Migrant Seafarers and HIV Risk in Thai Communities

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Abstract

Migrant workers, particularly seafarers, have been identified as a group at risk for HIV infection. Using an environmental model of health behavior, the objective of this study was to investigate the context and motivation for sexual risk taking among these men. Qualitative data were collected in focus groups and in–depth interviews on the organization of sex work in their communities, perceived vulnerability to HIV infection, pressure to visit sex workers, motivation for condom use, alcohol use, HIV testing and stigma. Although migrants do feel susceptible to HIV infection, peer pressure and alcohol use remain important factors in risky sexual behavior. Condoms were usually used with sex workers in brothels but irregularly used in other situations. Intervention programs for these men should include the development of peer education programs. These programs need to stress the importance of using condoms with all partners and awareness of the consequences of alcohol use.