

**PASSION, PLEASURE AND DANGER: THE STUDY OF SEXUAL
CULTURE OF MALE SEASONAL MIGRANT WORKERS IN
PHNOM PENH, CAMBODIA**

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ABSTRACT

In the context of increased migration into Phnom Penh, people are vulnerable to unsafe sexual practices resulting in STIs and HIV/AIDS infection. The study is to explore the migrant worker's sexual culture in terms of their sexual categories, partner relations, sexual desires, sexual pleasures, sexual practices, their migration/living context, their cultural beliefs in relation to STIs, HIV/AIDS and condom use, and the various forms of safe and unsafe sexual practices. The migrants worker's sexual culture, living/migration context, and cultural beliefs in relation to STIs, HIV/AIDS and condom use were also explored to find out their influence on safe and unsafe sexual practices.

A qualitative methodology using an ethnographic approach was employed. Snowball and purposive sampling techniques were used to select a total of 23 informants and key informants in Phnom Penh. Three focus group discussions, ten informants for narration of their sexual lives in depth interviews, and four key informants were interviewed. Content analysis was performed to explore the sexual culture, sexual practice which, are safe or unsafe, and cultural beliefs related to risky sexual practices.

The results revealed that migrant workers get less health support, poor housing, less awareness of infectious disease, poor sanitation and so on. The findings show that migrants become homesick, lonely, stressed, frustrated, and bored. This exposes them to sexual practices both safe and unsafe. The male migrant workers have more than one sexual partner: casual, regular and permanent sexual partners who lead them into dangerous sexual practices. The results also shows the notion of sexual desires which refers to the notion of hunger for food. Condom use reduces their sexual pleasures; the skin to skin contact is a more pleasurable and more preferred practice among the informants. Condoms are not commonly used with sweethearts, trusted and loved partners; this makes them vulnerable to infection.

To encourage safe sex and avoid risk to STIs, and HIV/AIDS infection, intervention programs have to target this vulnerable group by producing effective training on safe sex, sexuality, sexual and reproductive health, promoting new strategies for condom use which result in pleasurable and safe sex. The family, community, and society have to promote the understanding, support and positive and responsible behaviors in the lives of migrant workers.

**KEY WORDS: PASSION/PLEASURE/DANGER/SEXUAL CULTURE/
CAMBODIAN MIGRANT WORKERS**

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