

**Sexual behaviors and knowledge of HIV/AIDS/STDs of the plantation workers in upcountry estates of Sri Lanka**

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The social and economic consequences of the epidemic HIV/AIDS are devastating, with the loss of parents and wage earners. The number of HIV/AIDS cases in Sri Lanka is still relatively low, but extensive HIV risk factors are prevalent. Without vigorous action to prevent the spread of HIV infection, Sri Lanka runs the risk of developing an AIDS epidemic.

Studies on monitoring the current state of affairs within different communities are of a great need in developing strategies on prevention of this epidemic. This study focuses on such aspects, and is based on a survey conducted by the HIV/AIDS/STD Control Programme in Sri Lanka. The survey was targeted on the plantation workers in upcountry estates of Sri Lanka in assessing their life style, sexual behaviors and knowledge of HIV/AIDS and Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs). The sample of 594 plantation workers was selected to represent the entire plantation sector in upcountry estates of Sri Lanka using a two-stage cluster sampling technique.

Throughout the study, the survey data are subjected to several statistical analyses, in order to fulfill the aspects of monitoring the level of knowledge and behavioral characteristics of the plantation workers.

The study consisted of a preliminary analysis and two different modeling approaches, namely ordinal logistic regression for modeling the response-knowledge of HIV/AIDS and log-linear models that illustrate the significant associations between the socio-demographic and behavioral characteristics of the respondents.

There were some significant findings that emerged during the entire analysis. Male plantation workers were found to be more vulnerable than females yet they have a higher knowledge and better use of condoms. The young age groups were relatively in a better position compared to elders regarding the level of knowledge of HIV/AIDS and STDs. The condom use of plantation workers was not at a satisfactory level. A proper education and exposure to mass media seems influential on improving the knowledge of the respondents regarding HIV/AIDS and STDs.

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