

Experiences of Most at Risk Populations Participated in Couples HIV Counseling and Testing (CHCT) in Bali, Indonesia: What Happened After The Test?

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Background:

- The majority of most-at-risk populations (MARP) in Bali are still reluctant to participate in couples HIV counseling and testing (CHCT) as it could result in violence or divorce.
- The study explored the experiences and the post-test relationships of MARP who participated in CHCT in 2013.

Methods:

- A qualitative study was conducted in July-December 2013 through:
 - In-depth interviews with 22 couples who participated in CHCT (consisted of men who have sex with men (MSM), female sex workers and their partners)
 - Four focus group discussions with counselors and outreach workers
- Data were analysed thematically.

Results:

- The issue of separation after the test mostly occurred among MSM, unmarried, and/or discordant couples.
- Many couples; however, were still in their relationships even though the quality of the relationships were uncertain.
- Some unmarried discordant couples decided to continue their relationships because they have a strong commitment to support to each other.
- Some couples were suspicious to their partner regarding their risk behavior and HIV status; however, openness in the relationship communication and acceptance of their partner provided better response after the test, even when the test result was discordant.
- There were positive concordant couples who also choose to continue their relationships; but they expressed their dilemma in having children.
- Negative concordant couples generally had the lowest concern compared to the others; however, feeling suspicious to their partner's risk behavior and the possibility of their partner to be HIV positive may influence their future relationship.

Conclusion:

Issues of separation after the CHCT occurred among some couples; however, commitment, good communication, and acceptance of partner influence couples to continue their relationships. It implies the important role of counselors in emphasizing those aspects during counseling sessions while discussing the possible risk behavior and the test result.



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