

SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS ON RISK BEHAVIOR: CHARACTERISTICS OF MSM IN THE KANDY DISTRICT

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The statistics of the National STD/AIDS Control Program (NSACP-2012), reported that 14.5% of overall HIV infections have been identified in Sri Lanka are through homo/bisexuals. It is likely, due to social stigma on homosexuality that this figure is in reality somewhat higher than 14.5%. This study was carried out to analyze the socio-demographic factors on risk behavioral characteristics of men who have sex with men (MSM).

An interviewer administered questionnaire survey was conducted with MSM using snowball sampling technique in the Kandy district. Socio-demographic measures consisted of age, ethnicity, religion, marital status, education, employment and monthly income. Risk behaviors included insults and/or attacks, use of alcohol, narcotic drugs, smoking, Sexually Transmitted Infections, multiple sex partners and the involvement of money or gift. This study employed qualitative as well as quantitative data collection techniques. A total of 40 men having sex with men were studied which represented the Sinhalese, Tamils and Muslims 75%, 17.5% and 7.5 % respectively of the sample in the study.

The majority of MSM, 87.5% were employed, 52% had been married 62.5% were between 25-44 years. Most of the MSM, 67.5% had secondary education. All (100%) of MSM reported that they had sex with multiple partners within the last 12 months, around 52.5% of MSM have self-identified that they have Sexually Transmitted Infections, only 17.5% reported that they only had sex in exchange for money or gifts, and 67.5% reported that they did not consistently use condoms. Sexually Transmitted Infections are a big challenge to the public health.

The study requires a further in-depth analysis in this area in the future to enable the proactive programmes to minimize the homosexual related socio- health problems.