

## Mongolia: A pilot Study on Knowledge, Attitude and Practice for HIV/AIDS Prevention

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A pilot study on knowledge, attitude and practice for HIV/AIDS prevention was conducted in the eastern part of Mongolian Railway during the AIDS Awareness Train Campaign "Beijing-Ulaanbaatar", 1999. It was carried out by the Population Teaching and Research Center of the Mongolian National University in collaboration with the UNDP NEA Sub-regional "HIV & Development" project.

### Objectives

The main objective of the study is to assess knowledge, attitude and practice for HIV/AIDS prevention among the railway travelers and people who live near by the railway line, who work for railway sector.

### Methodology

In-depth interview is used as information collection method. The anonymous questionnaire has been developed according to Mongolia's specific conditions based on model questionnaire, which was initially developed by Chinese researchers. The questionnaire consists of four parts including respondent's background, HIV/AIDS knowledge, people's attitude, and practice-related questions. Sample size is 376 persons. Sample were taken in proportion to population size living in aimag centers including the population size near by the four railway stations.

### Main finding

In total, 376 respondents above 16 years old have been interviewed, of which 55.6 percent is male and 44 percent is female. About 30 percent of respondents are 16-24 age groups and 36.7 percent is 35 and above years old.

The study results show that most of respondents have ever heard about HIV/AIDS, but the percentage of respondents who have heard about HIV/AIDS is higher among the respondents below the age at 25 years. If looked at by educational level and employment status, the percentage of respondents who have ever heard about HIV/AIDS is lower among those with no education, unemployed and single respondents. It might be concluded that non-educated people have very limited access to reliable information and education. Single individuals with no reliable information are more likely to be at risk of HIV/AIDS infection. It suggests that information, education and communication activities among young adults need to be organized frequently.

The majority of the respondents (62%) stated that they have got HIV/AIDS related information on TV, 58.3 percent from newspaper, journal, 50 percent on radio and about 0.9-5.2 percent cited schools, hospitals, advocacy campaigns, performances as HIV/AIDS information sources. Apart from hearing about YIV/AIDS from mass media about 25 percent of respondents below age 25 stated that they have heard about HIV/AIDS from their friends and other people. The respondents who have higher education are more likely to get information about HIV/AIDS from mass media such as MV and radio, and respondents with primary or no education are more likely to get information from their friends and from other people. It may lead them to be at risk to get incorrect information about HIV/AIDS. Moreover, only 25-50 percent of the respondents with less or no education is getting HIV/AIDS prevention information from TV. As educational status improves the frequency of getting information from TV, newspaper and journal increases. Results show that respondents with higher education and employment are more likely to get information from various sources.

Although the percentage of male respondents who have ever heard about "how HIV/AIDS could be transmitted" was higher than for female respondents, the knowledge about the HIV/AIDS transmission modes is among male respondents than that among female respondents. Knowledge about HIV/AIDS transmission is observed to be lower among unemployed, young age groups and less educated respondents. For example, none of female respondents with no or primary education stated correctly HIV transmission modes.

Results show that 9.5 percent of the respondents answered that HIV could be transmitted when shaking hands and 27.6 percent answered that HIV could be transmitted by living together with HIV infected person. Out of total respondents, 71.6 percents answered that they sometimes thought about HIV/AIDS, while 28.4 percent never thought about it. About 25 percent of those with less education and 40 percent of unemployed have never thought about HIV/AIDS. Regarding respondent's reaction to the people living with HIV/AIDS, 36.4 percent of the respondents answered "will keep in distance from them". Respondents with less or no education were more answer that they will keep in distance from people living with HIV/AIDS showing more fear toward HIV/AIDS.

Condom use is not common among respondents. Only 56.2 percent of respondents or 65 percent of male and 55 percent of female respondents have ever used condoms. 65.2 percent of respondents have got condom from the pharmacy, 20.6 percent from kiosks and 8.3 percent from shops. Very small proportion of respondents cited hospitals, health centers, friends and open markets as sources where they could get condoms.

## Suggestions

- The various types of mass media such as TV, radio, newspaper and journal should be used as the main means for information, education, communication or advocacy activities;
- Advocacy Campaigns should be organized frequently where many people are passing through for example, at bus stations, open markets, shops, disco bars and university campuses using information desks and billboards;
- Education and Information activities should be targeted for specific groups, such as for young adults, unemployed, single individuals and less educated people;
- Reflect HIV/AIDS and sexuality issues in the school curriculum, or public health training program;
- Facilitate open discussions on HIV/AIDS and sexuality among different target groups;
- Encourage informal training program for various groups of the population;
- Promote condom use, and more information about condom use needs to be disseminated;
- Encourage conducting behavioral or HIV/AIDS related Knowledge, Attitude and Practice (KAP) studies involving different research institutions and researchers.

The results of this study undoubtedly will policy implications for HIV/AIDS prevention programs while the country is in the transitional period, because it provides valuable information on awareness of people about HIV/AIDS and the outputs of the study will provide social researchers, policy makers and planners with a wealth of information and a clear picture about the current level of travelers' knowledge, attitude and practice for HIV/AIDS prevention.