

point PACIFIC

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global perspectives on HIV/AIDS

point PACIFIC is a publication of the Asian Pacific AIDS Intervention Team and aims to provide Asia-specific HIV/AIDS-related news summaries, in addition to client narratives.



WORLD UPDATES

January >> Drug users and sex workers are the largest HIV risk groups of Central Asia. Additionally, criminalization of homosexuality complicates HIV testing because of fear of prosecution. But Global Fund is financing education programs to raise AIDS awareness, and antiretroviral drugs are becoming available. (*Eurasianet.org.*)

March >> HIV/AIDS cases have increased 28 percent in the number of new cases in Singapore. Health officials attributed the rise in part to the "Nation 04" gay and lesbian festival. Outraged gay activists say the event promotes homophobia. Because of the government's poor public health policies and deficiencies in health promotion among the gay community, activists say it should take some responsibility. (*Reuters*)



Promotional poster for Nation '04



India's government introduces legislation that would end the production of generic drugs and tighten patent laws to bring them in line with the World Trade Organization rules. Global drug makers say the new bill will attract foreign investment and encourage pharmaceuticals to outsource work to India. However, the bill will greatly affect thousands of Asian, African, and Latin American people who rely on Indian antiretroviral drugs. (*AP*)

China plans to create a national database to identify AIDS victims in order to get a better grasp of the epidemic. There are an estimated 800,000+ people infected with the virus, with many more unreported. (*Yahoo!*)

The UN Program reports that overseas Filipino workers (OFW) have low prevalence of HIV/AIDS due to its education and mandatory testing program. The government will continue to develop training for seamen that integrates AIDS prevention. (*Philippines Daily Inquirer*)

Compiled by Lucy Lacanilao

Client Commentary

By Dennis M.

My involvement with APAIT has changed many of my views and ways of life. I truly feel that community resources such as APAIT have contributed to the sense of progress I have made both in my professional and personal life. Patrick, Prevention Case Management Coordinator, has given me guidance when I was out of work. I like the fact that I can just drop in on the APAIT team anytime when they're working and always have a lending ear that's waiting for me. I know actions speak louder than words, and I truly feel that I am welcome to visit at any time.

In addition to this, workshops, trainings, and even conferences such as the Gay Men's Health Summit in Long Beach last month has helped me put things in a different perspective and has made me become more analytical and responsive to the everyday things that I do. Some of these includes learning to "never say never" and "nothing is ever set in stone." Through my involvement, I have learned to take ownership of my life and understand that I have the power to make decisions that will improve the quality of my life.

Most importantly, through APAIT, I have made and built relationships and have managed to meet new friends during these workshops, something I haven't accomplished just going to bars or clubs. My quality of life has changed for the better because of APAIT. Thank you APAIT Team!!! Salamat!

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Would you like to share your experiences or knowledge about Asia and HIV-related information in Asia? Contact Marie Auyong at mariea@apaitonline.org for submission guidelines.