

Rapid Situation Response Assessment for Risk of HIV/AIDS among Prisoners in Anuradhapura

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The HIV/AIDS pandemic is increasing throughout south Asia. Sri Lanka has a low prevalence of the epidemic and only less than 0.1% of the population is infected. However, concentrated HIV epidemics among female sex workers, homosexuals, and drug users and their sexual partners cannot be ruled out. This scenario is highly probable due to the existence of high transmission settings for HIV in the country such as prisons and correctional facilities. When there is high occurrence of drug usage and unsafe sex, people have a higher risk to HIV exposure and are often the most difficult to reach because homosexuality and drug use drive them underground.

This study was conducted from November 2007 to November 2008. The objective of the study was to assess the awareness about HIV/AIDS risk sex behavior and to assess vulnerability of infection to HIV/AIDS among prison inmates in Anuradhapura. A rapid situation response assessment was conducted for 50 drug users in prison. Of these, 45 prisoners had no knowledge about high risk sex behavior, and they had never used condoms during sexual intercourse. Forty nine prisoners did not know about the spread of HIV/AIDS and 39 were not aware about HIV/AIDS. Interventions to reduce the risk of sexual behavior such as demonstration of condom use, awareness programs, and safer practices were conducted. Finally, all 50 prisoners agreed to do blood tests for HIV/AIDS.