Violence perpetration against female sex workers in Thailand: Contextual data for intervention development and trauma-informed delivery of health services

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Background
- In Thailand and elsewhere, female sex workers (FSWs), suffer high rates of violence and coercive sex from clients, intimate partners, and police.
- It is imperative to understand the contexts in which violence occurs and respond with evidence-based violence prevention programs.
- To date, data are limited, and few violence prevention and response interventions for FSWs have been empirically tested.
- Ongoing HIV outreach represents an untapped avenue for violence-related support and safety planning.

Objectives
- To implement and evaluate a community-designed safety promotion intervention among FSW as part of routine sexual health outreach activities in Pattaya, Thailand.
- To test the feasibility and acceptability of adding a violence component to existing outreach, and identify the potential challenges and refinements necessary for broader implementation.

Study Innovations
- Participants were given a “reward card” at baseline, with a unique identifying code, and given stamps on the card for completing intervention sessions. Cards served the dual purpose of incentivizing completion of intervention and measuring intervention “dose” by participant.
- After multiple sensitization trainings, police volunteers accompanied SWING outreach workers into the field to foster police support and humanize FSW.

Results (baseline)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Safety behaviors used in past three months</th>
<th>Frequency (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Make an agreement about condom use before going out with the client</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderate yourself to not drink too much</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avoid clients that are too drunk</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Share the bad experiences you may have with friends or others at the bar to warn them</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Make an agreement about type of sex before going out with client</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Let someone at the bar know the place you are going with the client</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Get more information about who the client is</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Send message to someone to let them know that you are in an unsafe situation with a client</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Methods: Pre-post survey design
Community partner SWING is a leading sexual health and rights organization providing services for FSW in Thailand

Results at baseline Implication

Perpetrators
- Clients are a common perpetrator:
  - 24% experienced any type of client violence (past 3 months)
  - 14% reporting a client has brought more people to have sex than was agreed upon (ever)
- High condom coercion:
  - 23% reporting a client agreed to use a condom but then removed it later (ever)

Violence Response
- Low knowledge of services:
  - 81% did not know of any organization that offers support for FSW who experience violence
- Seeking help:
  - 66% agreed that if they experienced sexual violence they could seek help from the police
  - 89% agreed that if they experienced violence they could seek help from their Mamasan

Alcohol
- High alcohol use at work:
  - 56% of participants very often always drink alcohol when working

Key Findings/ Intervention Implications

Interventions should:
- Opportunity to improve FSW’s knowledge and linkage to available violence services
- FSW report some trust in disclosing violence to police and Mamasans. These groups should be trained and included in the violence response.

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