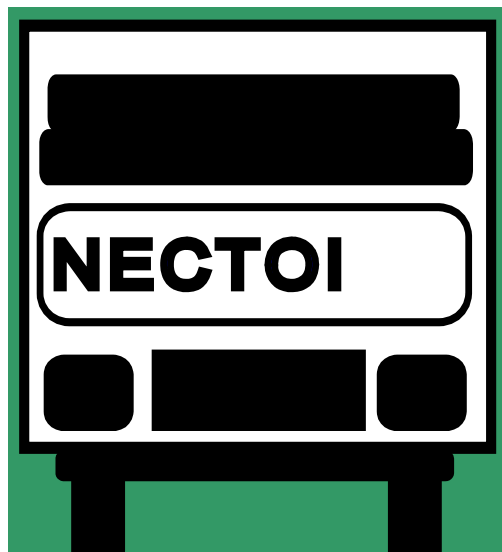




“Analysis of the causes and patterns of high risk heterosexual behaviors among long distance truck drivers in Zimbabwe”



NATIONAL EMPLOYMENT COUNCIL FOR THE TRANSPORT OPERATING INDUSTRY

SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS

NECTOI under the project “Amplifying the voices of people affected by HIV” conducted the above research in Beit bridge; Ngundu; Victoria Falls; Chirundu; Elephant Walk; Hwange; Mutare and; Nyamapanda in Zimbabwe

This study sought to fill in a knowledge gap through examining the various causes of High risk heterosexual behaviors (HRHSBs) among Long distance truck drivers (LDTDs) in a manner that permits direct comparison of the

Mixed method approach combining both quantitative and qualitative methodologies were used.

Qualitative methodologies (Key Informant Interviews & In-depth Interviews) to establish perceptions on the sexual behaviors of LDTDs)

Quantitative survey questionnaire was used to collect quantitative data on LDTDs behaviors

LDTDs being approached by sex workers

- 61.3% always being approached by SWs
- 63% of those being approached ended up agreeing to have sex
- Being approached by sex workers was strongly associated with HRHSB

Alcohol use

- 53.9% of the drivers who participated drink alcohol
- Drinking enables men to easily invite women especially sex workers to join them, and this is part of the sexual transaction.
- The sex workers find LDTDs when they are drunk, lonely or otherwise vulnerable and can be very persistent.
- Interaction with sex workers exposes LDTDs to high risk sexual behavior for instance unprotected casual sex or commercial sex

Sexual enhancement substances

- 31% of the LDTD in this study reported that they used sexual enhancement substances (SES)
- 7.6% of these LDTDs reporting that if they use SESs they do not need to use condoms,
- 79.9% reported that they use condoms for all the substances.
- Common sexual enhancement products mentioned in this study were Congo Dust, Gonazororo and Enzoy. Gonazororo is extracted from the baobab fruit (Malambe) and Enzoy is an energy powder.
- Common along Bulawayo-Vic Falls and Chirundu-Harare corridors.

Characteristics of respondents

- 426 respondents (long distance truck drivers)
- The main passageways mentioned -located in 6 provinces in Zimbabwe
- The majority of LDTDs were aged 30 years and above (68%) and the rest were aged below 29 years (32%).
- 77.7% had completed secondary education. Overall, 96.55% of the respondents were literate
- The majority (91.8%) of the respondents were married at the time of this study while 4% and 3.8% were divorced and separated respectively

Time variability

- Time variability or days spent away from home/family
- Drivers sometimes drive long distances before they can get a chance to go home to be with their families
- The length of time spent away from home was also increased by border inefficiencies
- Suggestion that there is a trend for those ‘on the road’ for long periods to have more recourse to sex workers than

those who spend less time on the road and more time at home.

Level of education of LDTDs

- 77.7% had completed secondary education
- Those with college or university education was at 8.7%
- Those with no formal education stood at 3.5%
- The lower the education the higher the likelihood of engaging in high risk sexual behaviour

Some key study recommendations

- ✘ While surveillance is difficult for mobile populations including long distance truck drivers Zimbabwe needs to conduct a nationwide sero-prevalence survey to establish HIV prevalence among long distance truck drivers and their assistants.
- ✘ Form a cohort of long distance truck drivers in Zimbabwe to test and monitor an evidence-based package of interventions to establish their effectiveness.
- ✘ Support the revision on the 2002 transport sector HIV policy to align with the ZNASP III and the changing HIV epidemiological landscape as well as high impact cost effective interventions such as the UNAIDS 90-90-90 Model.
- ✘ Formulate and enforce minimum standards for a truck stop 'model' that will reduce high risk heterosexual behavior and allocate appropriate funding for implementation. These standards should be in line with the **Regional Minimum Standards and Brand for HIV and other Health Services along Road Transport Corridors in the SADC Region (RMSB)**.
- ✘ Intensify engagement/advocacy with truck company owners in order to facilitate that a supportive work environment that will support a LDTD to reduce high risk sexual behaviors is availed. This should focus on significantly reducing average time spent away from home while on work by the LDTD.
- ✘ Mapping to identify existing HIV and AIDS responses or interventions targeting long distance truck drivers along transport corridors in Zimbabwe and, specifically,
 - a. to identify key actors in responses (*who*);
 - b. take an inventory of projects and programs for LDTDs in transport corridors, their objectives and achievements (*what*) and;
 - c. Establish the reach of existing HIV programs (*where*).
- ✘ In addition, while most truck company-based interventions including NECTOI have trained peer educators from among the companies' drivers and support personnel: mechanics, dock workers and administration, there is an urgent and important need to increase direct contact with the truck drivers who find themselves along the transport corridors away from their homes.
- ✘ Continue to commission operational research to generate evidence to influence risk sexual behaviors among long distance truck drivers.
- ✘ Access to targeted, integrated health services including HIV: Set up 'long distance truck driver-friendly' integrated health services providing access to integrated services, paying particular attention to location and operating hours, and the preferences of long distance truck drivers regarding service packages. Learning may be derived from Nyamapanda, Victoria Falls, Chirundu and Forbes Border Posts truck stops
- ✘ LDTD Population census: Reliable population size estimates for LDTDs in Zimbabwe is necessary in order to programme for these populations accurately. This should be carried out jointly by government, key stakeholders and technical experts.

Evidence from this comprehensive behavioral study suggests that long distance truck drivers in Zimbabwe are at an elevated risk of HIV infection than the general population due to work-related characteristics



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