

ABSTRACT

Sexually transmitted diseases, evidence of which in Sri Lanka dates back to the 5th century AD is increasing in importance in the Sri Lankan health scene. Similarly drug abuse, evidence of which, in Sri Lanka dates back to the 16th century AD is also causing concern as a health hazard. It has been shown in studies conducted abroad that drug abusers are a risk group in contracting sexually transmitted diseases.

Therefore this study was conducted to identify if drug abusers are a risk group in contracting sexually transmitted diseases in Sri Lanka. A study group of 93 drug abusing female prostitutes was selected from the Central VD clinic in the months of July, August, September, October and November in 1992. A control group of 1:1 age matched 93 non drug abusing female prostitutes were selected from the central VD clinic during the same time.

Another study group was selected from the new admissions to the Welikada prison. This consisted of 125 male prisoners convicted for drug offences and 25 female prisoners convicted for drug offences. The control group consisted of sex and 1:1 age matched prisoners convicted for other offences and admitted to the prison during the study period, that is June and July in 1992.

In both the female prostitutes and prisoners data was collected for prevalence of sexually transmitted diseases and past history of sexually transmitted diseases. Further a knowledge questionnaire on AIDS was administered to every study and control subject in both the female prostitutes and prisoners.

The results showed a statistically significant association between prevalence of sexually transmitted disease and drug abuse, after confounding factors were

also considered in the analysis. The AIDS knowledge did not differ in the study and control groups.

Therefore, according to the results of this study, it was concluded that drug abusers are a risk group in contracting sexually transmitted diseases. Thus it was recommended that special emphasis should be focused on drug abusers in the sexually transmitted diseases/AIDS control programme.