

A STUDY ON THE STATUS OF HIGH RISK GROUP FOR HIV IN COIMBATORE

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Abstract

India, with a population of more than one billion, has not been spared from the HIV epidemic. According to the 2005 UNAIDS estimate (UNAIDS 2005), India had 5.7 million people living with HIV. However, with support from UNAIDS and the World Health Organization (WHO) in 2006, a revised estimate from the National AIDS Control Organization estimated that the HIV prevalence in the country could actually be lower, at 2.5 million infected people. Sexual transmission accounts for more than 85% of all HIV infections in India. One critical consideration for most sexually transmitted HIV epidemics is the use of condoms during sex. In Thailand and Cambodia, significant success has been achieved in lowering the spread and prevalence of HIV, as well as other bacterial sexually transmitted infections (STIs), through promotion of 100% condom use for commercial sex (WHO 2000). Researchers have found that regular and consistent use of condoms may reduce the transmission of HIV infections by 87-95%. NACO in India has also emphasized condom use to reduce the risk of HIV transmission at the population level. Condom use among sexually active individuals in India, however, remains very low in almost all groups of sexually active people, including married men, unmarried men, University students, urban slum dwellers, rural men, truck drivers, etc., and has been documented even in high-risk groups such as commercial sex workers, non-regular sex partners and men having sex with men. Thus, despite the currently estimated low HIV prevalence, the opportunity for developing a widespread epidemic persists.

Keywords: *HIV, UNAIDS, STIs, sex workers, NACO, high-risk groups*

Introduction

More than 90 million males (i.e., more than 25% of adult males) in India are migrants. About 51 million males migrate from rural areas, and nearly a quarter of them migrate from one state to another (Census of India 2001). This is likely to increase further (National Sample Survey 1992-1993; National Sample Survey Report No. 470, 2001; UNESCO 2002), due to growing economic disparities. Thus, these vast numbers of migrants may constitute an important risk group for HIV/STIs, especially in acquiring the infection and transmitting it back to the rural population. Hence, considering the dearth of information on this important topic, the present study was undertaken to gain insights into the possible role of migrants in spreading HIV and STIs by comparing the patterns of sexual risk behaviors and condom use by local and migrant workers, and to identify predictors of condom use and the potential for transmission of HIV and other STIs from migrant workers to the general population. Specifically, we hypothesized that compared to local workers; migrant workers have higher HIV risk behaviors, along with lower use of condoms during sex with high-risk partners, as well as with their usual partners,

increasing the possibility of transmitting infection from their high-risk partners to their usual (low-risk) partners.

High Risk Groups for HIV

It is estimated that more than 90% of HIV transmission in India is related to unprotected sexual intercourse or sharing of injecting equipment between an infected and an uninfected individual. Not everyone in the population has the same risk of acquiring or transmitting HIV. Much of the HIV transmission in India occurs within groups or networks of individuals who have higher levels of risk due to a higher number of sexual partners or the sharing of injection drug equipment. High Risk Groups (HRGs) are as follows:

- Migrants
- Female sex workers (FSWs),
- Truckers,
- High-risk men who have sex with men, transgender (MSM and TGs)
- Injecting drug users (IDUs).

Statement of the Problem

Majority of the HIV infections worldwide are transmitted through sex between men and women and half of all adults living with HIV are women. Certain groups of people have been particularly affected and these include people who inject drugs, sex workers and men who have sex with men. HIV particularly affects adolescents and young people, who accounted for 39 percent of all new infections and 15 percent of all people living with HIV in 2012. AIDS related deaths among young adults have an especially damaging impact on their families and communities: skills are lost, workforces shrink and children are orphaned.

While mobility itself is not seen as a vulnerability factor for HIV infection, the unsafe conditions under which people migrate exposes them to a greater risk of infection. Difficult working conditions, loneliness and feelings of powerlessness, together with peer pressure, may lead migrants to engage in risky sexual behaviours that leave them vulnerable to HIV and AIDS. Similarly, those left at home may also face loneliness and exclusion. They may engage in risky behaviours for livelihood and survival purposes - particularly if the hoped-for remittances from migrants do not materialize - and can also be exposed to HIV infection by returning spouses or partners who may not be aware of their own HIV infection.

Aim of the Study

The main aim of the research is to study about the status of High Risk Groups for HIV of industrial migrants in Coimbatore district.

Objectives of the Study

- To know about the personal profile of HRG for HIV migrants in industries
- To study the nature of work and migration of the HRG for HIV migrants in the industries

- To understand about the various indications of being a HRG and their risk perception
- To understand the pattern of Sexually Transmitted Infection among the HRG for HIV in the industries.
- To suggest the best suitable precautionary measures to avoid becoming HIV+

Area of the Study

State	Tamil Nadu
District	Coimbatore
Nature of work	Industrial Migrants
No of Industries	15
Target group	High risk group migrants working in industries

Descriptive Research

Descriptive Research includes surveys and fact finding enquiries of different kinds. The major purpose of Descriptive Research is description of the state of affairs as it exists at present. It is designed to gather descriptive information and provides information for formulating more sophisticated studies. Data are collected by using one or more appropriate methods namely observation and interviewing.

Universe/Population

The universe of the study is all the High Risk Group Migrants working in the industries located in the Coimbatore District. Thus the universe population amounts to 4,000 migrants

Sample Design

In this study the researcher collected data purposively only from the HRG migrants working in Industries in Coimbatore. Thus, Purposive sampling technique is adopted

Sample Size

Sample of 100 respondents were taken for the study.

Tools for Data Collection

The researcher used interview schedule as the tool for data collection. The interview schedule is prepared according to the objectives of the study which includes questions on name, age, native state, nature of work, level of awareness about HIV infection, presence and absence of Sexually Transmitted Infection [STI], Integrated Counselling and Testing Centre [ICTC] test count their age of experience as a migrant, various indications as HRG, degree of their risk of becoming HIV+, impact on personal health, family and work place, precautionary measures taken to avoid becoming HIV+

Findings

Percentage Analysis

- The analysis is dominated by the opinion of the male migrants (81%)
- Most (35%) of the respondents belonged to the age group twenty to thirty five years
- Majority (44%) of the respondents were from Tamil Nadu
- Among the interstate respondents most of them were from Guwahati
- Most (82%) respondents were married.
- Majority (74%) of the respondents gained zero to five years of experience
- The educational status of majority (51%) of the respondents were below X std.
- The residential status of majority (72%) is within the industry.
- The distance of work place from the residential place of the respondents for majority (73%) of the respondents is within one kilometer.
- Most (18%) of the respondents work at Vascon Engineering
- Majority (77%) of the respondents work as labourers.
- Majority (51%) of the respondents work for 8 hours a day.
- Majority (57%) of the respondents rest for eight hours per day.
- Majority (83%) of the respondents have migrated without family.
- Majority (76%) of the respondents have migrated once in the last one year.
- All the respondents have a weekly holiday (100%)
- Majority (66%) of the respondents have awareness about STI.
- Majority (70%) of the respondents did not show any symptoms of STI.
- Majority (79%) of the respondents are interested in having unprotective sex.
- Majority(53) of the respondents do not interchange their inner wears
- Most (48%) of the respondents wash their clothes once in a week.
- Majority(91) of the respondents have water facilities in their sanitary place
- Most (31%) of the respondents have undertaken treatment for STI.
- Most (16%) of the respondents intake their STI medicines regularly.
- Majority (79%) of the respondents has STI.
- Majority (96%) of the respondents are aware about HIV.
- Most (49%) of the respondents have visited one to two times to any FSW or MSM in the last month.
- Majority of the respondents are influence by their friends to get contacted with an FSW or MSM.
- Majority (63%) of the respondents their last sexual encounter was protective.
- Majority (62%) of the respondents are aware of the right way of using condom.
- None of the respondents are affected by tuberculosis (100%)
- Majority (89%) of the respondents have the habit of injecting drugs through syringes.

- None of the respondents have HIV infectants in their families.
- Majority (88%) of the respondents have carried out a HIV test.
- Majority (84%) of the respondents have carried out a STI test.

Conclusion

It is found from the study that majority of the migrant workers are interested in having unprotected sex. Also it is evident that they need awareness on personal hygiene to keep them clean and tidy. It is a worrisome fact that a considerable number of respondents have STI. It is also a worrisome fact that majority of them have visited FSW in the previous months. It is a welcome thing that a vast majority of the respondents have carried out HIV and STI test. It becomes clearly evident that this migrant population which is always mobile is the most vulnerable group to get easily infected with STI and HIV. Government and NGO's should still more aggressively campaign among this section of people to keep them away from such deadly disease.

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