

ABSTRACT

Sexual behavior relating to AIDS risks among women tourists in Phuket Island, Thailand was studied. This study included Focus Group discussions and in-depth interviews with key informants ; local beach boys, tour guides, travel company managers and women tourists from Japan.

Result indicated that there had been more women tourists on the island as Phuket had been particularly promoted for Free Individual Tourists (FITs), especially women. The Japanese women tourists were found to be taking more sexual risks compared with other women tourist groups of other nationalities as more " casual sexual relationship" between Thai beachboys and Japanese female tourists were reported. Frequency and place of sexual intercourse reported point to low condom use. Factors contributing to the problem included the promotion of Phuket that lacked factual knowledge and health concern measures for young inexperienced women tourists, the specific national traits of young Japanese women such as being gentle, polite, fashionable and submissive; making them more approachable to young local men. The study also found that inadequacy of authority control to maximize tourist safety and absence of AIDS awareness messages in tourist areas. Researchers recommended that tourists safety programs as well as service in providing relevant facts and life skills training were to be set up prior to, during and after taking the trip overseas for most especially women tourists.