought the campaign was beneficial, with many saying they intended to seek HIV and STI testing services soon.

The evaluation, conducted three months after the campaign ended, found that 25% of MSM who had seen the ads spontaneously remembered elements of the drive (“proven recallers”), 70% remembered some aspects after prompting (“aided recognizers”), and just 5% failed to remember any component.

The “proven recallers” were found to be more likely to have sought HIV/AIDS information, undergone an HIV and STI check-ups, and to have consistently used condoms with partners than men who were not exposed to the campaign. The majority felt the campaign was relevant and socially acceptable.

These findings indicate the campaign had a significant impact on the sexual behavior and health concerns of MSM and imply that this effective intervention should be continued to complement other outreach activities.