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**HIV/AIDS PREVENTIVE BEHAVIOR:
FACTORS UNDERLYING CONDOM USE
AMONG MYANMAR MIGRANT WORKERS IN THAILAND**

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In the era of HIV/AIDS, the absence of proper treatment and vaccine has resulted in preventive behavior receiving greater global attention. However, there are concerns whether prevention and control programs are reaching migrant workers from Myanmar in Thailand. This study is a social science approach to examining the Myanmar workers' condom use behavior as received of HIV/AIDS prevention and underlying factors influencing condom use behavior in order to develop effective health education strategies for the migrant population.

A quantitative study was undertaken with 108 Myanmar workers at Samut Sakhon, Thailand in August 1997. In addition to close ended interview questionnaires, informal interviews were administered and conducted. Data were analyzed by SPSS-PC+. The results revealed that less than one third of the workers used condoms for prevention of disease. Low knowledge of condom use and HIV/AIDS was found, suggesting that effective health education is not being provided. Regarding the underlying factors of condom use, sociodemographic factors were not found to be related to condom use. However, the psychological factors of knowledge and perception of HIV/AIDS and perception of susceptibility to HIV/AIDS were significantly related to condom use. Also, exposure to HIV/AIDS program was related to condom use among workers.

The results suggest that effective health education for migrant populations should be developed and provided. This is best done with the collaboration of employers, migrant employees and government. Peer education appears to be an effective method and the use of audio visual materials in the native language of the workers is recommended. This study, despite its limitations highlights the need for specialized education and intervention regarding HIV/AIDS for migrant populations. Further research needs to explore the workers' HIV/AIDS related sexual behaviors in order to better understand and develop health education for migrant populations.