

CORRELATES OF SEXUAL BEHAVIOUR AMONG BARMAIDS IN MOROGORO MUNICIPAL, TANZANIA

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Abstract

Barmaids are among the high-risk group of infection of sexually transmitted diseases including HIV/AIDS. Most barmaids are young women who migrate from rural areas with a purpose to engage in formal employment to earn a living. However, since most of them have low levels of education and are unskilled they end up in low income earning jobs including working as barmaids. Due to the nature of their work, they are placed at a higher risk of involving themselves in risky sexual behaviour undertakings. Limited studies in Tanzania have examined sexual behaviour of barmaids and the risks involved.

The overall objective of the paper is to examine correlates of sexual behaviour among barmaids. Specifically the paper determines the; incidence of pregnancy, abortion and STIs among barmaids; influence of alcohol consumption on sexual behaviour; association between demographic variables (age, marital status, number of children. The paper employs data from a cross-sectional study using a randomly selected sample of 60 respondents from randomly selected bars in Morogoro Municipality. An interview using standard questions was employed to obtain information. Analysis will use an index of sexual behaviour to be developed from using six variables. These are frequency of sexual intercourse, incidence of STIs, incidence of abortion, number of sexual partners, use of condoms during sex and consistency in using condoms during sex.

The paper shows that the majority of barmaids: age wise are around 20-25 years; are engaged in bar business at the age of 16 years; are single or divorced; have one to two children; have primary level of education; receive an income of Tanzania Shillings 20,000 (about US \$15) per month; have parents who are peasants; live in rented houses and have single rooms. In terms of sexual

behaviour, barmaids: are all sexually active; majority of them began sex when they were between age 12 to 14 years; have more than three sexual partners; usually use condoms during sex although most of them never used condom at the first time they had sex; and have never been infected with STDs.

The paper recommends that special interventions targeting low-income earners should be constituted. In addition, labour regulations should be enforced to ensure that employers pay their staff the government's set minimum wages. NGOs are also asked to design programmes towards barmaids to protect them from risks associated with their sexual behaviour.

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