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Center for Interdisciplinary Research on AIDS
at Yale University

International HIV Research Seminar Series

”Circuit Parties as ‘Risk Environment’: Preliminary Findings from Thailand”

Thomas Guadamuz, PhD, MHS
Associate Professor of Social Epidemiology
Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities
Mahidol University, Thailand



Thursday, October 10, 2019
10:00 am-11:30 am
135 College Street, Suite 200
New Haven, CT

Light refreshments will be provided.

Contact dini.harsono@yale.edu for questions or if you will be joining by video/telephone conference.

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Dr. Thomas Guadamuz is a CIRA International Visiting Fellow working with Jeffrey Wickersham, PhD, Assistant Professor of Medicine (AIDS), Yale School of Medicine. Dr. Guadamuz is Associate Professor of Social Epidemiology in the Faculty of Social Sciences, Associate Dean and Assistant to the President (for Research and Academic Affairs) as well as the incumbent Head of the Center of Excellence in Research on Gender, Sexuality and Health at Mahidol University in Thailand. He has over 10 years' experience conducting research on the epidemiology of HIV and AIDS among sexual, racial and ethnic minority populations, including developing and testing innovative HIV preventive interventions. Currently, he is principal investigator of several intervention-related projects funded by the U.S. National Institutes of Health that directly respond to the escalating HIV epidemic among young men who have sex with men (MSM) in Thailand and other parts of Asia, including an R01 award to evaluate a multi-level combination intervention in two well-matched cities in Northeastern Thailand to reduce sexual risks and increase retention and engagement in HIV care among HIV-positive young MSM.

”Circuit Parties as ‘Risk Environment’: Preliminary Findings from Thailand”

Tim Rhodes explains that a ‘risk environment’ framework envisages drug harms as a product of the social situations and environments in which individuals participate” and that ‘risk environment’ is a “space – whether social or physical – in which a variety of factors interact to increase the chances of harm occurring.” (Rhodes, 2009). Using the ‘risk environment’ concept, circuit parties (CP) – weekend-long multiday dance celebrations where use of substances like alcohol, crystal meth and ecstasy are highly prevalent – could be conceptualized as risk environments specific to MSM. Three major arguments have been made for the association of HIV risks and CPs: 1) CP attracts HIV-positive and high-risk negative and unknown status MSM, 2) Distant travel to attend CP outside the individual’s home community increases the likelihood of disinhibiting substance use and increased sexual risk behaviors, and 3) Substance use at CP facilitates serodiscordant/unknown status sex around the CP event period. Amidst this phenomenon, one in three Thai MSM are HIV positive, about half of MSM have never been tested for HIV, and among those tested, few are linked to HIV care, treatment and support, and even fewer achieve viral suppression. This presentation will present preliminary data on CP-attending MSM. Understanding the contextual factors leading to sexual risk behaviors under the influence of substances at CP venues will be pivotal to inform culturally specific HIV prevention among high-risk men who may in turn become bridges of infection in their home communities.