

Abstract of Master's Thesis			
Course	Master of Public Health	Name	Ryo Kobayashi
Thesis Title	Factors Associated with Quality of Life of HIV-Positive Filipino Men Who Have Sex with Men in Metro Manila, the Philippines		
<p><b>Background</b></p> <p>Although the HIV prevalence rate still remains less than 0.1% in the Philippines, the country is undergoing a reversed trend against that of the world and it is on a verge of HIV epidemic, especially among the core risk group of men who have sex with men (MSM). For their double marginalized identities as being MSM and HIV-positive, they have a high risk of being exposed to discrimination and stigmatization.</p> <p><b>Objectives</b></p> <p>This study aimed to 1) identify factors associated with QOL among HIV-positive Filipino MSM who are enrolled in ART, and 2) to gain in-depth understandings and insights on their perceptions and experiences in the Filipino social, political, cultural and religious context and to also understand their experiences of how they cope with being HIV-positive MSM.</p> <p><b>Methods</b></p> <p>This was a cross-sectional study conducted among HIV-positive Filipino MSM aged 18 years and older who are registered at the San Lazaro Hospital HIV outpatient clinic in Metro Manila, Philippines between July 2017 and August 2017. Mixed method was used in two phases; quantitative strand was first conducted using the self-administered questionnaire survey to identify the patterns and factors correlated to well-being of HIV-positive Filipino MSM, followed by a qualitative strand which sought to better explain the underlying reasons for the observed patterns and understand how these men are coping to live everyday life in the given context. Socio-demographics, clinical data and QOL-related information was collected through the questionnaire. Health-related QOL was assessed using WHOQOL-HIV BREF and General Health Questionnaire (GHQ-12).</p>			

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<p><b>Result</b></p> <p>A total of 217 MSM were participated. Multiple regression analysis showed that HIV-related stigma was the most influential factor for QOL, exerting significant negative effects on all domains of WHOQOL-HIV BREF scores and GHQ-12 scores; physical (<math>r = -0.301, P \leq 0.001</math>), psychological (<math>r = -0.324, P \leq 0.001</math>), independence (<math>r = -0.244, P \leq 0.001</math>), social relationship (<math>r = -0.283, P \leq 0.001</math>), environment (<math>r = -0.322, P \leq 0.001</math>), and spirituality (<math>r = -0.419, P \leq 0.001</math>) domains. Employment status was also negatively associated with participants' general QOL (<math>r = -0.179, P = 0.008</math>), independence (<math>r = -0.195, P = 0.003</math>), environment (<math>r = -0.165, P = 0.008</math>), spirituality (<math>r = -0.138, P = 0.029</math>) domains and GHQ-12 (<math>r = -0.194, P = 0.005</math>). Thus, unemployment was negatively correlated with the health-related QOL of participants. Age was positively associated with psychological (<math>r = 0.145, P = 0.026</math>) and environment (<math>r = 0.152, P = 0.014</math>) domains. The findings from the Focus Group Discussions and in-depths interviews elaborated the above results and illustrated the reality which the participants live in. They experienced various forms of discrimination, stigma and prejudice from different clusters of society which prevented them from developing their potential and living their life to the fullest with equal opportunities free from health-related concerns and prejudice against their identity.</p> <p><b>Conclusion</b></p> <p>Several factors such as HIV-related stigma, employment status, socioeconomic level and age influenced health-related QOL of Filipino HIV-positive MSM. The findings from this study suggests a need for psychological care provision and capacity building programmes for these patients to boost self-confidence and help acquire various skills to improve their QOL. Furthermore, radical interventions are required at the national level to continuously support this vulnerable population.</p>			