

Addressing Young People's Concerns about HIV/AIDS and STI through the INTHANOU Hotline



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INTHANOU has contributed to HIV prevention, treatment and care in Cambodia through the operation of its hotline since August 2000. The hotline was set up to provide access to anonymous and confidential quality counseling and information related to HIV and sexually transmitted infections (STI) to people from all walks of life, with a special focus on young people under the age of 25 years. Inthanou started with two phone lines and had by September 2010 expanded to four telephone lines, including a new line for family planning and pregnancy options.

All incoming calls are automatically recorded by the call center for quality control. The profile of callers' and the topic of concern are randomly computerized in a database from every third call. The data is entered by counselors during the conversation, and later analyzed using a statistical software program.

This is the first of a series of newsletters that Inthanou produces to share relevant information emerging from the data collected by the organization's state of the art database. This issue of the newsletter presents disaggregated data based on concerns of young callers aged 15-24. The data presented was collected from 4,214 calls, a third of the total valid calls (12,874) between January to June 2010.

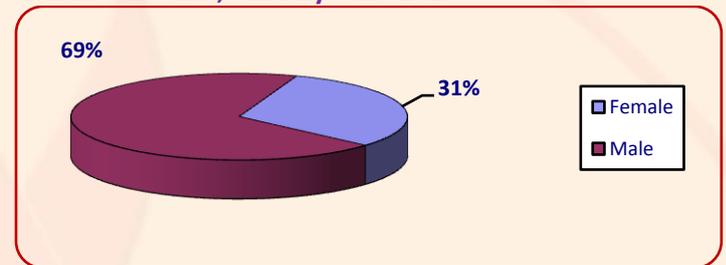
CALLER'S PROFILE

Sex

From January to June 2010, **52.70% of the 4,214 recorded calls were from young people** aged 15-24 years of age. Among these, two third were from young males, and about one third, from young females. 4.3% of calls from young males were males who have sex with other males. Women working in the entertainment venues (bars, karaoke, beer promotion, hotels) accounted for 11% of the total calls from young females (Figure 1).

Notably, **calls from young females have increased steadily** from 20% in 2006 to 25% in 2007, 28% in 2008 and 2009, and 31% in the first six months of 2010.

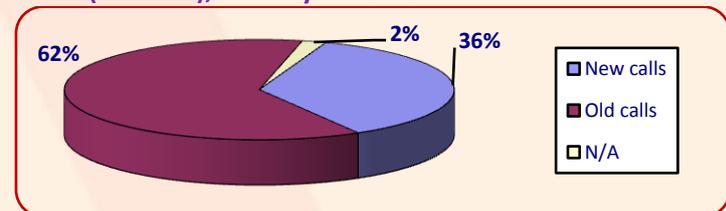
Figure 1: Sex of young people (n=2,221) who called the Inthanou hotline, January-June 2010



Type of calls

62% of calls from young people were from callers who had previously sought advice from the hotline. About 36% were calls from new young people, their first calls (Figure 2).

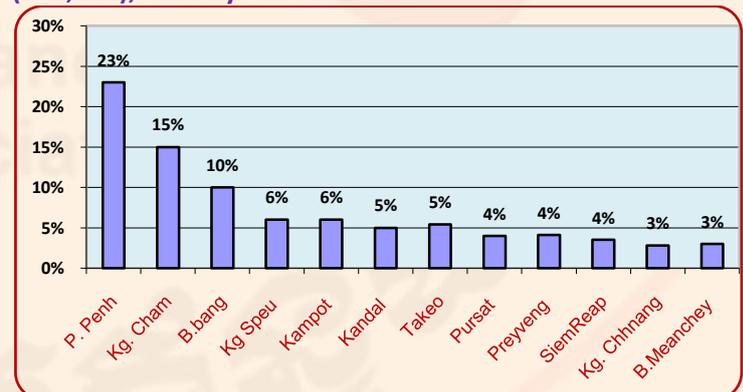
Figure 2: Old and new callers among young people aged 15-24 (n=2,221), January-June 2010



Origin of calls

The Hotline received calls from all parts of the country, and sometimes from callers in neighboring countries. During this period, nearly a quarter of calls were from Phnom Penh (23%), followed by Kampong Cham (15%) and Battambang (10%). Only a few calls were from some remote areas (Figure 3). Calls less than 3% are not presented in the figure.

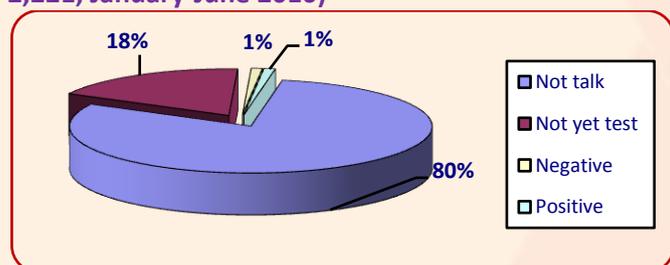
Figure 3: Geographical coverage of calls from young people (n=2,221), January-June 2010



Discussions on HIV testing

The majority of young callers sought information on the sexual transmission of HIV. **Approximately 20% of young people talked about HIV testing, with 18 % sharing that they have not tested for HIV.** Of those who talked about HIV testing, 35% were young females. Notably, the interest of young people to talk about HIV testing has increased compared to the previous three years (12%, 13% and 20% in 2007, 2008 and 2009, respectively) (Figure 4).

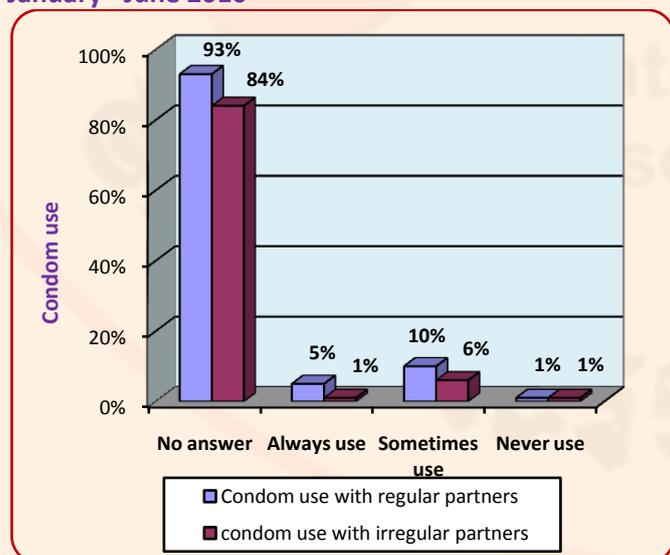
Figure 4: Discussion on HIV testing of young people (n= 2,221, January-June 2010)



Discussion on sexual behaviors

Nearly 24% of young people asked questions related to sexual behaviors. Questions about vaginal sex accounted for 63%, followed by those related to oral and vaginal sex (3.6%), oral and anal sex (1.9%), oral sex alone (1.1%) and anal sex alone (0.6%). Seven percent of the young callers indicated that they had sex with regular partners and 16 % had sexual relationships with occasional partners. Only 5.4 % of those who had sex reported consistent condom use with irregular partners (Figure 5).

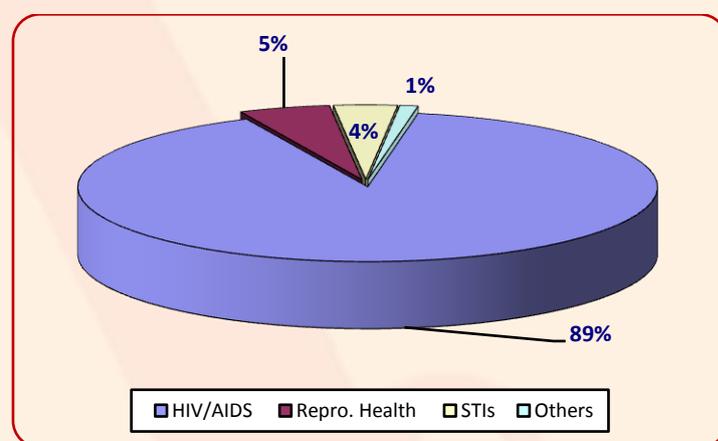
Figure 5: Young people talking about condom practice, January –June 2010



CALL INFORMATION

Of the 89% of young people who contacted hotline counselors to discuss HIV related issues, 21 % asked questions about condoms for HIV prevention. Of this, only 23 % were females. Nine percent of them were interested in issues related to reproductive health and sexually transmitted infections (Figure 6). Eighty four percent of callers wanted correct information. Nineteen percent of them required counseling and support for referral to services. Voluntary counseling and testing and STI diagnosis and treatment were among the most needed services.

Figure 6: Topic concerned by young people, January-June 2010



WHAT'S NEXT?

INTHANOU uses innovative approaches to reach young most at risk females and males to help prevent HIV infections, promote access to early HIV testing, STI treatment and access to ARVs and opportunistic infection services. In the future, the hotline seeks to increase even further the number of new calls through innovative communication campaigns, and to continue to offer correct information and quality confidential counseling to people from all walks of life.

We hope that this information will be useful to our partners, as it provides an insight into the trends and needs of target populations and service users.

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