

3837229 SHHS/M : MAJOR : HEALTH SOCIAL SCIENCE ; M.A. (HEALTH
SOCIAL SCIENCE)

KEY WORD : SAMOA/ SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED DISEASES/
REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH/ ACQUIRED IMMUNE
DEFICIENCY SYNDROME/ HEALTH EDUCATION

ANDREW REUBEN PETERU : THE SEXUALITY AND STD/HIV RISK
RELATED SEXUAL BEHAVIORS OF SINGLE, UNSKILLED, YOUNG ADULT,
SAMOAN MALES. THESIS ADVISOR : PAUL YABLO Ph.D., ORATAI RAUYAJIN
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251 p. ISBN 974 - 588 - 944 - 1

The South Pacific region has a high rate of STDs, and is believed to be one of the last areas to be affected by the HIV/AIDS pandemic. Western Samoa, and her neighboring island nations, are now experiencing the onset of the HIV/AIDS pandemic. With little information documenting the sexuality and sexual (particularly high risk) behaviors of Samoans, preventive health personnel have yet to understand the actual situations experienced by the Samoan population in relation to STDs/HIV/AIDS threat. Until such issues are addressed, planning and implementation processes will continue to be compromised in achieving effective and appropriate STD/HIV/AIDS awareness and prevention campaigns. This study was therefore conducted in order to gather this needed information

One hundred and five single, unskilled, young adult, Samoan males (aged between 16 and 25 years) were selected through purposive non-probability means to respond to a survey and to screen prospective interview informants. Indepth interviews were then conducted to study the sexuality and sexual behaviors of a selected group of 15 informants from the larger sample. The data was collected between December 1996 to March 1997.

Statistical analysis reveals that only 8 (7.8%) out of 102 respondents reported always using condoms. Only 3 of the 15 indepth interview informants reported sometimes using condoms. Some informants reported never having seen a condom. Twelve informants reported frequently engaging in same sex encounters. The informants reported engaging in oral, vaginal, and anal sex and had little to no knowledge relating to STD/HIV prevention. Females were frequently blamed as the cause and sexual transmission route of STDs and HIV. The findings suggest that the inequalities existing within the gender roles in the Samoan society largely shaped the sexuality and sexual behaviors of the informants. Socio-cultural factors appeared to encourage STD/HIV risk related sexual behaviors by reinforcing negative traits such as male dominance over females and the pursuit of the perception of male sexual prowess. Future research should address the relationships between language and sexual behavior, sexual acts, bisexuality, condom-use and preventive measures, preferred sources of information, and especially gender-power relations and it's affects on reproductive health.