

AIDS Risk among Tourists : A Study of Japaneses Female Tourists in Thailand

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Sexual behavior relating to AIDS risks among women tourists in Phuket Island, Thailand was studied. The study included focus group discussions and indepth-interviews with key informants: local beachboys, tour guides, travel company managers and women tourists from Japan. Results indicated that there were more women tourists on the island as Phuket had been particularly promoted for Free Individual Tourists (FITs), especially women. The Japanese women tourists were found to be taking more sexual risks compared with other women tourist groups of other nationalities as more casual sex between Thai beachboys and Japanese tourists were reported. Frequency and place of sexual intercourse reported point to low condom use. Factors contributing to the problem included the promotion of Phuket that lacked knowledge and health concern measures for young inexperienced women tourists, the specific national traits of young Japanese women such as being gentle, polite, fashionable and submissive; making them approachable to young local men. The study also found lack of authority's control for tourists safety and absence of AIDS awareness messages in tourist areas. Researchers recommended that tourists safety programs as well as service in providing relevant facts and life skills training were to be set up prior to, during and after taking the trip overseas for women tourists.