

Incidence of Consanguinity and its Trend in a Mendelian Population of Kerala

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ABSTRACT To determine the prevalence, pattern and trend of consanguinity an interview study was conducted (during 1993-1996) among the Pulayas of Alappuzha district of the state of Kerala. Of 601 marriages investigated 9.48 percent were consanguineous with an average coefficient of kinship of $a = 0.00599$. First cousin marriages were the most common (7.65%) with high incidence of Patrilateral cross cousin union (4.66%), followed by second cousin (1.66%) and first cousin once removed (0.17%). Regional differences are conspicuous, rate of consanguinity was found to be lower for urban areas (6.56%) relative to those in rural areas (11.62%). A consistent declining trend in consanguinity over time was not evident in the community, suggests that their propensity to marry a relative has not changed much over time. Because such marriages are part of a deeply rooted cultural trait among them offering significant social and economic benefits.