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PLANNING CLINIC.

SUCHADA SRIPUTTHA: PARTICIPATORY LEARNING: A STRATEGY FOR IMPROVED KNOWLEDGE, ATTITUDE AND PRACTICE ON SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED DISEASES IN WOMEN AND THEIR SPOUSES IN THE FAMILY PLANNING CLINIC, PHUWIANG HOSPITAL, THAILAND. THESIS ADVISOR: RATANA SOMRONGTHONG, M.A., 67pp. ISBN 974-9599-20-9

This study aimed to assess whether the participatory learning technique could be used to improve the knowledge, attitude, and practice of sexually transmitted diseases (STDs). Fifty women who tested positive by pap smear for vaginal fungus and Trichomonas, together with their husbands, volunteered as study subjects. The average age of the females was 32.6 years, and 37.5 years for males. The majority of the subjects (67%) had elementary level education; 70% were married, and 19% were married but occasionally lived apart. The two most common occupations were in agriculture (45%) and labor (25%). The average annual income per household was 6,745 Baht. Sixty-one percent (61%) of the subjects reported having some knowledge about STDs, but that was mostly related to HIV/AIDS. The most common source of knowledge was television programs (21%). The volunteered couples were enrolled into the participatory educational program from May to September 2002.

Pre- and post-test scores revealed significantly improved knowledge and attitude about STDs, at $p = 0.01$ for both categories. The results also showed that women in the study had increased levels of self-awareness about their illness, while their husbands became more aware of their wives' illness. Both spouses reported that they had changed their STD-preventive behavior. The women felt that they were able to discuss safe sex, or various issues related to sexual intercourse and its associated risks, and that they were able to request that their husbands use condoms.

The results of this study indicated that participatory learning should be utilized with other groups, such as adolescents and housewives. Adolescents could learn how to practice safe sex and other life skills, while housewives could acquire knowledge of STDs and how to negotiate safer sex with their husbands.

Field of study Health Systems Development **Student's signature**

Academic year 2002 **Advisor's signature**