



# HIV Care Denied to Most MSM in Asia-Pacific Region

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Nearly 90 percent of men who have sex with men in the Asia-Pacific region are denied HIV care because of regional laws criminalizing male homosexual activity, according to a U.N.-backed report written about in [BBC News](#). The distressing statistics come to light as the United States commemorates National Asian & Pacific Islander HIV/AIDS Awareness Day on Wednesday, May 19.

According to the report in the BBC article, gays and bisexuals comprise between 10 and 30 percent of HIV/AIDS cases in most Asia-Pacific countries, but 19 out of 48 of those countries criminalized gay male sex.

In some countries, the punishment is death. In others, criminalization results in extortion, harassment and violence. As a result, HIV rates are increasing.

“The effectiveness of the HIV response will depend not just on the sustained scale up of HIV prevention, treatment and care, but on whether the legal and social environment support or hinder programmes for those who are most vulnerable,” wrote Mandeep Dhaliwal, of the U.N. Development Programme, which coproduced the report with the Asia Pacific Coalition on Male Sexual Health.

In the United States, the annual National Asian & Pacific Islander HIV/AIDS Awareness Day marks its fifth year. It was launched by the Banyan Tree Project, a campaign to end silence and shame surrounding HIV/AIDS in these communities. Events across the country include educational activities, awards ceremonies, entertainment and HIV testing.

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