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Factors Influencing Condom Use among Male Clients of Female Sex Workers in Haiti

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BACKGROUND

Male Haitian clients of female sex workers (FSWs) have a higher prevalence of HIV than the general population (7.2% vs. 2.2%) and serve as a bridging population between FSWs and other partners. Following the success of Condomania, male clients requested that PSI expand the program to include prevention activities targeted towards them.

METHODS

- To better understand drivers and barriers to condom use among male clients and to develop client-centered messaging, PSI/Haiti conducted a qualitative research study based on narrative techniques, following its Framework on Qualitative Research for Social Marketing (FoQus) methodology.
- Male clients were recruited and trained as interviewers, and each interviewed two of their peers.
- Participants completed a photonarrative or spoken narrative on sex seeking practices and a one-on-one in-depth interview.

RESULTS

- A total of 24 clients were interviewed.
- The archetypal client is in his 20s, unemployed or underemployed, lives with his family, and visits FSWs regularly, often with friend groups.
- Clients demonstrated a low internal locus of control: many feel that in a country with diminished economic hopes, alcohol consumption and sex with FSWs are necessary distractions.
- Condoms were viewed as widely available, and their use was often initiated by FSWs. Few clients implemented other protective strategies, and most felt that abstinence was not a viable choice.
- Condom use was situation-dependent for clients. They did not use with regular or trusted FSWs, and felt that they could discern from experience which FSWs they needed to use a condom with.
- Other factors that influenced condom use decision-making included alcohol consumption and the attractiveness of one's partner.
- Although knowledge of HIV was high, some doubted its existence. Personal risk perception was low, and many felt that if they had not yet experienced a negative consequence of unprotected sex, that they would not in the future.



DESCRIPTION

PSI/Haiti has been promoting and distributing condoms since 1989 and currently works in all 10 geographic areas of Haiti. Since 2006, the Condomania program has conducted interpersonal outreach to FSWs promoting correct and consistent use of male and female condoms to prevent transmission of HIV and other STIs.

"I have sex with sex workers, but at the same time, I have all the necessary information about them. That's why I sometimes don't use condoms." - *Unemployed, inconsistent condom user, 28*

"I don't know any other way to protect yourself besides condoms. Unless I decide to resort to abstinence, which I can't do." - *Student, Consistent condom user, 25*

"There was that particular woman who was so sexy! I had the condom in my hand but for some reason I didn't use it. You know, sometimes you're so hung up on the sex that you forget about the condom!" - *Electrician, inconsistent condom user, 27*

"That's why you mustn't drink too much alcohol so you lose control. You should have control over the moonshine and not let the moonshine control you!" - *Battery salesman, inconsistent condom user, 22*

"I have a neighborhood friend who always gives me advice about condoms. You know, he's a little older than me so he tends to be moralistic with me. When he tells me that I will die of AIDS if I don't decide to use condoms, I tell him that I've been living that way long enough not to worry about that." - *Unemployed, inconsistent condom user, 23*

CONCLUSIONS

- Condomania appears to have been successful in improving FSW initiation of condom use.
- HIV and STI prevention interventions targeting clients will focus on improving perceptions of HIV susceptibility and clients' locus of control for preventing disease. Interventions will also seek to improve condom use in established FSW-client relationships.

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