The Cambodian Young Women’s Health Study (YWHS) is a study of young women in Phnom Penh who work in the sex and entertainment sectors, and have high risk of HIV and other sexually transmitted infections (STI).

We describe the collaborative leadership framework we have used to successfully join community-based, governmental, and research organizations in the design and implementation of this prospective study, as well as some key findings.

The Cambodia-based team includes the National Center for HIV, AIDS, Dermatology and STD (NCHADS) and the Cambodia Women’s Development Agency (CWDA), a leading women’s advocacy organization.

They share responsibility for project implementation, participant recruitment and retention, collection of clinical and behavioral data, outreach, and participant referrals.

Study procedures are at a government clinic staffed by clinicians, interviewers, HIV counselors, and outreach workers.

Supporting non-research activities are held at a community-based site.

Both groups aim to develop HIV research and service needs responsive to participants.

Issues

• The Cambodian Young Women’s Health Study (YWHS) is a study of young women in Phnom Penh who work in the sex and entertainment sectors, and have high risk of HIV and other sexually transmitted infections (STI).

• We describe the collaborative leadership framework we have used to successfully join community-based, governmental, and research organizations in the design and implementation of this prospective study, as well as some key findings.

Lessons Learned

• Between April and August 2007, 200 women were recruited for study participation and 160 (80%) women enrolled; 23% were HIV-positive.

• Participants returned for quarterly study visits for one year, which included screening for HIV and STI.

• Retention for the study has been successful: 130 (81%) of enrolled women returned to the NCHADS clinic for the 3 month study visit, 120 (75%) at 6 months, 112 (70%) at 9 months, 101 (63%) for the 12 month visit.

• In all, CWDA has provided a total of 1,430 follow-up encounters to participants, including community meetings to discuss the YWHS, educational, skills-building and leadership workshops, and general counseling and support.

• Of the 37 HIV positive women in the study, 70% followed up with referrals to HIV care at government and non-government supported clinics.

Description

• The Cambodia-based team includes the National Center for HIV, AIDS, Dermatology and STD (NCHADS) and the Cambodia Women’s Development Agency (CWDA), a leading women’s advocacy organization.

• They share responsibility for project implementation, participant recruitment and retention, collection of clinical and behavioral data, outreach, and participant referrals.

• Study procedures are at a government clinic staffed by clinicians, interviewers, HIV counselors, and outreach workers.

• Supporting non-research activities are held at a community-based site.

The Next Steps

The operational partnership has been successful in all areas including study planning, operations management, implementation of data collection, and grant writing. Young women participating in the YWHS benefit from the collaborative team experience in conducting epidemiological, and clinical studies as well as community-based outreach and HIV prevention in Cambodia.

Financial support. This work was supported by NIH/NIAID grant U01 AI054241-03

University of California San Francisco

UCSF AIDS Research Institute

National Centre in HIV Epidemiology & Clinical Research, University of New South Wales

MINISTRY OF HEALTH OF THE KINGDOM OF CAMBODIA

National Center for HIV/AIDS, Dermatology and STDs