

REPORT ON HIV SENTINEL SURVEILLANCE - 1994

As the prevalence of HIV infection was considered as yet low in Sri Lanka, it was proposed that sentinel surveillance for HIV be carried out annually rather than every 6 months as was done in 1993. One of the major drawbacks in the 1993 survey was the inability to enrol the stipulated sample size from the sentinel population groups during the survey period, particularly from Galle and Ratnapura.

Therefore in 1994, the survey was conducted once from 1st July to 30th September (3 months).

Active surveillance of all sentinel populations using unlinked anonymous testing procedure was the design option used for the 1994 survey except for blood donors where mandatory testing was used.

Sentinel sites

In addition to the sites surveyed in 1993, sentinel sites representing the North Western (Kurunegala) and North Central (Anuradhapura) Provinces, were included in the 1994 survey.

Sentinel Sites - Colombo, Galle, Kurunegala, Kandy, Ratnapura & Anuradhapura

Sentinel Populations

The following population groups were surveyed.

- * Representing high risk behaviour
 - female sex workers (FSW)
 - Male STD clinic attendees
- * Medium risk behaviour
 - new patients diagnosed as having tuberculosis
- * Low risk behaviour
 - blood donors
 - new ante-natal clinic attendees (only from Colombo)

Table 1 - The Sentinel population groups and the sample sizes to be surveyed in 1994

Sentinel Population	Colombo	Kandy	Galle	Ratna-pura	Kurune-gala	Anuradha-pura
Male STD clinic attendees	400	200	100	100	100	100
Female Sex Workers	200	100	100	100	100	100
TB patients	200	100	100	100	100	100
Blood donors	600	600	600	600	600	600
ANC attendees	600	-	-	-	-	-

Testing procedures

All sera were individually tested for HIV antibody. Pooling of sera was not carried out.

Results

Table II - Results of HIV sentinel survey - 1994

Population Group	Colombo		Kandy		Galle		Ratna-pura		Anuradha-pura		Kurune-gala	
	No. tested	No. +ve	No. tested	No. +ve	No. tested	No. +ve	No. tested	No. +ve	No. tested	No. +ve	No. tested	No. +ve
Male STD patients	376	0	200	0	98	0	43	0	96	0	79	0
Female sex workers	200	0	100	0	26	0	27	0	100	0	30	0
TB patients	200	0	49	0	29	0	31	0	76	0	35	0
Blood donors	600	0	600	0	600	0	557	0	600	0	600	0
ANC attendees	600	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Fifty one to sixty three percent of male STD patients surveyed were between 15-29 years of age, while 62% to 74% of all female sex workers were also in the 15-29 year age group.

However over 50% of patients diagnosed with tuberculosis were more than 40 years old in all sentinel sites other than at Ratnapura. In Ratnapura 49% of TB patients were >40 yrs of age. The male to female ratio of TB patients varied from 1.8:1 (in Anuradhapura to 3.8:1 (in Galle).

Ante-natal clinic attendees were surveyed only in Colombo. Their average age was 28 years and 64% were in the 15-29 year age group.

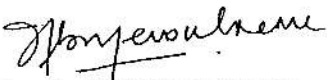
Constraints

Galle, Ratnapura and Kurunegala were unable to enrol the required sample size of male STD patients, female sex workers and TB patients even though the period of surveillance was extended to 3 months.

One factor that may have adversely affected the adequate enrolment of persons could be the general election that was held in Sri Lanka in August 1994. However, this would have influenced all the sentinel sites and not only Ratnapura, Galle and Kurunegala.

Comments

The sentinel surveillance for HIV for 1994 which included a total of 5952 persons representing those practicing high risk, medium risk and low risk behaviours did not yield any HIV positives. While these results appear to be keeping with the fact that Sri Lanka is still enjoying a low prevalence of HIV infection, it is also somewhat worrying. The estimated cumulative HIV antibody positives 1994 was around 5500 to 6000. It is therefore, somewhat surprising that not one positive was detected during the survey.


Dr. I. Abeyewickreme
Consultant Venereologist/Focal Point Surveillance &
Research
STD/AIDS CONTROL PROGRAMME