

Descriptive Study of Sexual Relationships Prevalent Within a University in Sri Lanka

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Intimate reciprocal relationships, which Erikson describes, do have a sexual nature. This means that relationships will entertain some form of sexual activity. Undergraduate university students who are young adults are expected to be intimate in these types of relationships. Though there are few studies in this area, a study carried out in University of Peradeniya in 1990 has given some insight towards the situation. Due to many sociological transitions, the current situation is different from what was observed 20 years ago at Peradeniya. The aims of this study are to describe the heterosexual and homosexual relationships prevalent among undergraduates in the university and to study the prevalence of vaginal intercourse among university students.

The study is a descriptive cross-sectional study. The study population was undergraduate students of the University of Peradeniya, who understand the Sinhala language. The proposal was perused by the Board of study in Psychiatry, of the Postgraduate Institute of Medicine, University of Colombo, Sri Lanka. A self-administered questionnaire, developed in English, was translated to Sinhalese, compared and used as the data collection tool.

Out of the students who reported heterosexual relationships, more than 75% have introduced their date to their parents. This rate is high compared to the findings in a previous study done at Peradeniya, which reported a rate of only 25%. Females introduced the date to their parents more than the males, according to the current study. These findings may indicate the stability of the relationship in terms of marriage as suggested by the previous study. This may also indicate the gradual social acceptance of love marriages. In contrast to this, homosexual relationships which were observed in this study were not informed to the family. This may reflect the prevalent homophobic nature of contemporary society. The prevalence of vaginal intercourse was calculated using direct and indirect questioning. The reason for this is that due to cultural constraints, students are prone to under-report vaginal intercourse. Therefore, this study reveals a range for the rate of vaginal intercourse which is 4-32% for the male students. The rate for the female students is 4-28%. Results indicate that there are very active sexual relationships among university students.