

## **ABSTRACT**

HIV has become a serious problem in Myanmar with increasing trend in low risk female population. This cross sectional descriptive study was conducted from last week of September to second week of October 2012, to assess the levels of knowledge about and attitude towards HIV/AIDS among rural female population of reproductive age in Yenangyaung Township, Magwe Region. A total of 180 respondents from three villages selected by multistage sampling method were face to face interviewed with pretested and structured questionnaires. About half of the respondents were within 35 to 49 years age group and reached primary education level. Most of them earned with agricultural work. Majority of the respondents got HIV/AIDS related knowledge from health care provider. All respondents have heard about HIV infection that can be transmitted from one person to another. Nearly one fourth of respondents had comprehensive knowledge about HIV that is knowledge of three major ways of preventing HIV transmission and three common misconceptions that were HIV transmission by mosquito bite and eating or living together with PLHIV and knew an apparently healthy person could have HIV infection. Half of the respondents knew all three methods of mother to child transmission and that this vertical transmission can be prevented but methods of PMCT could not be stated well. Forty five percent of respondents were in low level of knowledge. Their knowledge about how HIV is transmitted and how to prevent transmission is incomplete and there are still many misconceptions. About two third of respondents had negative attitude towards condom utilization and agreed with at least one of seven discriminatory statements indicating that there is still discrimination towards PLHIV. The rural females with high educational level had good knowledge scores and comprehensive knowledge about HIV who, in turn, had positive attitudes towards condom utilization and PLHIV. That is why the most important way to prevent the rapid transmission of HIV is to raise the level of knowledge about how HIV is transmitted and how to be protected.