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Short Communication

Use of Mapping Techniques to Prevent and Monitor Infectious Diseases

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1. Introduction

Geographic information systems (GIS) provide a strong framework to monitor health problems within the public health community. It is important to maintain a robust STI surveillance system in order to assess the changing HIV risk in various geographical and risk populations [1,2].GIS is a system to display spatial data [3].Spatial datarefers to any data that can be mapped. Maps of infectious disease prevalence can be made to monitor spread of these diseases. Preventive techniques can be implemented in at risk areas to reduce the economic burden and to improve public health. A study was done by Kangathetal [2,4] in Sri Lanka shows the importance of use of GIS to study sexually transmitted diseases. This study was a pioneering study in Sri Lanka to overview of disease outbreak in different climatic regions of Sri Lanka.

2. Materials and Methods

We mailed an e-mail based survey of six questions to physicians working in public health centers in northern, north central and eastern province. Out of 75 physicians, 53 physicians were responded to our survey. The response was analyzed to get a better understanding of GIS based preventive techniques. Table 1 shows the questions we used for the survey.

3. Results

46 of the 53 physicians contacted responded to the survey. 92.3% of the physicians showed lack of awareness to use of GIS based techniques to monitor and develop preventive care strategies. The 62 % of physicians have been used internet for searching medicines and email and have not aware of GIS as science to apply for their public health databases.

4. Conclusion

Physicians involved in public health should be educated and given training in utilizing GIS as a tool to develop prevention strategies and identify hotspots to make awareness program in vulnerable regions

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