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The Sexual Health of Men Who Have Sex with Men in Lebanon

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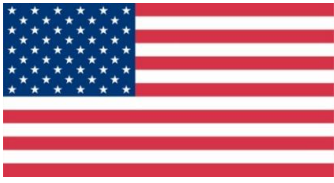
Submitted to

Knowledge is Power (KIP) Project

Olayan School of Business

American University of Beirut

***Disclaimer:** This study was funded by a grant from the United States Department of State. The opinions, findings and conclusions stated herein are those of the author[s] and do not necessarily reflect those of the United States Department of State.*



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Executive Summary

With the latest UNAIDS report stating a gradual increase in the rates of sexually transmitted infections (STIs) in the region and the scarcity of local literature on rates of prevalence of STIs and the sexual practices of key affected populations it is important to assess the sexual health of men who have sex with men in Lebanon in order to meet their sexual health needs and that of the general population. The cross-sectional study on a sample of 1351 MSM found rates of STIs to be relatively higher than those reported in the literature whether HIV (5.4%), symptoms of Gonorrhea or Chlamydia (20.8%), HPV (44.5%) or Syphilis (3%). Risky condom-use behavior is also prevalent in the sample and was found to be associated with the level of education of an individual and the sources of sexual health education thus reiterating the importance of having accessible and reliable sexual health education in schools and universities. Additionally recreational drug use was reported among 29% of the sample, students and cigarette smokers were at higher odds of using recreational drugs. The findings indicate the importance of targeting members of the MSM community and especially the youth to provide them with accessible and reliable information on sexual health as well on the possible risks associated with different sexual practices and behaviors.