

## An Exploration of Male Sexual Behavior with MSM Sexual Orientation

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**Abstract:** This study examined the sexual behavior of men who have sex with men (MSM) in Bukittinggi, West Sumatra, Indonesia. This study employed descriptive research and included 148 MSM perpetrators. The samples were selected by proportional sampling from October 2020 to January 2021. The data were collected using a questionnaire. Then, the data analysis was conducted by univariate analysis, which was presented as frequency and percentage. The subjects in this study were between 20 and 30 years old. They were often the oldest children, had a secondary education, and worked as entrepreneurs. MSM perpetrators noticed that they began enjoying other men between the ages of 13 and 18, and some of them were younger (under 13 years old); they admitted that this activity was motivated by sexual fulfillment, financial hardship, and loyalty to friends. Most MSM perpetrators had sex with an irregular male three times per week, and some had it up to twelve times. The main activity was engaging in anal and oral sex, whether or not with protection, with most sex partners between the ages of 23 and 45. It was revealed that the perpetrators were worshipping and were even aware that their actions were abnormal. Perpetrators feel sexual satisfaction, and this activity makes money at the same time. The MSM sexual behavior phenomenon in Bukittinggi was extremely alarming since the perpetrators' sexual behavior began when they were still in school.

**Keywords:** men who have sex with men, sexual behavior, sexual orientation.

## 男男性接触者性取向对男性性行为的探索

### 摘要:

本研究调查了印度尼西亚西苏门答腊武吉丁宜的男男性行为者(男男性接触者)的性行为。本研究采用描述性研究,包括148名男男性接触者肇事者。样本从2020年10月至2021年1月按比例抽样选取。数据采用问卷调查方式收集。然后,通过单变量分析进行数据分析,以频率和百分比表示。本研究的受试者年龄在20至30岁之间。他们通常是最年长的孩子,受过中等教育,并担任企业家。男男性接触者肇事者注意到他们开始享受13至18岁之间的其他男性,其中一些更年轻(13岁以下);他们承认,这种活动的动机是性满足、经济困难和对朋友的忠诚。大多数男男性接触者施暴者每周与不规则男性发生性关系3次,有些则多达12次。主要活动是与大多数23至45岁的性伴侣进行肛交和口交,无论是否有保护。据透露,肇事者正在崇拜,甚至意识到他们的行为不正常。施暴者感到性满足,而这项活动同时赚钱。武吉丁宜的男男性接触者性行为现象极为惊人,因为肇事者的性行为在他们还在上学时就开始了。

**关键词:** 男男性行为者、性行为、性取向。

## 1. Introduction

Heterosexuality is a frequent abnormal behavior recognized in a society, whereas MSM is odd in the culture. MSM is a sexual encounter between two men, regardless of their sexual orientation and identity, and they frequently engage in multiple-sex relationships [1, 2].

In 2019, it was reported that the global average proportion of adult men who have sex with other men was 1.9%. The increase in men who have sex with men will increase the rate of contracting HIV [3].

The data collected in Indonesia revealed that 1,095,970 men have sex with men (MSM), both visible and invisible [4]. In Bukittinggi, based on data from the Bukittinggi HIV/AIDS Control Commission in 2020, the projected number of male residents in Bukittinggi in 2020 is 63,519 people. If this is a percentage, the number of MSM in Bukittinggi in 2020 is 0.81% of the male population [5].

Since LSL refers to the most obscure group or sub-community, it is particularly challenging to pinpoint. They exclusively speak in front of the group. MSM is a major population that is neglected and misunderstood, and as a result, they choose to avoid each other or remain silent rather than succumb to social pressure [6].

Research conducted by Queen Mary's School of Biological and Chemical Sciences and the Karolinska Institutet concludes that a combination of genetics and social factors is responsible for MSM. According to Dr. Niklas Langstrom's research from the Karolinska Institute, environmental factors have a 64% greater impact than genes. A person who does not have the MSM gene can develop same-sex behavior or orientation if it is supported by environmental factors [7].

Additionally, a study by Ganna et al. [8] concluded that no single gene in a person's body significantly affects sexual behavior. They assert that genetic factors cause only 8%-25% of MSM sexual behavior while environmental and cultural factors influence 75%. The MSM is an abnormal method for obtaining sex enjoyment. It is described by Robert M. Z. Lawang as an action that departs from the accepted social norms (society). Therefore, MSM feel isolated in social life. Consequently, MSM has made associations secretly and reclusively [9] so that it has grown rapidly.

Exploration/exposure of complete data on male sexual behavior with deviant sexual orientations would provide opportunities to prevent this problem. However, no study is available in the literature on the exploration of MSM behavior so far. Therefore, the purpose of this study focused on exploring the sexual behavior of MSM, especially in Bukittinggi, which should still be fulfilling customary provisions and obeying religious teachings as the foundation of the

philosophy of social life.

## 2. Materials and Methods

### 2.1. Design, Samples, and Setting of the Study

The research was conducted using a descriptive method with a cross-sectional study approach through a friend-to-friend approach in the community. This technique was carried out because MSM in Bukittinggi served as the research samples. Since this group was concealed, samples had to be obtained by approaching community members and other actors. There were 148 MSM in the sample, all of whom had given informed consent and met the research criteria. A questionnaire with 13 questions about the description of MSM sexual behavior was used as a guide for the guided interviews to be conducted with the samples to collect accurate data.

### 2.2. Variables

Up to 13 different variables were presented with descriptive data, such as education, educational status, respondents' jobs and parents' occupations, the age at which respondents began liking men, how long they had liked other men, the causes of MSM behavior, the frequency and length of sexual activity, the ages of partners, perceptions of family members who had the same sexual orientation, and the respondents' religious practices.

The outreach team or fellow MSM actors acted as enumerators. Enumerators were given training for one day before the data collection. This research has been approved by the Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Medicine, Andalas University, Number 254/KEP/FK /2020. After the data were obtained, the data analysis was carried out with univariate analysis in the form of frequency and percentage

### 2.3. Data Analysis

The data analysis was performed using the SPSS software. Then, the data were presented in quantitative data with the frequency distribution and percentage.

## 3. Research Results

Table 1 demonstrates that, in addition to those who have graduated from Bachelor, 3-year diploma, and junior high school, the average education of respondents is high school or equivalent (73.64%). The respondents' most recent degree was the anticipated education. In terms of marital status, up to 97.97% of the perpetrators had never been married, although there were also others who had been married, which was as much as 2.03% of the respondents. Additionally, it was discovered that self-employment accounted for 42.57% of respondents' professions, with the remaining respondents attending school and college, working, or

being employed. Then, traders made up the bulk of their parents' professions (36.49%). The economy and social standing of actors and parents were factors in this.

Fig. 1 and 2 show the age when they started to like their male partner and how long they liked the male partner.

Table 1 Characteristics of the respondents

Characteristics	Frequency (n = 148)
<b>Education</b>	
Bachelor	13(8,78)
3-year diploma	9(6,08)
Senior High School	109(73,64)
Junior High School	16(10,81)
Elementary school	1 (0,67)
<b>Marital Status</b>	
Marry	3(2,03)
Not Married	145(97,97)
<b>Respondents' Occupation</b>	
Traders	21(14,19)
Self-employed	63(42,57)
Farmers	14(9,45)
Employees	17(11,49)
College students	20(13,51)
Salon	10(6,76)
Government employees	1(0,68)
Students	2(1,35)
<b>Parent's Occupation</b>	
Traders	73(36,49)
Self-employed	46(31,08)
Farmers	29(14,86)
Employees	0(0)

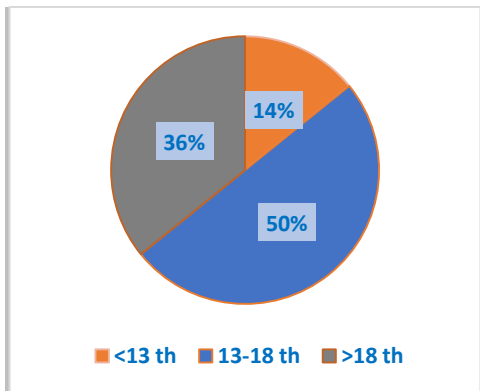


Fig. 1 The age of starting to like men

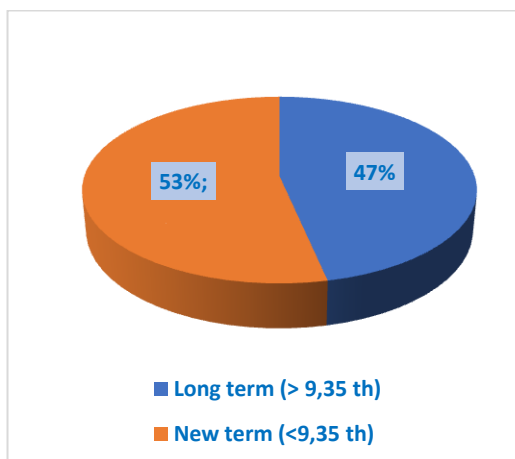


Fig. 2 The length of liking men

Fig. 1 and 2 show that, of the 148 respondents, 50% realized they preferred other guys between the ages of 13 and 18. Additionally, 36% of people thought they began liking other males at a younger age, 13 years old. Meanwhile, less than 9.3 years (47%) have passed since men started to like other men.

Fig. 3 and 4 show the reasons for male sexual behavior and activities performed.

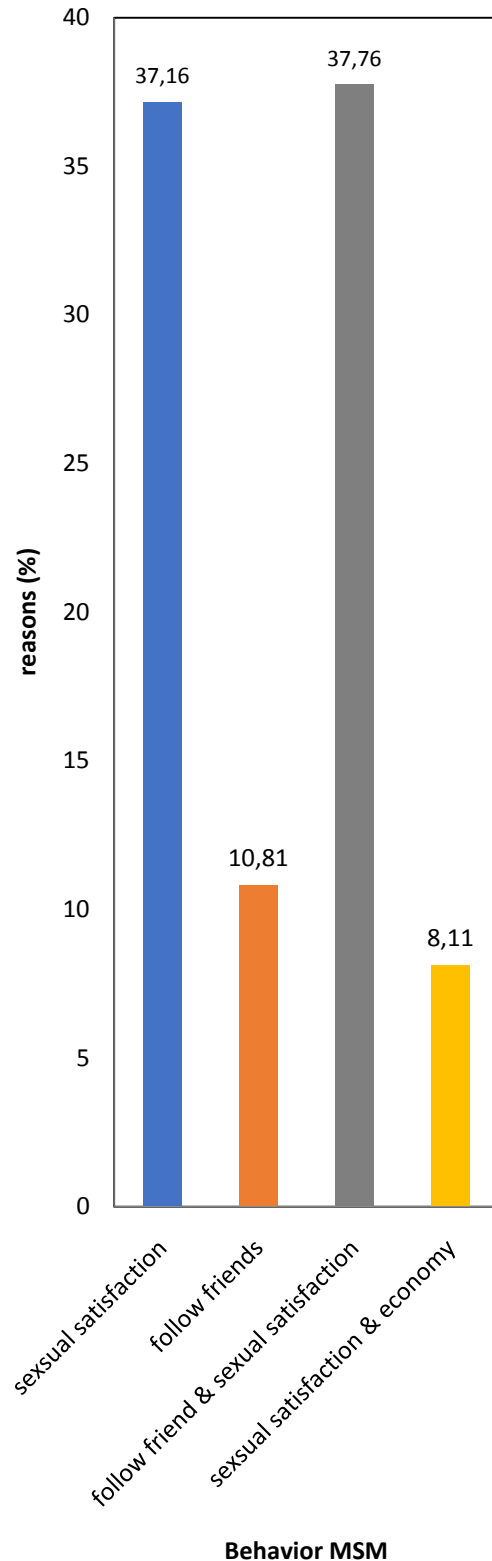


Fig. 3 Reasons for MSM behaviour

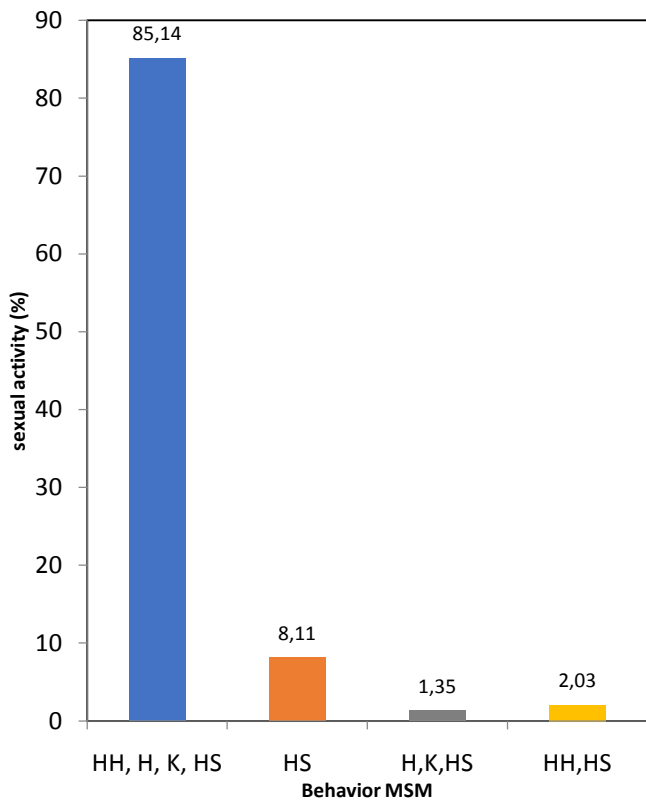


Fig. 4 Sexual activities

Fig. 3 and 4 show that, of the 148 respondents, 37.76% engaged in this deviant behavior to please their sexual appetites and to follow their friends, while most sexual acts were holding hands, embracing, kissing, and having sex (85.14%). They acknowledged that the type of sexual activity they engaged in was oral/anal sex, which was exceedingly dangerous to the perpetrator's reproductive health. Moreover, although condoms were freely distributed in the respondents' neighborhood, the perpetrators generally did not use protection (condoms) to protect themselves from STDs.

Additionally, Fig. 5 and 6 depict the sexual relations and the age of the sexual partners.

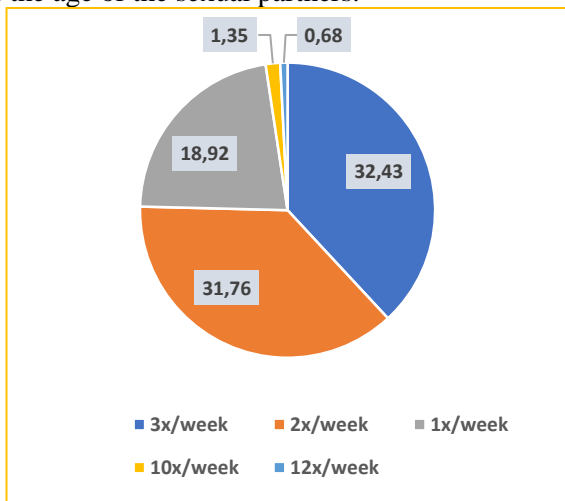


Fig. 5 The frequency of sexual intercourse

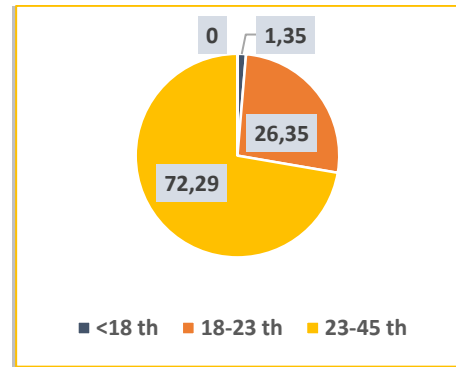


Fig. 6 The age of sexual partners

Fig. 5 and 6 show the results of interviews with respondents, revealing that from 148 respondents, the average frequency of having sexual intercourse was three times a week (31.76%), whereas the lowest frequency was once a week, and the highest frequency was 12 times a week. Then, the average age of the sexual partners was between 23 and 45 years old (72.29%), and the youngest was under 18 years old (1.35%), which was still considered the school age.

Additionally, Fig. 7 and 8 depict the perceptions of the sexual behavior and orientation in the perpetrators' families.

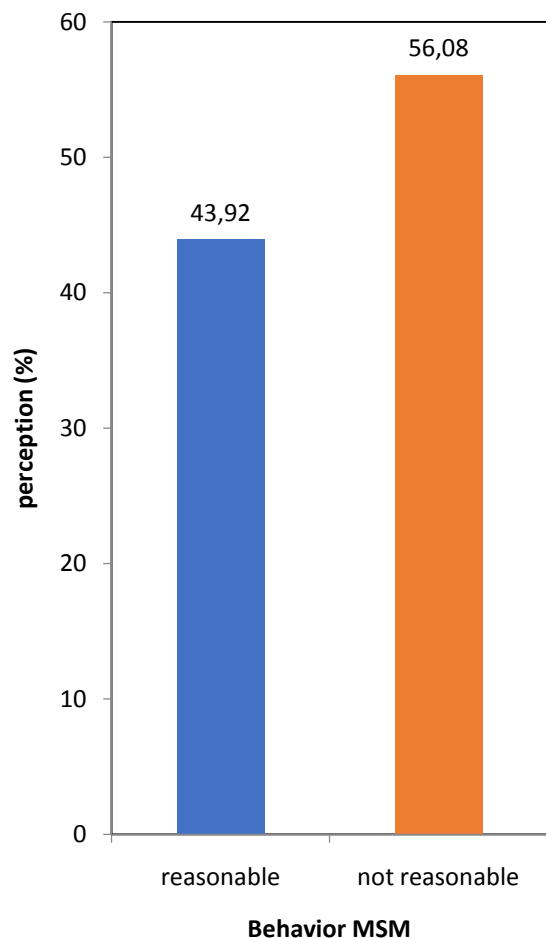


Fig. 7 Perceptions toward the perpetrators

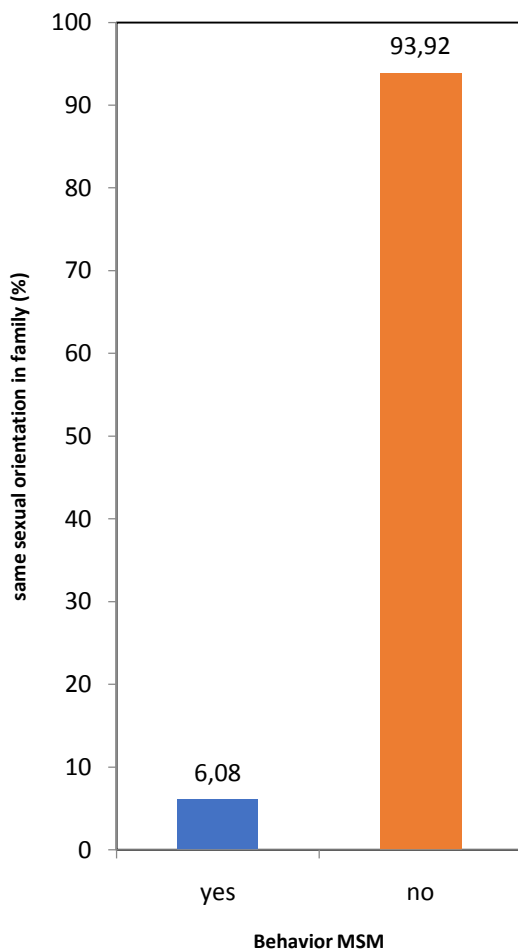


Fig. 8 The same sexual orientation in the family

Fig. 7 and 8 show that 56.08% of respondents were aware of and believed that the sexually immoral behavior they were engaging in was abnormal (wrong). The perpetrators were also aware of the adverse effects of their actions, such as contracting HIV/AIDS or other sexually transmitted diseases (STDs). According to the results of the interviews, the offenders also stated that they had a desire to change but did not know when it would happen because they were content and satisfied with their current state. It was discovered that a small percentage (6.08%) of the respondent's family members (such as an uncle, cousin, and sibling) displayed the same sexual behavior. The responders were honest with these family members about who they were. However, the respondents lacked the bravery to open up to family members who did not act in the same way because they were terrified of being reprimanded, kicked out of the house, and shunned. As a result, the family behaved normally when they were alone, but they behaved differently when they were with their community.

Fig. 9 depicts the worship activities of the respondents.

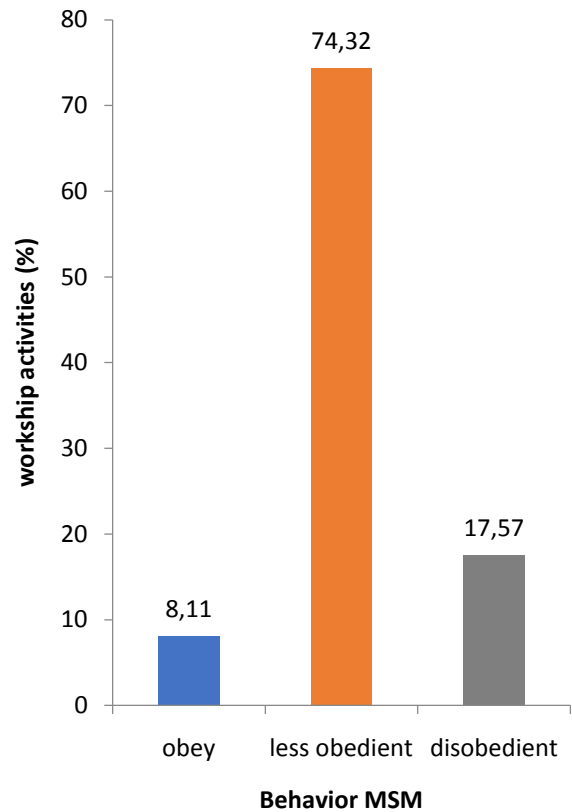


Fig. 9 The worship activities of the respondents

Fig. 9 shows that the respondents practice their respective religions' forms of worship. Among the 148 respondents, 74.32% of them showed less obedience in worship, whereas 8.11% of the respondents were obedient. The respondents also reported that their friends supported and reminded one another to worship.

#### 4. Discussion

This study's findings showed that the respondents, who were MSM perpetrators, were still single on average (97.9%). They engaged in MSM sexual activity twice to three times per week (31%), with some engaging more frequently. The age range of the sexual partners ranged from 18 to 23 years old, but some offenders were younger than 18 or older than 23. The partners were both permanent and non-permanent. Additionally, this study discovered that they frequently engaged in anal and oral intercourse while holding hands, kissing, hugging, and other sexual acts, most of which were performed without the use of any form of protection (condoms). A study by Macapagal et al. [10] found that most participants reported having both oral (75.7%,  $n = 78$ ) and anal (62.1%,  $n = 64$ ) intercourse with their partners. Only 25.0% ( $n = 16$ ) of those who said they had anal sex with their partners always used a condom; then, of those who said they had anal sex, 78.1% ( $n = 50$ ) had sex with their partners more than once.

The perpetrators psychologically acknowledged that they had done the wrong thing. They were aware of

their actions' consequences, yet they could not change their behavior. It was revealed that only 16% of the respondents expressed the desire to stop because of the willingness to have a normal life, get married, and have children. Meanwhile, those who did not want to stop claimed that they were already at ease and were experiencing sexual fulfillment. It was discovered that other elements, such as economic concerns and the influence of friends, were highly influential.

Additionally, they typically developed an interest in men between the ages of 13 and 18, which is the period after finishing primary school. However, several of the perpetrators were also in elementary school, which was a transitional stage between childhood and adolescence, and was a very unstable and easily affected time for youngsters. The study also discovered that the average time spent engaging in this behavior was more than 9.3 years. Then, regarding the educational background, most offenders were senior high school students or equivalent, followed by university students, employees, or business owners. The perpetrators hid their identities from their families and were more open to friends. Nevertheless, some perpetrators came from the same family.

This behavior cannot be identified with certainty because, in terms of physical appearance, some people characterize it as Gay, while some are not. The perpetrators generally possessed strong physical characteristics, wore male clothes, walked upright, and sounded like ordinary men. Still, when they were in their community and interacted with friends or partners, the perpetrators became more feminine and graceful; they softened their voices, and some of them dressed like women and even wore hijab. It was implied that the man's current appearance could not really reflect his sexual orientation, whether he is homosexual or heterosexual. This is also supported by the research of Duan et al. [11], finding that MSM experience an identity crisis, so it is important to provide targeted interventions to increase the understanding of the self-identity of the MSM population

The study's findings suggest that, while many factors contributed to this behavior, the parenting style in the family, including gender-specific caregiving, the father's role, environmental monitoring, socialization, and child predator protection, was crucial. The guidance provided at school also played a significant role in forming the belief that boys should like girls; this belief must be established from an early age.

Prior research from focus group discussions with LGBT community members revealed that many factors, including the family, inner motivation (biological), environment, and economics, contributed to the deviant conduct [12]. Another study by Hardisman et al. [13] found that strong environmental

and social roles, starting with the role of family environment, parenting, and social environment, influenced the triggering variables for MSM behavior, particularly throughout puberty and adolescence. Concerning the 44 MSM informants in Padang, the backdrop of this conduct was due to the presence of predisposing factors, such as personality with low self-control, inadequate religious knowledge, parenting patterns, lack of affection, and sexual harassment, while the enabling factors (supportive) included lifestyle and the presence of adult MSM actors (predators), which were reinforced by reinforcing factors (driving), namely association.

Based on the findings of this study, the researchers argue that environmental influences are to blame for the phenomena of males losing their identity and masculinity (family, community, association, media, and the internet). Boys frequently have female caregivers, who may or may not be competent to employ the parenting. The child's awareness of his identity as a boy will be clouded by this. Due to the quick flow of information from the internet and other forms of mass media, boys might also adopt the same patterns as girls. On the internet, there is a wealth of knowledge regarding the complexities of men sex men (M.S.M.). Children can acquire this material and adopt this behavior if they are not properly supervised. Therefore, boys should receive the proper parenting from their families beginning in their early years. The father's influence on a child's identity and character is significant. The father must play a significant part in a boy's growth and development; with the appropriate guidance, a boy's knowledge, attitude, and behavior will be shaped, as well as his character as a whole man.

## 5. Conclusion

This study describes the sexual behavior of MSM. The novelty found in this study was that it was found that MSM actors had behaved like this for around 5–10 years, this was due to gender-inappropriate parenting patterns during childhood. The first time I had sexual intercourse with a man was in junior high/high school with sexual activities holding hands, kissing, hugging and intimate relationships. This shows that, at the age of teenagers, they have behaved MSM. Further, it was found that MSM actors make this activity a job that brings money.

The limitation of this study is that it is a descriptive study, which has not seen the dominant factor using statistics, but the study strength is using a large sample of MSM actors, which can describe the results of the study well. It is hoped that from the results of this study there will be prevention programs carried out, among others, namely parental care for children so that they can detect patterns of deviant behavior, besides that social control is needed such as community leaders to

reduce the number of MSM perpetrators.

This study shows that future research requires multi-sectoral involvement in the prevention, treatment and rehabilitation of MSM actors so that they do not develop rapidly and can avoid the impact of these behaviors, such as avoiding HIV, a change in the paradigm of life and human survival in the future.

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