

Sexual behaviors of Bolivian female sex workers: A survey in six cities

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Sex work in Bolivia



- Ambiguous legal status
- Governmental health regulations in place
 - Require weekly STI exams
 - Health cards are stamped at each exam

HIV and sex work in Bolivia

- HIV prevalence in the general adult population: 0.1%¹
- HIV prevalence among female sex workers (FSW): 0.33%²
 - Chuquisaca: 1.14%
 - Santa Cruz: 0.46%
 - Cochabamba: 0.44%

¹UNAIDS/WHO 2007

²Ministerio de Salud y Deportes 2006

Objectives

- (1) Describe demographic characteristics and work contexts of Bolivian FSW**
- (2) Describe sexual behaviors of Bolivian FSW**

Methods

- **Surveys in public clinics Cochabamba, El Alto, La Paz, Oruro, Santa Cruz y Sucre (Sept 2005 – Jan 2006)**
- **Survey themes:**
 - **Demographic characteristics**
 - **Sexual history and practices**
 - **Work contexts**
 - **Sexual behaviors with:**
 - **Familiar clients**
 - **New clients**
 - **Intimate partners**

Demographic characteristics (1)

	n=1252 (100%)
Median age	25
Less than primary school	311 (24.8)
City	
Oruro	190 (15.2)
Cochabamba	196 (15.7)
Sucre	199 (15.9)
La Paz	201 (16.1)
El Alto	231 (18.5)
Santa Cruz	235 (18.8)

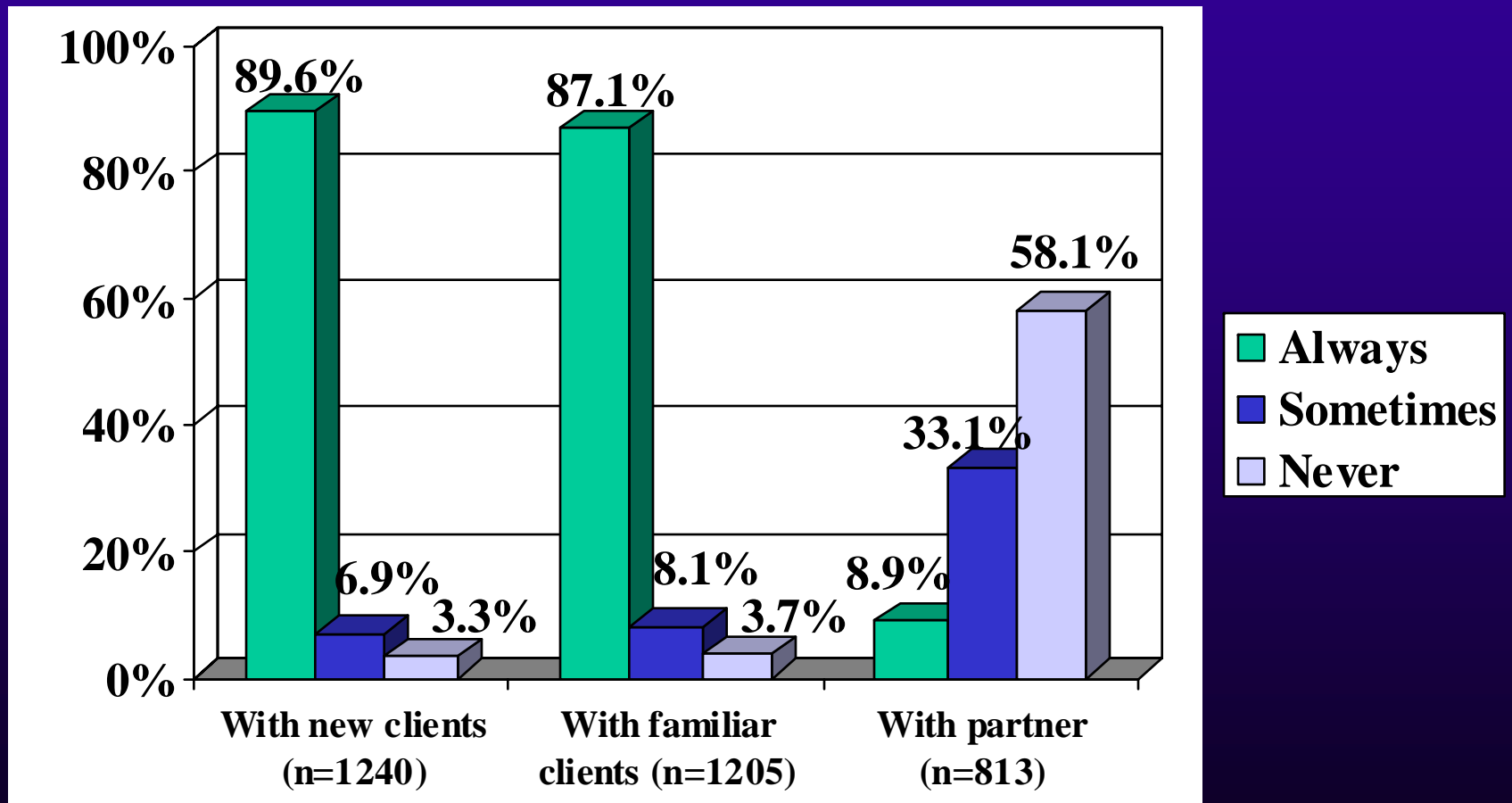
Demographic characteristics (2)

	n=1252 (100%)
Civil status	
Single	750 (59.9)
Married	47 (3.8)
Cohabiting	254 (20.3)
Separated/divorced/widowed	200 (16.0)
Have live children	947 (75.6)

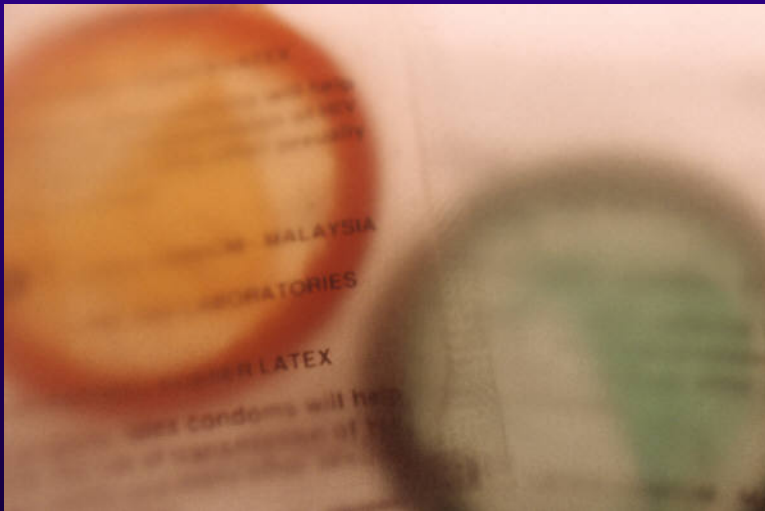
Work context

	Middle/higher class setting n=400 (32%)	Middle/lower class setting n=793 (63%)	Street n=24 (2%)
3 or more financial dependents	187 (46.8)	441 (55.6)	19 (79.2)
Average # of working days per week	4.6 ± 1.7	4.9 ± 1.7	4.8 ± 1.4
Average earnings on a “good day” (USD)	\$71.00 ± 161.00	\$40.00 ± 32.60	\$25.00 ± 20.50
Average earnings on a “bad day” (USD)	\$14.75 ± 101.00	\$8.00 ± 8.75	\$7.00 ± 3.50

Condom use in the past month



Most common reasons for never using condoms with partners (n=472)



- Partner seemed healthy (75.8%)
- Partner did not want to (67.2%)
- Participant herself did not want to (48.5%)
- Neither participant nor partner wanted to (70.1%)
- Did not think about it (29.0%)

Predictive factors for consistent condom use with partner (n=813)

	Adjusted OR	CI 95%
Recruitment in Oruro	3.23	(1.77-5.90)
User of male condom as birth control method	3.13	(1.68-5.84)
>5 clients per day	1.85	(1.09-3.12)
Previous STI diagnosis	0.55	(0.32-0.93)
Cohabiting	0.43	(0.22-0.85)

Predictive factors for consistent condom use with familiar clients (n=1172)

	Adjusted OR	CI 95%
Recruitment in Cochabamba	2.74	(1.05-7.15)
Recruitment in Santa Cruz	0.18	(0.11-0.29)
Use male condom for birth control	2.87	(1.87-4.39)
Always have vaginal sex with new clients	2.97	(2.14-4.14)

Predictive factors for consistent condom use with new clients (n=1237)

	Adjusted OR	CI 95%
Recruitment in El Alto	11.22	(2.67-42.07)
Recruitment in La Paz	8.56	(1.74-42.07)
Recruitment in Santa Cruz	0.12	(0.05-0.30)
Always have vaginal sex with familiar partners	10.14	(5.77-17.79)

Conclusions

- **High levels of condom use with clients**
- **Results suggest an increase in condom use in the past decade**
 - **1993: 58% of La Paz FSW said they always or almost always used condom with new clients**
 - **2005: 98% of La Paz FSW said they always used condoms with new clients**
- **Educational and outreach activities must address promoting condom use with intimate partners**



¡Muchas gracias!

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