



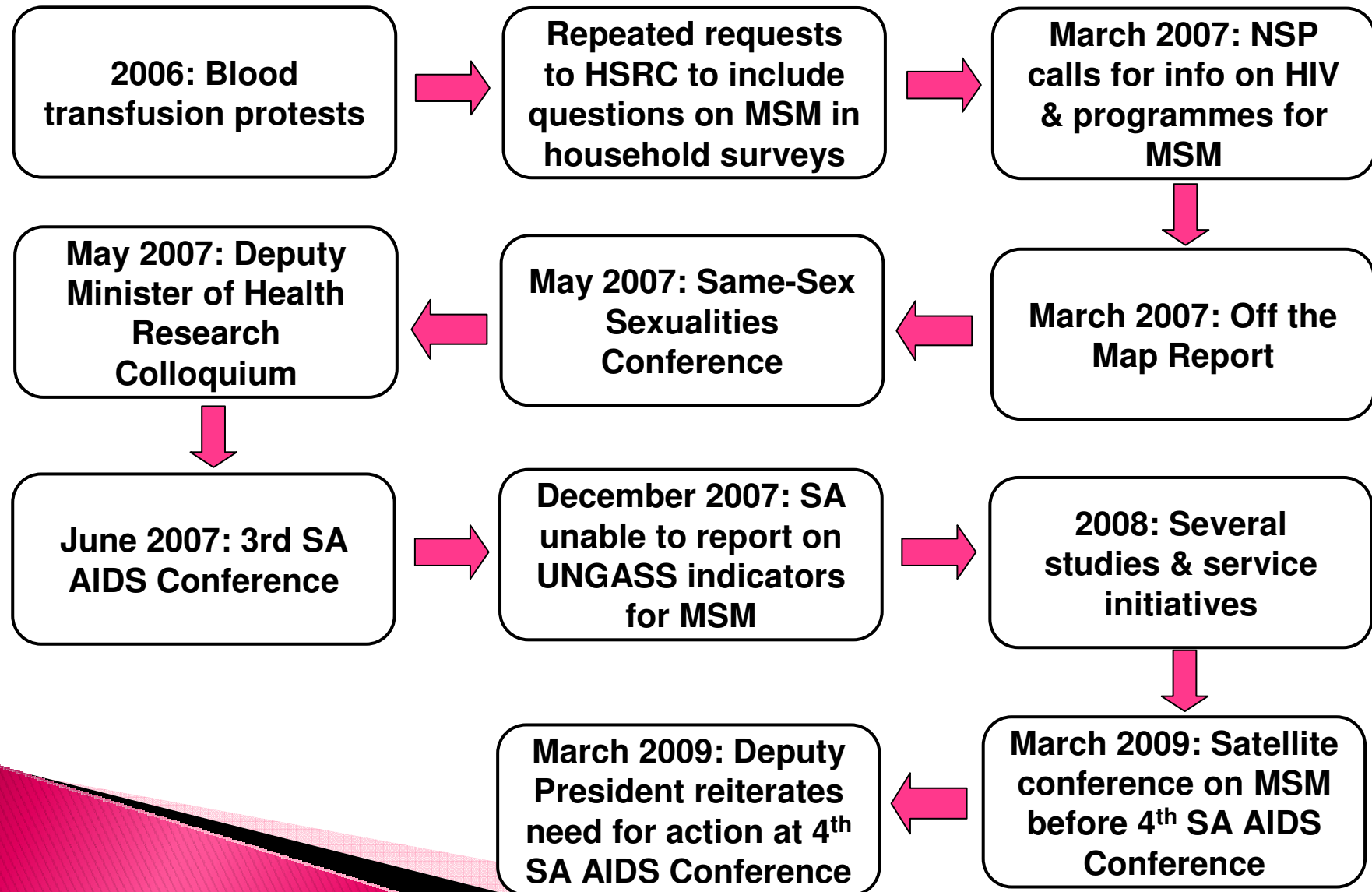
## **A hidden HIV epidemic among men who have sex with men (MSM)? Preliminary findings from the Johannesburg/eThekweni Men's Study (JEMS)**

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4<sup>th</sup> SA AIDS Conference,  
2 April 2009

**JEMS.... Caring for men's health**

# The need for research, information & action on MSM



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HIV & AIDS and STI  
STRATEGIC PLAN FOR SOUTH AFRICA  
2007-2011



April 2007



“Whilst HIV infection amongst MSM was the focus in the early phases of the epidemic in South Africa, there is currently very little known about the epidemic amongst MSM in the country.”

— NSP

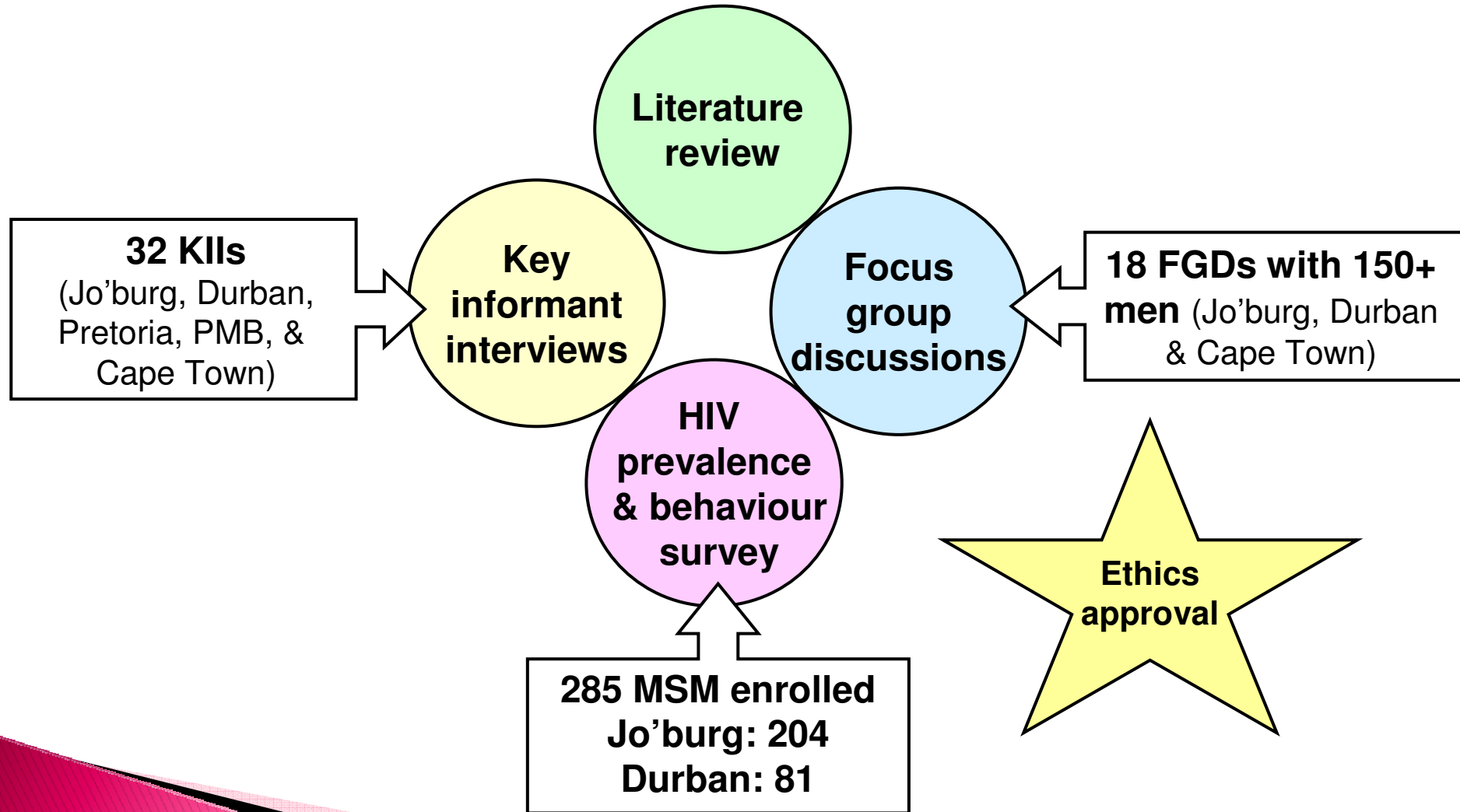
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# Aims & objectives

1. Provide preliminary information on **epidemiology** of HIV among men who have sex with men (MSM) in Johannesburg and eThekweni (Durban)
2. Review **availability of HIV-related programmes** and services for MSM
3. Use this information as initial step towards implementing **national surveillance** of HIV among MSM
4. Make preliminary **recommendations on programmes** to address HIV among MSM

# Approach & Methods

Steering Committee / Community Advisory Board

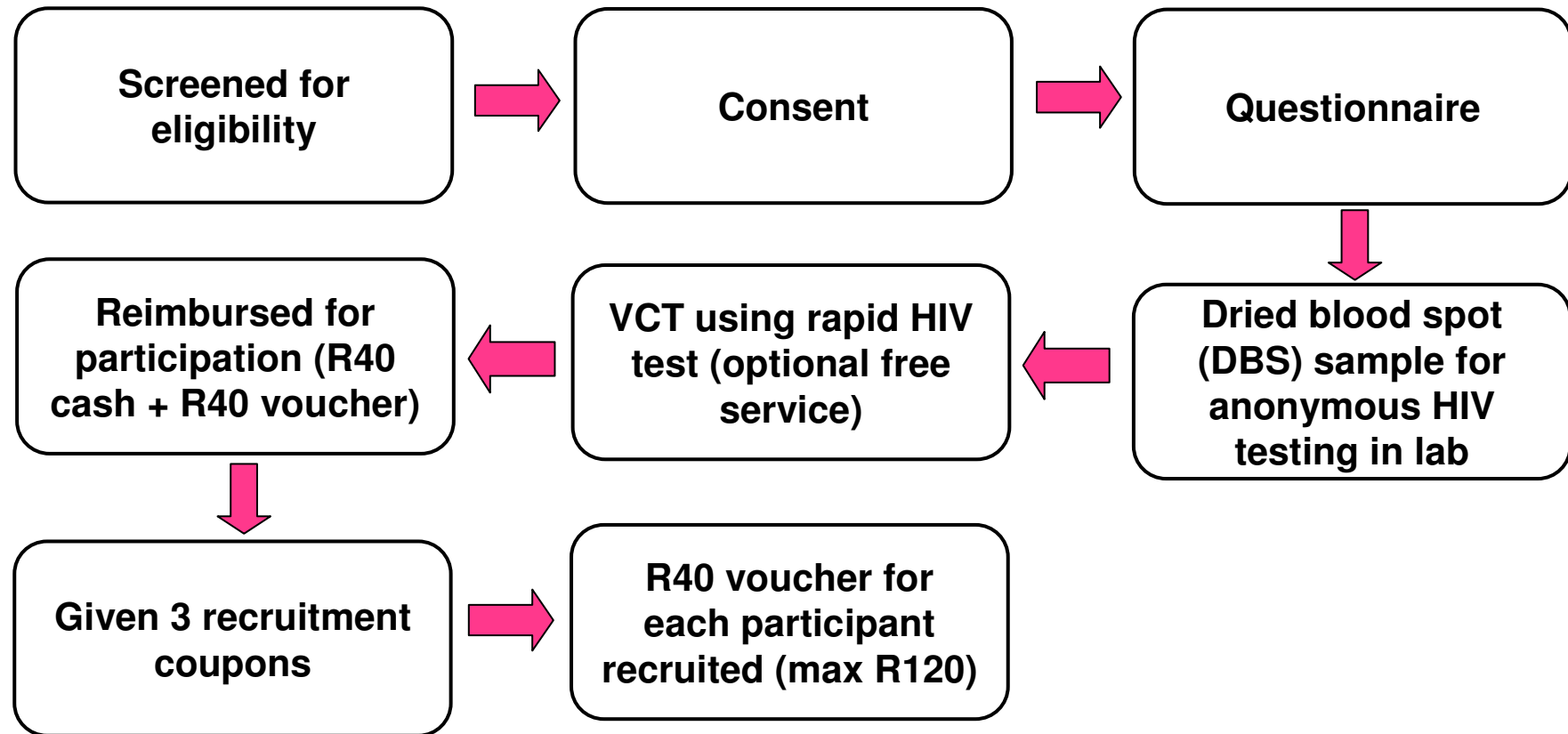


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# Survey methods

- ▶ Used respondent-driven sampling (RDS)
- ▶ Eligible: Man (male) aged 18 yrs+ who reported having sex with another man (male) in past 12 mo & who lived/worked/played in Johannesburg or Durban
- ▶ Initial participants (“seeds”) chosen to be diverse in terms of age & race & to have large social networks
- ▶ Each participant could recruit up to 3 more participants using coupon system

# Survey methods

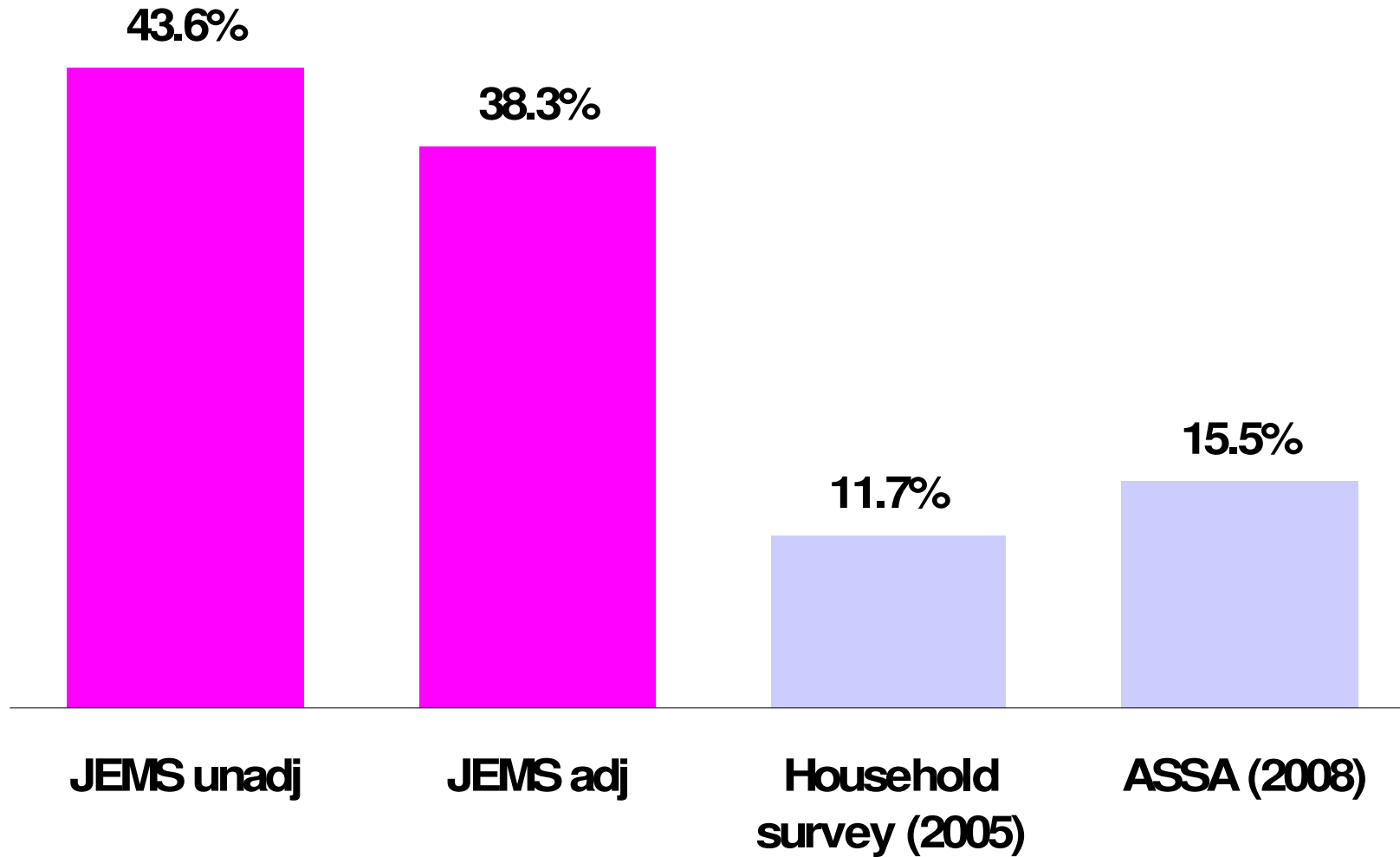


# Participant Characteristics (Survey)

- ▶ 285 participants (204 Jo'burg, 81 Durban)
- ▶ 88% black African
- ▶ Age range 18 – 61 years, (mean 24.5 years, median 22 years, 67% < 25 years)
- ▶ 78% homosexual/gay, 19% bisexual, 2% heterosexual/straight, 2% other
- ▶ 54% had  $\geq$  Grade 12 education
- ▶ 95% accepted HIV testing

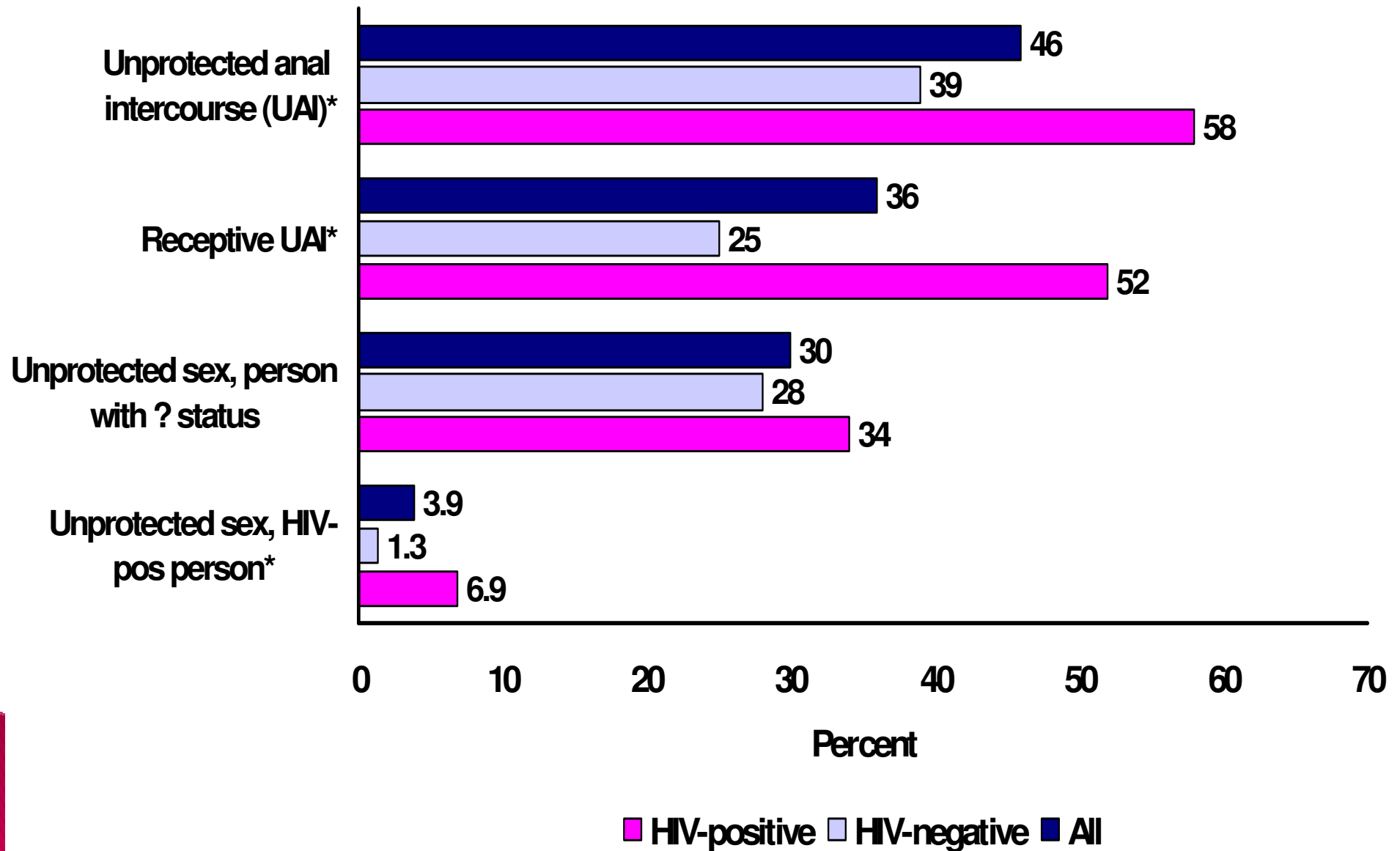


# HIV prevalence

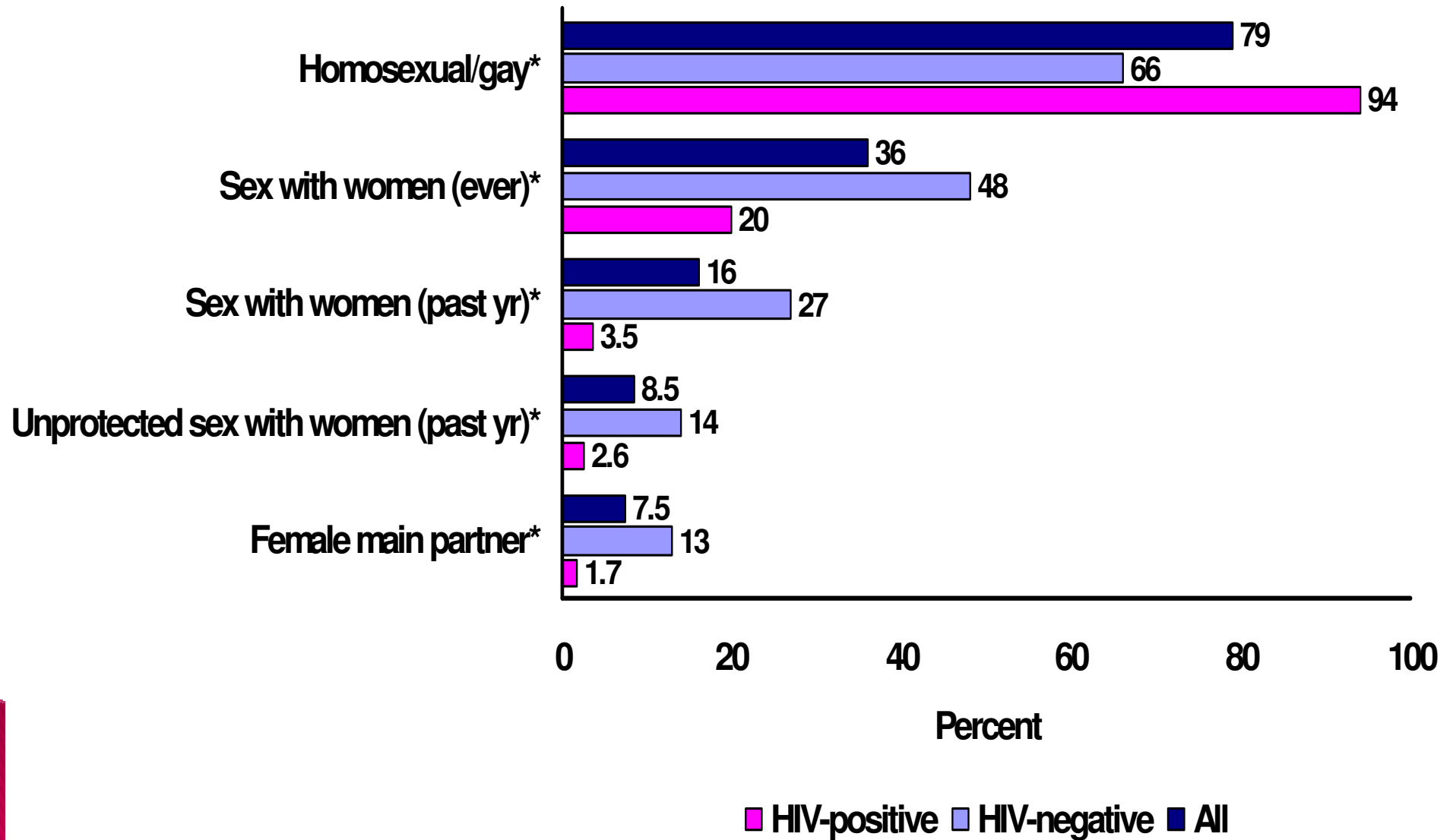


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# High-risk sexual behaviour, previous 12 mo



# Sexual orientation & sex with women



# Conclusions

- ▶ Participants predominantly young, gay, black Africans — not “representative” of MSM
- ▶ Among study participants:
  - HIV prevalence more than double HIV prevalence among men in general population
  - High levels of high-risk sexual behaviour
  - Limited sexual contact with women — majority of HIV-positive participants had most likely acquired HIV from sex with men
- ▶ Current HIV response does not meet needs of MSM
- ▶ Results suggest parallel HIV epidemic among MSM

# Recommendations

- ▶ **Implement national surveillance** of HIV among MSM in SA (geographic, race, age) & assess extent of HIV epidemic among larger, more diverse & “representative” sample
- ▶ **Urgently implement** aspects of **NSP** pertaining to MSM:
  - Implement & expand HIV prevention, treatment, care & support programmes for MSM
  - Address structural factors & ensure upholding of human rights of MSM by addressing stigma & discrimination

# Acknowledgements

- ▶ **UK Department for International Development (DfID)** (Robin Gorna) for funding & **HLSP** (Kevin Bellis) for support
- ▶ **National Institute for Communicable Diseases (NICD)** (Adrian Puren, Bev Singh, Mahlatse Maleka) for HIV testing
- ▶ **New Start** (Miriam Mhaza & Scott Billy) for providing VCT
- ▶ **NHLS** (Debbie Pretorius) & **Durban Lesbian & Gay Community & Health Centre** (Nonhlanhla Mkhize) for providing site premises
- ▶ **Steering committee** members for input and support
- ▶ Institutional support (**Wits, HSRC, MRC**)