

## **Improving the Health Status of Three Wheeler Drivers**

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The objectives of this study were to assess the basic health status of three wheeler drivers and if necessary direct them for further health care, reduce drug demand and increase their knowledge on HIV/AIDS. Selection was made randomly, and 88 drivers from a three wheeler park in Kadugannawa, 34 from a three wheeler park in Pilimalawa and 54 drivers from Katugastota were selected for the study. Pre questionnaires and health camps were used for the preliminary health survey. Blood pressure, Random Blood Sugar (RBS), and Bio Mass Index (BMI) were measured by conducting separate health camps in the above mentioned locations. Three repetitive health camps with a 30 day time gap were conducted at each location. Demonstrations on condom use and HIV awareness were part of the program during these health camps. Post questionnaires and follow-up programs were used to evaluate the progress.

According to the survey 25.9% of three wheeler drivers had their blood pressure measured and 33.4% had their BMI measured previously. Of the total respondents 85% did not have sufficient knowledge on HIV/AIDS and only 51.8 % knew the correct way of using a condom. The following data were collected during the health camps. Of the total participants, 8.4 % had low (<18) BMI, 58.1% normal (18-25) BMI and 33.5% had high (>25) BMI. About 72% of the participants recorded normal blood pressure and 19% had high blood pressure. Four percent (4%) of three wheeler drivers recorded high RBS values. Blood pressure, RBS and BMI were categorized according to age class. Drivers who showed high blood pressure and high RBS were directed to medical and health care services. Exercise and healthy food habits were introduced for the three wheeler drivers and their families. The adverse effects of alcohol, tobacco and drugs on the human body were discussed.

Evaluation after a five month period showed that the number with high BMI decreased from 33.5% to 10%, knowledge on HIV/AIDS increased by 85% and knowledge on correct use of a condom increased to 80%. Through our interventions we were able to increase awareness and improve health conditions among three wheeler drivers by simple and effective health advice and proper guidance.