

# Taipei

CCIDA16 |  TAIPEI Surveys and Analysis Vaccination PLEASE CLICK THE BOX OF RIGHT TOP CORNER TO MAXIMIZE THE QUESTION WINDOWS.

MEDIA PLAYER

## HIV/AIDS in the era of COVID-19 : Taipei City's response



Presenter: Lian-Yu Chen, M.D., PhD  
Director, Kunming Prevention Control Center, Taipei City Hospital  
Assistant Professor, Institute of Epidemiology and Preventive Medicine,  
National Taiwan University  
16<sup>th</sup> Conference on Countermeasures to Combat Infectious Diseases in Asia

DOWNLOAD

-  HIV/AIDS in the era of COVID19: Taipei City's response
-  新型コロナウイルス感染症時代のHIV/AIDS: 台北市の対応

Question 1: slide 11

**(Q)** The slide says there is a convenient private vaccine injection site in KPCC that provides "convenient service only for PLHIV." What specific services are you providing for them? In addition, there would be a kind of risk that generally some people may look at such activities only for a targeted group in a negative light because they are not the target group and cannot use it. What safeguards are taken

Question 2:

**(Q)** We would like to know a) Reasons that many people infected with COVID-19 are positive for HIV, and b) the COVID-19 infection route (infection source) of HIV positive people.

**(A)** During the period of the endemic of COVID-19 in Taipei, the total confirmed cases number decreased gradually.

Question 3:

**(Q)** We would like to know the Specific content of education carried out in the courses for health professionals on LGBT-friendly approaches (main content of more than 30 courses you are providing).

**(A)** The public health workers don't familiar with the MSM group. The education courses provide the skills how to

Question 4:

**(Q)** What was the actual decrease in government-administered HIV tests (conducted at public health centers, etc.) due to the spread of COVID-19 infections?

**(A)** The Central Epidemic Command Center of Taiwan announced lock down policy during COVID-19 edemic in Taipei. The number of HIV testing dropped drastically during

“HIV/AIDS in the era of COVID-19: Taipei City's response”

# HIV/AIDS in the era of COVID-19 : Taipei City's response



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Hi, I'm Dr. Lian-Yu Chen,  
I'm the director of Kunming Prevention and Control Center, Taipei City Hospital.  
I'm also the assistant professor, Institute of Public Health in National Taiwan University. Kunming Prevention and Control Center is responsible for HIV and the prevention policy for the whole Taipei City.  
So today, it is my great honor to share on this topic, HIV/AIDS in the era of COVID-19: Taipei City's response.

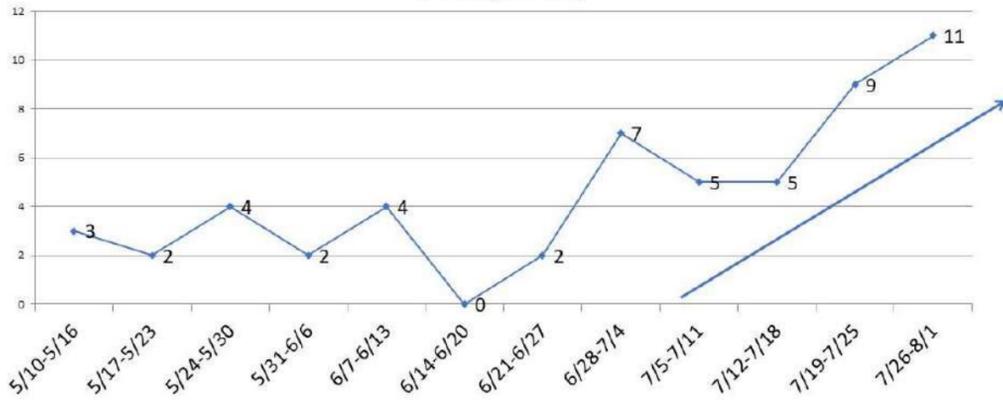


As we all know, the COVID-19 and HIV are two major pandemics that have caused a lot of mortalities and damages in varied two different time frame.  
In the past two years, COVID-19 has caused so lot of damages and human challenges for vulnerable group, ...including people with colour, people who live under the poverty line, and also people who have chronic illnesses, including people who live with HIV.  
People living with HIV experience their tremendous barrier to care, ...experience their barrier to receive the screening they need, and also they experience worsening of social stigma tax, stigma during this era.



As we know, that Taiwan has been a very successful story when it comes to COVID battle.  
However, in last May, we have been fighting a biggest outbreak of COVID-19. The COVID cases surge in a very short period of time, up to five hundred to six hundred per day. In response to that, Taiwan government orders the toughest curves amid the infection spikes, ...including closing restaurants, closing schools, mask mandates, and real name registration.

### Increased cases of COVID-19 in PLHIV in Taipei City (2021/05-08)



Male/Female: 53/1 Age: 23-70, mean:39.8, death: 2(1 suicide)

So here in this graph, you will be able to see the cases of COVID-19 in people living with HIV in Taipei City. As you can see, in May, there are a few cases of COVID-19 among people living with HIV. However, the number has increased rapidly in July.

### Media reports up to 1/3 of PLHIV with COVID-19

信義區「廣義家戶感染」！柯文哲曝3問題點：很頭痛

2021/07/12 17:57

北市信義區廣義家戶感染7人確診 匡列31接觸者

字數：

2021/07/12 17:57 (7/12 18:11 更新)



#### 臺北市疫調分析

日期	當日確診數	感染源不明人數	感染源不明比
7/1	17	5	29.4%
7/2	16	2	12.5%
7/3	55	8	14.5%
7/4	19	6	31.6%
7/5	22	2	9.1%
7/6	17	3	17.6%
7/7	11	2	18.2%
7/8	16	4	25%
7/9	20	3	15%
7/10	11	1	9%
統計	204	36	17.6%

註：110/06/30-110/07/09 確診

家戶感染或廣義家戶感染佔1/3

At that time, our mayor Dr. Ko Wen-je has held the press conference to deliver the transparent correct messages on COVID-19.

So based on the data, we reviewed to our citizens, as you can see here, about one-third of confirmed COVID cases were people living with HIV. As you can imagine that has caused the immense tension in social atmosphere. And also they have put a lot of pressure on Taipei City government to control the pandemics, particularly among this group.

## Intervention measures

- Contact tracing for vulnerable population (MSM)
- Distribute free home-based COVID-19 testing kits
- Increase COVID-19 Vaccine Coverage rate
- Educate health professionals on LGBT-friendly approach



In response to that, so there are four major intervention measures that we have taken to control the COVID pandemics among this group.

First, we try to strengthen our contact tracing for vulnerable group based on our data in Taipei, that mainly are men who have sex with men, MSM subpopulations.

Second, we tried to distribute free home-based COVID-19 testing kits.

“Test, test, test is the most important thing,” said by the secretary-general of WHO, so that is why we are trying to do here, to control the pandemics.

Third, we tried to increase the COVID-19 vaccine coverage rate as soon as possible.

And also, fourth, we believe to educate the health professionals on LGBT-friendly approach is very important particularly in COVID-19 pandemics.

## Real-Name Registration and Contact Tracing



So, on the left side, you will see the sign of QR code. That is the “Real Name Registration,” that we have been conducting very early in COVID-19 pandemics.

So in each sign, each public building, when you are about to enter it, you will be needed to send your message, your digital tracing, to our government. There will be able to allow our authority to do this digital tracing for each individual.

So, on the right, you will see a digital dashboard.

The dashboard is a visual aid for us to see which area will be the hotspot.

...and also for the easier for our health professionals to connecting the dots to identify which area is more dangerous and also who are at particular risk for COVID-19 infection.

## Distribute home-based COVID-19 testing kits



Distribute 1000 COVID self-test kits and continued to increase HIV self-test rates



We also try to increase the testing rate among people living with HIV.

So, on the left side, you will see the home-based COVID-19 testing kit we distributed for more than 1,000.

Also we asked all case manager to ask follow up about the test result and do the necessary arrangements based on their test results.

On the right side, you will see, we tried to emphasize the importance of self-test for HIV,

...as many public services have been interrupted during the pandemics, ...so we tried to do the public campaign and asked the risk group to use the self-test for the HIV.

## Distribute home-based COVID-19 testing kits

- Provide **free self testing kits** for high risk group kits from Taiwan CDC or Taipei City Health Department
- HIV case managers will **provide individualized care**, including arranging taxi for the patient to the appointed hospital, or referral of medical services.



On the right side, you will see that poster about how to distribute the home-base COVID-19 testing kits and also how to use that.

This free testing kits are offered by Taiwan CDC and also Taipei City health department.

And our case manager will offer individualized care, including arranging the taxi, or making the appointment to the hospital, or any referral of their medical services.

## Free PCR screen stations in Taipei City Hospitals



So, in addition to the home-based testing kits, we also have seven free PCR screening stations in Taipei City Hospital in very different districts in Taipei.

So the only thing the patient needs to do is to walk into the ER and order PCR testing which'll be free. We tried to increase the testing rate for whoever felt they are at risk for COVID-19 infection.

## Increase Vaccine Coverage rate

- HIV case manager directly contact with the case **one by one** to explain the importance of COVID vaccination for HIV/AIDS groups and **make the appointment** for their vaccination injection.
- Arrange a private vaccine injection site in KPCC (Kunming Prevention and Control Center), which provides convenient service only for PLHIV.



Vaccine injection site: separate space, keep privacy, avoid stigma for PLHIV

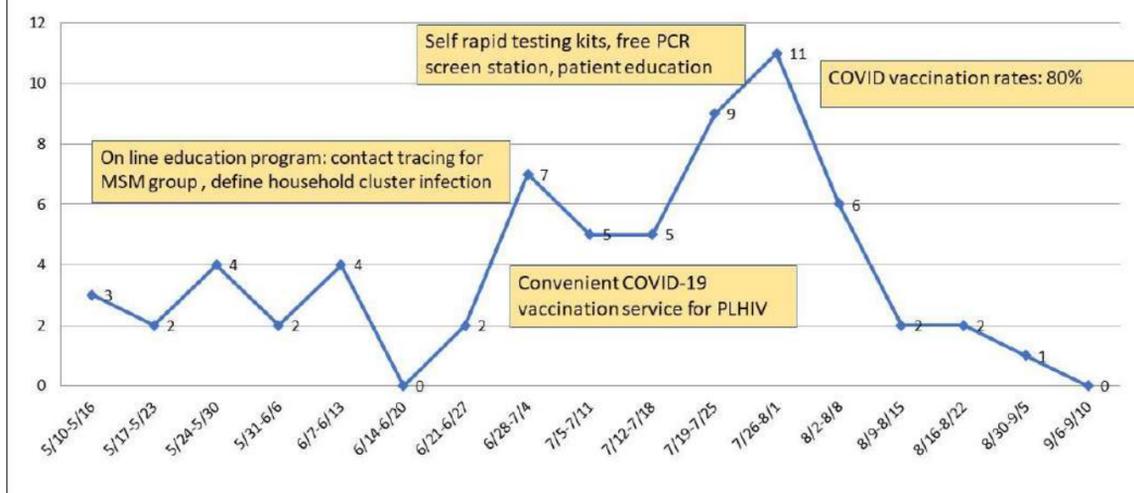
Our third strategy will be to increase the COVID vaccine coverage rate in a very short period of time. So the way we are doing this, is we asked our HIV case managers to directly contact our patients one by one. First, to explain the importance of COVID vaccination for this HIV populations. And also, we asked our case manager to just made appointment for them about what date and what site that they are able to receive their COVID vaccinations. So on the right side, the photo you will see, we also make an extra arrangement of a private vaccination injection site, here in KPCC, ...which we'll offer very convenient one-spot services for our HIV patients. So here, they will be able to see a doctor, they will be able to see their HIV case manager, ...and also they will be able to receive their COVID vaccination.

## Taipei City: 1<sup>st</sup> Vaccine coverage rate in Taiwan

Taiwan and Main Cities	Population of HIV Infection	Vaccinated	
		Number of People	Percentage (%)
Taiwan	34,695	20,414	59
<b>Taipei</b>	4,888	3,894	<b>80</b>
New Taipei	8,081	4,711	58
Taoyuan	3,539	1,970	56
Taichung	4,228	2,156	51
Tainan	2,157	1,032	48
Kaohsiung	4,790	3,116	65

Due to the other active approaches, you can see Taipei City has been number one of the vaccine coverage rate in Taiwan when it comes to people living with HIV. In a very short period of time about two weeks, ...we increased our vaccine coverage rate to up to 80%.

## Epidemic curve after Increasing Vaccine Coverage



So, does the increasing vaccine coverage rate work?

The answer will be obviously “yes.”

So very early in May, we initiate online education program.

We start the contact tracing, and also we distributed a rapid testing kits.

And also we arranged the free PCR stations.

As you can see, when our vaccine coverage rate, uh, went up to up to 80%. ...our COVID cases went down to zero, which can maintain until now, that is November when this was recorded.

## Educate health professionals on LGBT-friendly approach



Initiate more than 30 courses on **LGBT-friendly approach** for contact-tracing

Fourth, we also want to emphasize it's important to educate or help professionals an LGBT-friendly approach.

The way we are doing this is to initiate more than 30 online courses on LGBT-friendly approach, ...for individuals who are responsible for contact tracing for doctors and nurses or other health professionals,

It is very important to hold a friendly and non-judgmental attitude when we are taking history and sensitive issues.

So we believe LGBT-friendly approach is the only way they'll work to get honest transparent information.

## HIV and COVID-19

- PLHIV have one or more comorbidities that may put them at increased risk for a more severe course of COVID-19.
- Both COVID-19 and HIV disproportionately affect communities of color.
- Some cases series from Europe and the United States: no significant difference in clinical outcome. Some cohort studies: worse outcomes, increased COVID 19 mortality rates.
- In a multicenter cohort study of 286 patients with HIV and COVID-19 in the US, lower CD4 count was associated with a higher risk for the composite endpoint of ICU admission, mechanical ventilation, or death.
- In a cohort study in New York, PLHIV had higher rates of hospitalization and mortality with COVID-19 compared with people without HIV.

Hoffman C, et al. Immune deficiency is a risk factor for severe COVID-19 in people living with HIV. HIV Medicine. 2020  
Interim Guidance for COVID-19 and Persons with HIV, AIDSInfo (U.S. National Institutes of Health) Updated Feb. 26, 2021  
Park LS, Rentsch CT, Sigel K, et al. COVID-19 in the largest US HIV cohort. Presented at: 23rd International AIDS Conference; 2020.  
Tesoriero J, et al. COVID-19 outcomes among persons living with or without diagnosed HIV infection in New York State. JAMA Netw Open. 2021.

HIV and COVID-19 have a lot of similarities and differences. So, here are a few things that we could summarize in this rite.

First, people living with HIV have comorbidities, which may put them at the increased risk for a more severe course of COVID-19.

Second, both COVID-19 and HIV disproportionately affect the communities of color.

Third, although some cases series from Europe and the United States has shown there is no significant differences in their clinical outcome when they were infected with COVID. However some cohort studies have shown that those with HIV will have worse clinical outcomes and higher mortality rates. Here are two studies from the US.

As you can see here, in a multicenter cohort study with HIV and COVID-19 in the US, ...that shows lower CD4 outcome, what is associated with a higher risk for ICU admission, mechanical ventilation, or death. Another cohort study in New York which shows the people living with HIV had higher rates of hospitalization and mortality, compared to those without.

## HIV and COVID-19

- PLHIV have one or more comorbidities that may put them at increased risk for a more severe course of COVID-19.
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People with HIV should be included in the category of high-risk medical conditions when developing vaccine priority.

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In short, we believe people with HIV should be included in a category of high risk medical conditions when developing that seem priority.

And that is exactly what we have been doing here in Taiwan, and that is exactly why we have been doing here in Taipei. So we increased about saying all coverage among people living with HIV, up to 80% in the very short period of time.

## De-stigmatization and public health education

國內 調查 VIP

斬斷「特殊交友圈」傳染鏈有技巧 北市新招護隱私 5天就揪出確診

方炳超 +追蹤

2021-07-26 08:00 9730 人氣

不過，要怎麼鼓勵居家篩檢、並讓這些族群願意在疫調中說出實情？台北市聯合醫院昆明防治中心主任陳亮好受訪時表示，在與中央開會時，就有建議派派滋個案管理師進去協助，目前有這樣需求的縣市大概都會這樣做，比較敏感的問題會讓他們來問，因為個案管理師比較有經驗，也知道HIV感染者在意的是什麼，而做疫調的目的只是要知悉接觸者、知道相處時間長短，對於活動內容這類隱私其實不是重點，要找出可能的新冠肺炎感染者才是目的。（相關報導：同志團體成防疫破口？柯文哲堅稱沒歧視 呱吉：講出同志這一刻就錯了 | 更多文章）

HIV感染者成疫調難題 專家一語卸心防：不是要知道有幾個性伴侶

方炳超 +追蹤

2021-07-26 08:10 12538 人氣

台北市聯合醫院昆明防治中心主任陳亮好表示，隨疫情逐步減緩，所以HIV感染者感染新冠肺炎的狀況逐漸被看見。（資料照，取自Google map）

陳亮好說，其實台北市做了滿積極的處理，也有跟中央開會，是希望鼓勵不要標籤化，也鼓勵他們要勇於求助，「我們一定是伸出友誼的手」，陳亮好說，用責難、標籤化，會有更大群人躲起來，這是人性。

So we believe with it, it is very important to hold a neutral, friendly attitude toward vulnerable group, particularly LGBT population.

During each pandemics, it is, there will be tension in the society.

So when one-third of COVID cases are people living with HIV, ...there are some atmosphere that is not very friendly to our LGBT friends.

So, as a director of are Kunming Prevention and Control Center, I feel obligated to talk to the media about the importance of this stigmatization, ...and also about importance to hold a friendly, non-judgmental attitude to each one around us.

## Summary

- COVID pandemics will **expand obstacles to treatment access** and HIV prevention services, exacerbate social and structural barriers to care.
- Taipei Pubic health system has **rapid response** to the COVID-19 outbreak in people living with HIV.
- Approaches including **contact tracing** for vulnerable population (MSM), **distributing COVID-19 home test kits**, **increasing vaccine coverage rates** demonstrated prominent effectiveness on COVID-19 prevention.
- It is crucial to hold **a neutral and friendly attitude** for vulnerable groups(LGBTQ), who are at higher risk during COVID pandemics.

So to summarize, COVID pandemics will expand obstacles to treatment access and prevention services, and you will also worsen their social and structural barriers to care.

However, in this pandemic, Taipei City government has continue to offer medical care and also prevention services.

Second, you can see Taipei public health system has rapidly responded to the COVID-19 outbreak in people living with HIV.

This approaches, including contact tracing for vulnerable group, distributing COVID-19 home test kits up to 1,000 kits. And also increasing the vaccine coverage rates, in a very short period of time, to up to 80%, ...which all demonstrated a prominent effectiveness on COVID-19 prevention.

And also, it is crucial to hold a neutral and friendly attitude for LGBT group, who are not only at higher risk during the COVID pandemics, ...they are also at higher risk to experience the stigmatization.

**LOVE** is not shut down!



So we believe that when a city is shut down, love is not shut down.



Thank you very much for your attention on this.  
We are..., all your comments and questions will be very welcome.  
And you are encouraged to email your comments and questions to the email that has shown on this line.  
Thank you.

## Questions and answers (Taipei)

### Q1.

The slide says there is a convenient private vaccine injection site in KPCC that provides “convenient service only for PLHIV.” What specific services are you providing for them? In addition, there would be a kind of risk that generally some people may look at such activities only for a targeted group in a negative light because they are not the target group and cannot use it. What safeguards are taken when informing the public of the services to avoid such prejudice?

### A1.

We provide the site only for the HIV cases vaccination. The priority order of the COVID-19 vaccine injection in Taiwan is health care worker in hospital, then, public health worker, old age, chronic high risk disease, immunocompromised cases... The young HIV MSM cases maybe be questioned when receiving vaccine injection at other site because they are young and no chronic high risk diseases. Our HIV case managers contact with the patients directly avoid public prejudice.

### Q2.

We would like to know a) Reasons that many people infected with COVID-19 are positive for HIV, and b) the COVID-19 infection route (infection source) of HIV positive people.

### A2.

During the period of the endemic of COVID-19 in Taipei, the total confirmed cases number decreased gradually. However, the proportion of HIV positive cases increased gradually. The major risk factor of HIV infection in Taipei is MSM (men who have sex with men). The COVID-19 infection route of HIV cases is sexual contact.

### Q3.

We would like to know the Specific content of education carried out in the courses for health professionals on LGBT-friendly approaches (main content of more than 30 courses you are providing).

### A3.

The public health workers don't familiar with the MSM group. The education courses provide the skills how to communicate with LGBT group, contact tracing with their sexual partners. Avoid stigma and discrimination.

**Q4.**

What was the actual decrease in government-administered HIV tests (conducted at public health centers, etc.) due to the spread of COVID-19 infections?

**A4.**

What was the actual decrease in government-administered HIV tests (conducted at public health centers, etc.) due to the spread of COVID-19 infections?

**Q5.**

Could you elaborate on home-based COVID-19 testing kits?

- Is it nasal swab or saliva testing? How frequently is it performed?
- How could the government confirm that the tests are correctly performed?
- How are the test results collected?
- Please, let me know more details about Taipei City's self inspection kit.

**A5.**

The home-based testing kits are provided or donated to the Taipei city government by some companies. The commercial kits are nasal swab routes. In Taipei, we could buy the kits at pharmacy or drug store. The operation instruction is inside the kits box or video information is offered online. During the pandemic period in Taipei, we provide the kits for HIV cases at some hospitals for free. They report the test result to the HIV case managers. However, the home-based kits are just a convenient method for screen in Taipei. People could receive COVID-19 PCR test at local screening sites or hospitals for free in Taipei.

**Q6.**

Could you elaborate on the LGBT-friendly approach courses that are available to the health professionals?

**A6.**

Contact tracing is an important part for the COVID-19 infection control. The MSM (men who have sex with men) group who is the major HIV risk group in Taipei will not tell the truth about they may get the COVID-19 infection due to sexual contact. The LGBT friendly approach courses provide the training skills to COVID-19 surveillance workers how to communicate with the LGBT group because they are not familiar with this special group. Contact tracing is for COVID-19 disease control not for privacy. Avoid the stigma

and discrimination.

**Q7.**

How is Taipei and the community monitoring and managing PLHIV with COVID-19, -e.g., is there an integrated managing system?

-If so, is the tuberculosis and HIV coinfection managed together?

**A7.**

When a newly confirmed COVID-19 case is reported, the HIV status will be checked in the national notifiable disease system by the surveillance workers and HIV case managers.

We will check the new HIV case' chest X ray routinely. The newly diagnosed TB cases will offer HIV test by patient's will.

Taiwan CDC offer HIV patients interferon gamma release assays (IGRA) for latent TB infection screen.