

3936558 SHMS/D : MAJOR : MEDICAL AND HEALTH SOCIAL SCIENCES ; Ph.D.

(MEDICAL AND HEATH SOCIAL SCIENCES)

KEY WORDS : SEXUAL CULTURE / FEMALE ADOLESCENTS/ RISK PERCEPTION /  
SEXUAL RISK BEHAVIOR / SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED DISEASES

NIRAMON MUANGSOM: SEXUAL CULTURE, RISK PERCEPTION AND SEXUAL RISK  
BEHAVIOR RELATED TO SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED DISEASES TRANSMISSION :  
A CASE STUDY OF URBAN FEMALE ADOLESCENTS LIVING IN NORTHEAST THAILAND.  
THESIS ADVISORS: PIMPAWUN BOONMONGKON, Ph.D. PREECHA UPAYOKIN, Ph.D.  
AMARA SOONTORNDHADA, Ph.D. 236 p. ISBN 974-665-167-6

The objectives of the study were aimed at understanding how the sexual culture, risk perception and sexual risk behavior related to Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs) transmission among urban female adolescents are articulated within the contemporary urban lifestyle context. This study used a qualitative ethnographic, case study and explanatory research study design. The methods of data collection were key informant interview, in-depth interview, focus group discussion, case follow-up interview, participant observation and medical record review. The sample included female vocational students and female adolescents aged 15-24 who have finished vocational school. Duration of collecting data was 9 months. The number of informants was 18.

The results revealed that sexual meanings held by female adolescents are complex and contain several meanings at the same time including love, affection, emotional support, sexual desire, happiness and the expectation to get married with their sexual partners. Some adolescents described sex as a result of force or for financial exchange. The informants' risk perception towards contracting STDs was low. On the contrary, their risk perception was high for the social risk associated with losing the relationship with their loved one and for gender-based violence. Sexual risk behavior related to STDs are no condom use at first sexual intercourse, irregular condom use, coercive sex and having multiple sexual partners. The study revealed how these sexual risk behaviors are articulated within the context of their sexual culture, life style, risky situations and risk perception.

The results of the study indicated that health education must be culturally sensitive to the specific sex-subculture as well as contextualizing the risk situation into the content of health education. A strong campaign should be conducted to change the present attitudes that condom use between lovers means distrust. Empowerment about sexual negotiation for safer sex among female adolescents is an important strategy. Safer sex practices can reduce many kinds of sexual health problems among female adolescents.