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REWADEE LERTSINTANAPAT : SEXUALITY, GENDER POWER RELATIONS
AND NEGOTIATION FOR SAFER SEX AMONG LOWER-MIDDLE CLASS MARRIED
WOMEN: A CASE STUDY AT PUBLIC HEALTH CENTER 61, BANGKOK METROPOLITAN
ADMINISTRATION. THESIS ADVISORS : PIMPAWUN BOONMONGKON, Ph.D., SUREE
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This study is intended to investigate meanings of sexuality and gender power relations in relation to negotiation for safer sex, focusing on lower-middle class married women who were clients attending the maternal and child clinic at Public Health Center 61 in Bangkok during November 1995-May 1996. A qualitative research method with case study was utilized. Data were collected from twenty five clients using in-depth interview techniques with tape recording and observations during home visits to clients. Data were processed by manual compilation and cut and paste technique. Data analysis was content analysis and analytic induction. The results were presented in text and tabulated description. Parts of the results were presented as direct quotation to substantiate some important points.

The findings of this study revealed a doubled standard in sexuality and gender roles which encourage women to keep virginity until marriage and not to engage in premarital and extramarital sex while men do not need to. Meanings of sexual relations to women involve affectionate emotion rather than responding to sexual desire as men perceive. These women believe that men have more desire than women. Communication about sex is embarrassing for women.

Most married women perceive that they play submissive roles in relationship with husbands. Having sexual relations depends on husbands regarding initiating sex and sexual acts. Wives' duties are to keep a happy home and provide husbands and children with pleasure while husbands are heads of the house and economic providers for the family. Decision-making power in the household matters including sexual relations mostly belongs to husbands. Level of sexual negotiation for unwanted and safer sex of married women is mostly low. Factors related to sexual negotiation power for safer sex are perceptions of inferior women's roles and unbalanced power relations with men in the marriage context, low level of sexual communication and sexual decision making, women's economic dependency on men, age and years of marriage, beliefs about condom use in extramarital relationships and underestimated HIV risk perceptions.