

laboratory result, the female sex workers were divided into two groups, anti-HCV positive and anti-HCV negative. The studied variables of these two groups were analyzed for searching some factors associated with HCV infection. After that, 10 female sex workers with anti-HCV positive and 10 anti-HCV negative were randomly selected for in-depth interview.

The results revealed that the prevalence rate of HCV infection in female sex workers was 9.5%. The highest prevalence (12.24 %) was in the group of age 20 years or less. That was significantly higher than the prevalence in the group of age over 30 years ($p= 0.0409$). When it was classified by duration of working in the sex trade, the highest prevalence rate (23.08%) was in female sex workers who have worked more than 96 months. It was significantly higher than the prevalence of those with duration of working less than 48 months ($p= 0.0075$). The factors associated with HCV infection were domicile, duration of working in the sex trade, tattooing, and history of STDs in the last 4 years ($p < 0.05$).

The qualitative analysis found that the factors related with HCV infection in female sex workers were domicile, educational level, ear piercing (more than one), history of incising herself (at arm), occasional use condom during sexual intercourse in the last 4 years and history of STDs in the last 4 years. This study supports that sexual contact may be one of important transmission routes for HCV infection.