

Assess the Risk Behaviours and Safer Sex Practices among Male Attendees in a Sexual Health Setting

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Abstract : Background / introduction: During the year 2011, 8511 males received services from the sexual health clinics island wide. At present there is only limited information on the risk behaviours of male attendees. Information on risk behaviours related to STI /HIV transmission is helpful in planning suitable prevention interventions. Aim(s)/objectives: The objectives were to determine the sexual partners (other than the marital partner and regular partners) responsible for transmitting STI (Sexually transmitted infections)/ HIV and to understand the practice of safer sex. Methods: Study was a clinic based prospective study conducted for a one year period using an interviewer administered questionnaire. Results: 983 attendees were interviewed. Mean age was 34.02 years. 75% of the sample had completed GCE O/L (ordinary level examination). Skilled labourers, drivers and forces/police comprised 40% of the sample. 50% admitted sex with a casual female, 12% with a casual male, and 13% with CSW (commercial sex workers) while MSW (male sex workers) exposures were minimal. It was identified that younger males had more contacts with males, and regular female partners while more older males with CSW. Anal sex among males was reported by 11.5%. 20.5% used alcohol frequently and 5.9% used drugs and 1.4% injected. Common STI were genital herpes (7.9%), Non gonococcal urethritis (6.2%) and gonorrhoea (6.2%). Among those who had contacts with FSW 6.7% gonorrhoea (GC), 8.2% non gonococcal urethritis (NGU), 7.5% genital herpes and 0.7% HIV. Non regular partner exposures 3.7% had gonorrhoea, 8.3% NGU, 6.6% genital herpes and 0.8% HIV. Among MSM contacts 10.6% had GC, 4.5% NGU, 5.3% genital herpes, 5.3% secondary syphilis and 0.8% HIV. Only 9.0% used condoms correctly. Friends, doctors, newspapers, internet, and forces were important sources of information on condoms. Non use of condoms were due to worry about satisfaction (24.6%) and faith in the partner (25.6%). Discussion/conclusion: Casual partners for unsafe sex is a concern. MSM and CSW are remained as an important source of infection. Early Syphilis and gonorrhoea infections were mostly seen among MSM exposures. The findings indicate that the male population in the sample had satisfactory education. However, still the unsafe sexual contacts are common. Newspapers, internet were more important sources of information on condoms. Low condom use remains another concern. More males contracted STI through casual partners. Therefore strategies used for prevention need to be revisited also emphasizing on general population where casual partners represent. Increasing awareness of men and women through mass media and primary health care teams may be important strategies that can be used to keep the HIV epidemic in a low level.

Keywords : STI, HIV, Males, safe sex practices

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