

THE NETWORK: TOWARDS UNITY
FOR HEALTH & FACULTAD DE MEDICINA,
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THE NETWORK
TOWARDS UNITY FOR HEALTH



Facultad de Medicina



TUFH2020 MEXICO

VIRTUAL CONFERENCE

"PRIMARY HEALTH CARE: A PATH
TOWARDS SOCIAL JUSTICE"

SYSTEMS AND COMMUNITY BASED
RESPONSES TO COVID-19

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TUFH 2020 Abstracts

Title	HIV infection among Men who have Sex with Men in the Caribbean: a synthesis of the facts, underlying factors, national, regional responses and persistent challenges of a hidden epidemic.
Type	Oral Presentation <i>Measuring Progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals</i>
Presenting Author	Willy Dunbar
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Country	Belgium
Abstract N°	TUFH7
Content	<p>The HIV epidemic hit the Caribbean in the late '70s and it currently reflects the highest HIV seroprevalence rate after sub-Saharan Africa. Men who have Sex with Men (MSM) in the Caribbean, like in other places in the world, have been one of the constituencies most affected by the epidemic, and continue to be vulnerable to high rates of HIV-related morbidity and mortality. Even though high-quality data on prevalence and healthcare services utilization among MSM in several Caribbean countries is limited, gay men and other MSM accounted for nearly a quarter of new infections in 2017. From the social construction of heteronormativity in the region, several social and cultural factors, gender norms, and strong stigma associated with HIV and homosexuality lie behind this high burden. Caribbean cultural constructions of masculinity impose obligations and restrictions leading to risky sexual practices besides the practice of sex between men remains a criminal offence in several Caribbean countries. In term of response, international funding programmes have economically supported the region and have also launched specific initiatives, in partnership with national institutions and civil society organizations to expand MSM's access to and retention in HIV services. But, persistent challenges mainly linked to the conservative nature of Caribbean societies makes it difficult to identify and reach MSM. To end the AIDS epidemic by 2030, the Caribbean and global community urgently need to defy expectations to no longer keep unchecked the invisibility of MSM.</p>