

**RISK PERCEPTION AND CONDOM USE AMONG THAI
YOUTH: FINDINGS FROM KANCHANABURI DEMOGRAPHIC
SURVEILLANCE SYSTEM SITE IN THAILAND**



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MOHAMMAD RAISUL HAQUE 4938043 PRDE/D

Ph.D. (DEMOGRAPHY)

THESIS ADVISORY COMMITTEE: AMARA SOONTHORNDHADA, Ph.D.,
SIRINAN KITTISUKSATHIT PH.D., SURASAK TANEAPANICHSKUL, PH.D.**ABSTRACT**

Youth aged 15-24 years comprise a large fragment of the total population in Thailand, and unsafe sexual behaviors are increasing among young people nowadays. The objectives of the study are to explore different characteristics of youth and other conducive, facilitating and impeding factors associated with risk perception of sexually transmitted infections for using condoms in the study population.

The data employed in this study derived from the Kanchanaburi Demographic Surveillance System (KDSS) of Thailand 2000 and 2004. The villages/blocks for the Kanchanaburi province were selected using a stratified systemic design and structured interviews were conducted to collect data. The study mainly focused on the respondents male condom users aged 15-24. There were 532 male 'ever' users in year 2000 (Round 1), 480 male 'ever' users and 195 'current' users in 2004 (Round 5), and a total of 152 male 'ever' users for panel data (2000-2004) obtained for the sample size. Based on Health Belief Model the study assessed the relationship between predisposing, enabling and reinforcing factors with risk perception of STIs, and constructed three models for both cross sectional and panel data.

The findings reveal that the perception of risk and use of condom depends upon the type of partner. Youth having temporary partners are more likely to perceive risk and reasons for using a condom than when with their regular partner. Younger youth and those single (unmarried) are more likely to perceive risk. Education has a significant association with risk perception of infections. It reveals that perception of risk increases with increasing level of education. The other conducive factors like high household wealth, and access to mass media e.g., TV are having a significant influence on perceiving self risk of STIs among the condom users. The odd ratio also shows that drinking liquor means it less likely to perceive risk and impedes the chance of changing behavior to risk perception of infections in condom use. Overall, socioeconomic status has a great influence on risk perception of STIs. In addition, youth having high risk sexual behavior need realistic risk assessments and to identify positive ways of incorporating condoms into their sexual lives.

KEY WORDS: YOUTH / RISK PERCEPTION / SEXUAL BEHAVIOR/ CONDOM

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