

Integrated Biological and Behavioral Surveillance (IBBS) Survey among Male Labour Migrants in Western and Mid to Far Western Region of Nepal Round V –2015

Brief Description

This is the fifth round of Integrated Biological and Behavioral Surveillance Survey (IBBS) conducted among the Male Labour Migrants (MLM) of 11 districts of Western (5) and Mid to Far Western (6) Regions of Nepal. Primarily, this survey was carried out to track the trend in prevalence of HIV among MLMs and to explore the sexual risk behaviors associated with the HIV infection. This survey was carried during July-September 2015. Two stage 30 cluster sampling method was adopted in this survey. Desired numbers of participants were selected on the basis of population proportion to size from selected clusters. Each of Village Development Committee/Municipality/Sub-Metropolitan city of the selected districts of Western and Mid to Far Western Regions were considered clusters.

Background and Rationale for IBBS survey

In the early 1990s, a national HIV surveillance system was established in Nepal to monitor the HIV epidemic and to inform evidence-based HIV prevention efforts. Since then, IBBS surveys have been conducted at the interval of 2-3 years among Key Affected Population (KAP) of the epidemic zones. Male Labor Migrants (MLM) is one of the KAPs as their vulnerability to the HIV infection is triggered their risky sexual behaviors.

This is the fifth round of IBBS survey; conducted as a part of national surveillance plan of National Centre for AIDS and STD Control, to trace out the trend of HIV infection among MLMs. Furthermore, findings of the study might be instrumental for the formulation and modification of evidence based policies and strategies to fight against HIV and AIDS in Nepal.

Methods

This was a serial cross-sectional survey; conducted in the five districts (Kaski, Palpa, Syangja, Kapilvastu and Gulmi) of Western Region and six districts (Banke, Surkhet, Kailali, Kanchanpur, Doti, and Achham) of Mid to Far Western Region of Nepal. Study population comprised of 720 male returnee labor migrants aged 18-49 years, having stayed continuously or with interruption for at least three months in India as a migrant worker and having returned to Nepal within three years prior to the date of the survey. Blood samples were tested using Determine HIV_{1/2} as first test and Uni- Gold HIV_{1/2} as second test; and STAT PAK as a tie breaker in case of a tie between the first two tests.

A total of 360 samples were selected from Western Region and 360 samples from Mid to Far Western Region using two

stage cluster sampling methods (first stage: selection of 30 clusters from each of the Western and Mid to Far Western Region using population proportional to size method and second stage: selection of 12 participants from each of the selected clusters).

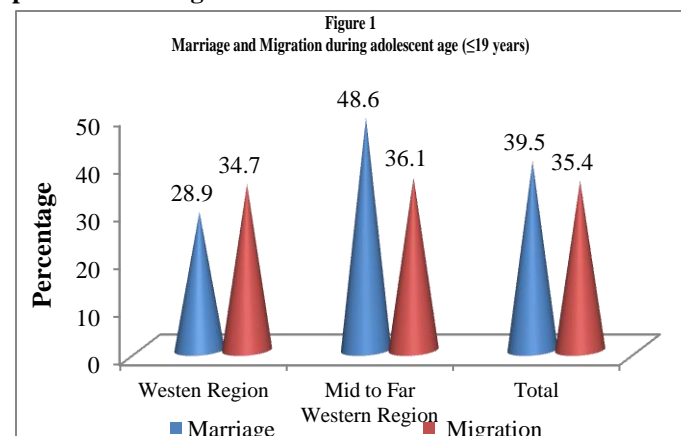
Information pertaining to the socio-demography and sexual behaviors of the MLMs was collected using a structured questionnaire by trained male interviewers. Additionally, blood samples of all the participants were also collected and tested for HIV infection in the field. External quality assessment of the blood sample was done in the National Public Health Laboratory, Teku, Kathmandu. Ethical approval was obtained from Nepal Health Research Council and informed consent was taken from each of the participants prior to the interviews and HIV testing.

KEY FINDINGS

A large proportion of MLMs were young: More than a quarter of MLMs (27.8%) were < 25 years old. Median age of the migrants of Western and Mid to Far Western Region was 31.0 years and 31.5 years respectively.

Majority of MLMs were literate: Two-fifths of the MLMs had 6-9 years of formal schooling and almost one-fifth had SLC or higher educational attainment.

Marriage and Migration during adolescent age was widely prevalent among MLMs:



Almost two-fifths (39.5%) of the MLMs had got first marriage during adolescent age and this practice was more common among the MLMs of Mid to Far Western region (48.6%) than those MLMs of Western Region. Similarly, more than one-third (35.4%) of the MLMs had first migration before completing 20 years of life. Mean age at first Marriage

and Migration was 20.9±3.5 years and 23.6±7.7 years respectively.

Maharastra (45.0%) and Delhi (36.8%) are the major destination among MLMs: Nearly one third (30.6%) of the MLMs of Western region opined that Delhi is one of the major destination while 80 percent of the MLMs of Mid to Far West development region stated that Maharashtra is the one of the major destination for migration. Other popular destinations in India were Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Kerala and Himanchal Pradesh.

HIV prevalence among MLM was 0.4%.

Prevalence of HIV infection among MLM shows decreasing trend: Prevalence of HIV among MLMs of Western region was 1.1 percent in 2006 and it was 0.3 percent in 2015. In the meantime, HIV prevalence among MLMs of Mid to Far Western region was 4.3 percent in 2010, 1.3 percent in 2012 and 0.6 percent in 2015.

Early entry into sexual life was common among MLMs: More than half (54.0%) of the migrants had first sexual contact before 20 years of age and their mean age at first sex was 19.7±3.5 years. Mean age of the MLMs of Mid to Far Western region (19.2±3 years) at first sex was almost one year lesser than the MLMs of Western region (20.3±4 years).

Sexual contact with Female Sex worker was prevalent among MLMs: A total of 17.5 percent of the MLMs had ever had sex with FSWs. Almost 8 percent of the MLMs in Nepal and 11.1 percent in India had sex with FSWs. Furthermore, 13.6 percent MLMs of the Mid to Far Western Region and 8.6 percent MLMs of Western Region had sexual contact with FSWs in India.

Limited proportion of the MLMs had used Condom Consistently during the sex with FSWs: Only two-fifths of the MLMs who had sex with FSWs in Nepal and seven-tenth of the MLMs who had sex with FSWs in India had used condom consistently.

Consistent condom use was better practiced by the MLMs of Western region (48% and 80%) than those MLMs of Mid to Far Western region (32.3% and 57.1%) respectively during the sex with FSWs in Nepal and India.

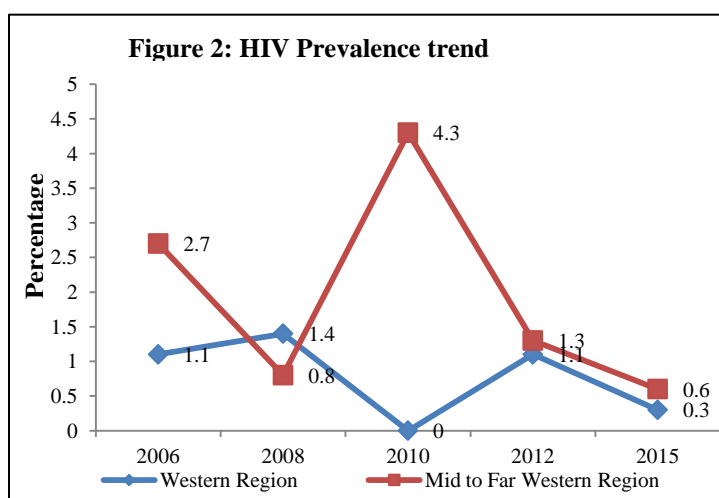
Awareness of HIV and AIDS was prevalent among majority of MLMs; however, Comprehensive Knowledge about HIV and AIDS was low: More than four-fifths (81.7%) of the MLMs had ever heard about HIV and AIDS. Overall, less than one third (31.5%) of the MLMs had knowledge of ABCs and 17.2 percent of the MLMs had knowledge of BCDEF.

Exposure to STI, HIV and AIDS programs among MLMs was low. A very small proportion of respondents in the

Western Region (2.8%) had met, discussed, or interacted with peer educators (PE) or outreach educators (OE) in the last 12 month period. Only 0.4 percent of the MLMs had visited to DIC in the last 12 months. Very few (0.8%) of the MLMs of Mid to Far Western Region had visited to STI clinic whereas none of the MLMs of Western region visited to STI clinics in the last 12 months. Only one percent of the MLMs had met with CHBC workers in the last 12 months.

Implications for Program

Risky sexual behaviors were prevalent among MLMs. Frequent exposures to such risks make MLMs and their spouses at risk of HIV transmission. Therefore, MLMs should be made aware about their high risk behaviors through community-focused HIV prevention programs.



Overall, Knowledge of ABC and BCDEF of HIV prevention and control was low among MLMs. Programs focusing on raising of awareness among MLM needs to be geared up to move towards the vision of Zero HIV in Nepal.

Very few MLMs had accessed and utilized the services provided by PEs/OEs. Therefore, outreach activities, mobile HTC and STI services should be organized to increase the utilization of MLMs in migration dense districts.

IBBS Key Indicators among MLMs

| IBBS Key Indicators | | Western (N=360) | Mid to Far Western (N=360) |
|---|-------|--------------------|-------------------------------------|
| HIV Prevalence | % | 0.3 | 0.6 |
| Age <20 years | % | 8.3 | 5.3 |
| Illiterate | % | 4.4 | 20.0 |
| Ever married | % | 74.4 | 88.1 |
| Median age of marriage | years | 21 | 20 |
| Median age at first sex year | years | 20 | 18 |
| Ever had sex with FSW | % | 15.4 | 19.5 |
| Ever had sex with FSW in India | % | 6.1 | 5.6 |
| Migration Destination (Major states only) | | | |
| Maharashtra | % | 10.0 | 80.0 |
| Delhi | % | 30.6 | 43.1 |
| Himanchal | % | 16.9 | 13.1 |
| Gujrat | % | 2.3 | 23.3 |
| Types of Work (Major work only) | | | |
| Factory Labor | % | 39.7 | 90.0 |
| Technical/Operator/Machinery Labor | % | 25.0 | 72.5 |
| Hotel Labor | % | 37.2 | 53.1 |
| Median age of first migration year | years | 22 | 21 |
| Knowledge of HIV preventive measures 'ABC | % | 36.1 | 26.9 |
| Comprehensive knowledge on HIV 'BCDEF' | % | 20.6 | 13.9 |
| Reported STI symptoms in the past year | % | 4.2 | 1.7 |
| Visited STI clinic in the past year | % | 0 | 0.8 |
| MLM reached by PEs/OEs in the past year | % | 2.8 | 2.8 |
| MLM reached with targeted HIV prevention (BCC with OE/PE or DIC or STI Clinics or HTC or community events/trainings or drug | % | 3 | 4.5 |
| Knowledge to receive HIV test result | % | 58 | 40 |
| Knowledge to obtain condom | % | 41 | 34 |
| MLM that have received an HIV test in the last 12 months. | % | 9.5 | 15.5 |

Note: A=Abstinence from sex, B=Being faithful to one partner, C= Consistent use of condom, D=A healthy looking person can be infected, E=Can get HIV from mosquito bite, F=Can't get HIV by sharing meal

For more information, please contact:

National Center for AIDS and STD Control
Teku, Kathmandu
Tel: +977 1 4258219, 4261653
Fax: +977 1 4215149
url: www.ncasc.gov.np