



Gamification to Enhance Engagement in HIV Prevention and Co-Morbid Conditions in Young Men Who Have Sex with Men (MY-Hero)

IMPLEMENTED BY

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BACKGROUND & OVERVIEW

Malaysia's HIV epidemic is rapidly expanding with recent evidence suggesting **accelerated sexual transmission**, especially among men who have sex with men (MSM): **10% in 2008 to 54% in 2016**. Previous research suggests high HIV prevalence in MSM nationally (21.6%).

Among these, **young MSM (YMSM) bear a substantial burden of new HIV cases in Malaysia**, attributed to high levels of condomless sex, low uptake of HIV testing, and limited access to PrEP. Besides heightened risk, Malaysian YMSM have risk behaviors that contribute to poor overall health, including high use of cigarettes (78%), alcohol and methamphetamine, depression, and STIs.

Besides the common barriers that YMSM have (e.g., lack of knowledge in HIV prevention and misperception of risk), Malaysian YMSM also experience high **stigma and discrimination and difficulty in accessing confidential HIV care**.

To address this, we adapted HMP to build a **gamified mHealth integrated HIV prevention app** (named MY-Hero) to engage Malaysian YMSM with HIV prevention and their overall health.



APP HIGHLIGHTS



Health Tracker

Medication and habit tracking allows users to visualize patterns in their adherence, self monitor and receive feedback for improvement. Reminders help folx never miss a dose!



Badges

Users can earn badges for actions taken within the app. Rewards engagement and participation in the study.



Avatar Customization

Supports ongoing engagement by unlocking new accessories the more users engage with the app.



Forum

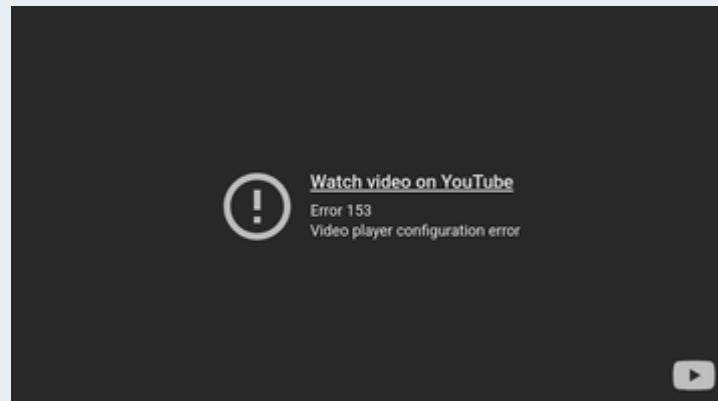
Users can participate in forum discussions and polls to foster community support and peer-to-peer sharing within the app.



Store

Users can earn “bucks” by using the app. Bucks can be redeemed for real-world swag!

**Learn more about the
MY-Hero app:
[youtube.com/watch?
v=nvv2MoizJ8c](https://youtube.com/watch?v=nvv2MoizJ8c)**



STUDY AIMS

AIM 1	AIM 2	AIM 3
To conduct formative assessments with providers, community leaders and Malaysian YMSM to inform adaptation and enhancement of HMP platform components to build MYHero by focus groups and expert panels.	To recruit 15 Malaysian YMSM aged between 18 and 29 years old to conduct beta testing to assess its usability and acceptability and refine the app.	To recruit 50 Malaysian YMSM aged between 18 and 29 years old to conduct a 6-month extended beta testing with 3 iterative rapid-cycle to examine feasibility, acceptability, user engagement, refine the app and features that contribute to YMSM's improved health behaviors.

WHAT'S NEXT

Our study team will **test the refined MY-Hero app** from the rapid-cycle testing by conducting a **randomized control trial** as part of a potential R01 proposal to evaluate the effectiveness of **gamification elements on HIV prevention behaviors and co-morbid conditions** among Malaysian YMSM.