

Abstract

Sexual Morbidity and Treatment Seeking Behaviour among Clients of Sex Workers

Mr. Rajarama K E T
Population Research Centre
Vidyagiri, Dharwad 580 004
E-mail: rajaramaket@yahoo.co.in

Prof. R. K Sinha
International Institute for Population Sciences
Govandi Station Road
Mumbai

In recent years, studies on sexual morbidities are on rise because presence of sexually transmitted diseases (STD) in an individual enhances the chances of acquiring and transmitting HIV infection. Hence, effective management of sexual diseases among general population and high risk groups is important in the control of HIV/AIDS epidemic. In this context, it is important to know the prevalence of STD, relationship between sexual behaviour and sexual morbidity and treatment seeking behaviour of clients of sex workers who are considered as bridge group in spreading HIV infection from sex workers to low risk population in Karnataka.

The present study is based on primary data collected from 307 clients of sex workers from 8 sex service points of Hubli-Dharwad city. The sex service points were identified using Time Location Cluster Sampling (TLCS). In all, 54 high risk clusters were identified and 8 zones were selected where volume of sex worker and clients were more for recruiting clients for interview.

Life-time prevalence of sexual diseases among the study population is 43 percent. Most commonly reported STD symptoms were burning on urination (21%) followed by discharges from sex organs and ulcer over genital area. The diseases are found more among the clients who having had sex with more number of sex partners. Fifty-six percent of patients having had sex contact with several commercial and non-commercial sex partners at the time of suffering from the infection. Tragic part of the story is most of the patients never used condom during such encounters (47 %). Nearly, one-fifth of patients did not take treatment. Those who have taken treatment, majority approached allopathic health practitioners (80%). Since presence of STD among individuals has far reaching effect on individuals as well as his sex partners' health, educating clients of sex workers regarding prevention of STD by using condom, importance of medication, partners treatment etc. are should be the components of intervention programmes.