

4238465 ADPM / M : MAJOR : PRIMARY HEALTH CARE MANAGEMENT:
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HLA TUN OO: SAFE SEX BEHAVIOR AMONG CONSCRIPTS IN ROYAL THAI ARMY, SOUTHERN THAILAND. THESIS ADVISOR: BOONYONG KEIWKARNKA, DR.P.H., PANTYP RAMASOOTA, DR. P.H., DOUNGSAMORN CHINCHOTIKASEM, M.A, MR. NATE HONGKRAILERT, M.Ed., 85 p. ISBN: 974-663-872-6

A cross sectional descriptive study on safe sex behavior among conscripts in Royal Thai Army in southern Thailand was conducted during March - April, 2000. The main objective was to examine the safe sex behavior among the conscripts in that region. Regarding the increasing trend of HIV sero-prevalence reported by the Armed Forces Research Institute of Medical Science, Royal Thai Army: conscripts in that region was purposively selected as the study group. By means of clustered sampling technique and simple random sampling method data of 210 sample conscripts were collected by self administered questionnaire and then analyzed. The majority of the conscripts were single, Buddhist and possessed a secondary and higher education level. Three in five conscripts reported that their salary was sufficient. Most of their parents had a primary education level and did agricultural works.

Their main source of HIV / AIDS information was TV/Video and easy availability of condoms. Most of them had high knowledge on HIV/AIDS mode of transmission, but there were some incorrect concepts and negative attitudes on sexual transmission of AIDS virus and lack of condom use consistency.

Out of 210 conscripts 198 had had sex experiences and 158 had girl friends. Out of these 158 , 143 revealed sex with a girl friend. Only 31 among them reported using a condom every-time and safe sex behavior with a girl-friend. Commonly reported first sex partner was girl-friend. At the age of 19 almost all conscripts had had a sexual intercourse experience. At first sex, only 64 (nearly one third of 198) revealed condom use, safe sex behavior. During the last 3 months, 3 out of 4 sex experienced conscripts reported, at least 2 and more than 2 sex partners. Condom use with sex worker and bar/karaoke waitresses was high, but sex with newly met persons and girl friends reported condom use percentage was relatively very low. Condom use became inconsistent when the number of sex partners increased. Out of 198, one third reflected addict-able drug use history and 85 percent revealed alcohol drinking history. Under influence of those risk taking behaviors half of the conscripts went into sexual intercourse. At that time only 45 percent revealed every-time condom use. Regarding consistency of condom use at every sex act, safe sex behavior was very rare among all sex experienced conscripts.

Safe sex behavior "condom use" at first sex was statistically significantly associated to the age, educational status, father's education and salary. However, there was no association found between knowledge, attitude and safe sex behavior at first sex.

Irregularity and inconsistency of "condom use" safe sex behavior indicated those conscripts as the population with HIV/AIDS high risk behavior. These findings should be valuable information to the health planners, administrators and other responsible persons to control and prevent HIV/AIDS transmission not only among conscripts but also among the community in Thailand.