

# Sexual Behavior and Prevalence of Serum Markers

## for Sexually Transmitted Diseases among Tour Guides in Cuzco

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### Objectives:

To describe the sexual behavior and the prevalence of IgG antibodies against several sexually transmitted diseases among tour guides in Cuzco, Peru.

### Methods:

The main tour guide association in Cuzco organized a mandatory re-certification course for tour guides in February 2004. We invited tour guides attending this course to participate in the study. Subjects who volunteered answered a questionnaire and gave a blood sample. Commercial ELISA tests were used for the detection of IgG antibodies against *Chlamydia trachomatis*, herpes simplex virus (HSV) type 2, and *Treponema pallidum*. ELISA tests for the detection of IgG antibodies against HSV type 2 used crude viral antigens.

### Results:

A total of 161 subjects participated in the study. The median age was 32 (interquartile range (IQR): 27-37 years). Half were male and 53.4% were single. The median time working as a tour guide was 3 years (IQR: 2-6 years); 34.8% worked as full-time tour guides and the tour most commonly guided was the Inca trail (74.2%).

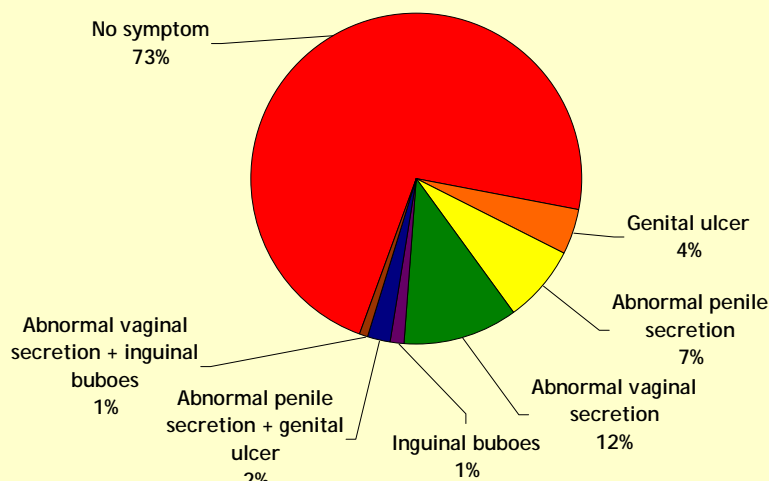
Twenty-five percent admitted that they would have sexual activity with their foreign clients. Casual sexual activity in the previous 12 months was admitted by 65.0% of the participants. The median number of new partners in that period was 2 (IQR: 1-3 partners). Ten percent had had sexual intercourse with a traveler and 15.1% with a sexual worker during the last year. Consistent condom use was reported by 38.1% of the sexually active tour guides.

None of the participants tested positive for *Treponema pallidum*, 15.5% had a positive test for *Chlamydia trachomatis*, and 88.2% for herpes simplex virus type 2.

### Conclusions

The participating tour guides constitute a sexually active group. Through the interaction with both travelers and sexual workers, this group has the potential to spread sexually transmitted diseases in and outside of Peru. A high prevalence of serum markers for sexually transmitted diseases is found in this population. Due to low specificity of ELISA tests based on crude HSV antigens, caution should be taken when interpreting these results.

### Reported History of Symptoms Compatible with STD



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