SOCIOCULTURAL FACTORS AND RISK PERCEPTIONS AMONG MAYAN WOMEN IN THE GUATEMALA HIGHLANDS

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OBJECTIVE
To identify sociocultural factors and AIDS risk perceptions that place Mayan women in the Guatemalan Highlands at risk for HIV

METHODS
• Descriptive study in October 1999
• 210 Mayan mothers with children under 2 years old from 30 randomly selected communities in the department of Quetzaltenango
• Structured survey administered through individual interviews in Spanish and/or Mam (a local Indigenous language)
• 60% of the women have husbands who migrate to the Guatemalan Pacific Coast for seasonal agricultural work

RESULTS
HIV KNOWLEDGE (N=210)
Mayan Women who Know that HIV/AIDS Exists

MAYAN WOMEN HAVE RECEIVED INFORMATION ABOUT HIV/AIDS (N=98)
Through Which Communication Sources

ARE MAYAN WOMEN AT RISK FOR HIV/AIDS INFECTION? (N=98)

MAYAN WOMEN MENTIONED THE FOLLOWING FORMS OF STI AND HIV PREVENTION (N=98)

REASONS WHY MAYAN WOMEN ARE VULNERABLE TO HIV/AIDS (N=98)

WHERE DO MAYAN WOMEN GO FOR STI TREATMENT? (N=24)

CONCLUSIONS
• Most of these Mayan women reported knowledge of HIV/AIDS
• Sociocultural factors can influence and continue to affect women in their capacity to make changes that would lower their risk for HIV and other STIs.
• It is necessary to implement interventions that are based upon their daily lives and level of knowledge of Mayan women.

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