ABSTRACT

A cross-sectional study was conducted to assess the factors associated with delayed treatment among patients with sexually transmitted infections (STIs) attending three selected AIDS/STD clinics in Yangon during September to November 2010. All patients above 18 years were chosen after clinical confirmation. Interviews were performed in privacy and interviewer and interviewee were of the same sex. Written informed consent was obtained after proper and thorough explanation.

Of the 116 respondents under study, 61.2% were male. The middle age group (between 35-45 years) were the highest group (33.6%) and 69.8% was from central AIDS/STD clinic (Latha). Clinically, half of the patients were diagnosed as Syphilis and 19.8% as Gonorrhoea.

STIs knowledge of the respondents was under average with a few common mistaken beliefs. About 37.9% had high knowledge level. A total of 103 patients could report time lapse between the onset of symptom(s) to first seeking care. Average delayed duration was 42.52 days (SD= 66.34) with a range of "1 to 365" days. Duration of delay varied with sex, current occupation, previous experiences of STIs, current STI type and knowledge level. Over 69% waited for more than seven days before seeking care. Proportion of delay differed statistically by age groups, current STI symptoms and knowledge level.

Major reasons for delay were low perceived susceptibility (46.9%) and perceived seriousness (75.3%) of STIs and not knowing of where to consult (58%). Different sorts of treatment were taken before consulting at AIDS/STD clinic. Over 41% consulted with general practitioners (GPs) prior to AIDS/STD clinic. Among them, 56.2% were late treatment seekers. Some patients did not get proper treatment although they consulted GPs.

Intensification of health education programmes on STIs is crucial. Refresher training and enhancement of partnership with GPs and private sectors should be strengthened.

{**Key wards:** STIs, Factors associated with delayed treatment**,** Duration of delay, Proportion of delay}