

“...And they all think that for money we should do everything” — exploring conflict in sex work settings with immigrant and trafficked female sex workers in Israel

Rachel A. Weber, MPH
Paula Gazit
Vivian Go, PhD
Jonathan Zenilman, MD

Background: Sex work and sexually transmitted infections (STIs)

- Sex workers have been identified worldwide as an important core transmitter group of STIs, including HIV/AIDS
- Clients of sex workers are an important bridge group for transmission of STIs
- HIV and STI prevention efforts among sex workers generally include
 - HIV/STI education
 - Condom promotion
 - Ensuring access to condoms

Background: Violence and STIs among sex workers

- Sex workers experience violence from clients, pimps, and police¹
- Types of violence include
 - Rape
 - Condom removal
 - Physical violence
 - Threats of violence
- Forced sex is related to HIV risk and increases risk of acquiring STIs²
- Violence and conflict inhibit a sex worker's ability to negotiate types of sex and condom use

¹ The Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (2002) Sex work and HIV/AIDS: UNAIDS technical update. Available: http://data.unaids.org/Publications/IRC-pub02/JC705-SexWork-TU_en.pdf. Accessed 16 September 2007

² Maman S, Campbell J, Sweat MD, Gielen AC. The intersections of HIV and violence: directions for future research and interventions. *Soc Sci Med.* 2000 Feb;50(4):459-78. Review.

Background: Prostitution in Israel

- The sex worker population is comprised of native Israelis, legal immigrants, and trafficked persons
- The number of trafficked sex workers from former Soviet states has been estimated to be 3,000-5,000 annually, however, no official numbers are available
- Prostitution is found in the streets, brothels, escort services, discreet apartments, hotels, and massage parlors
- Prostitution is not illegal

RW1

Slide 4

RW1

This slide is better than it looks, but the interesting stuff is what I say on i

1. I talk about why it is so hard to get real numbers of trafficking victims

2. I do a bit people find interesting about prostitution not being illegal, but pimping and owning property where sex is sold are illegal-meaning the sex work is only legal in a very narrow environment (I can stand on a street corner and sell sex, but that's about it)

Rachel Weber, 11/3/2007



Trafficking definition

According to the UN Protocol on Trafficking:

- *The recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons by means of the threat of the use of force of other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation*



Methodology: Study design

Study population:

- Nine sex workers aged 19-53
- Women serviced 1-25 clients per day
- Six were victims of trafficking
- Countries of origin included Russia, Ukraine, and Kazakhstan

Data collection: up to three in-depth interviews conducted in private location

Interviews conducted in Russian

Participants compensated 200 shekel [\$45] per interview

Purposive sampling: Recruitment from STD Clinic (4), Ma'agan shelter (4), and detention center (1)



Methodology: Topics explored

- Work conditions
- Relationships with bosses others at their work location
- Description of and relationships with clients
- Condom use practices
- Causes of conflict
- Experiences of violence



Results

Telling stories of conflict: examples of three sex workers and their experience with violence



Inessa

Inessa is 27 and legally immigrated to Israel. She worked six days a week in a room she privately rented and saw six to eight clients on average per day, 15 on a busy day.

RW2

Slide 9

RW2

Not in the slide, but I also say she is 27 years old and a nurse by training in her home country.

Rachel Weber, 11/3/2007



In Inessa's own words

“If suddenly a man miscalculated his strength, then he may fail a second time [at achieving orgasm] if I have started already [with sexual activity] and then the complaints begin... I am not working or I am working badly, or I am to blame for all his earthly and other-worldly sins.”

“The aggression makes itself apparent in the coarse sex, very course, very audacious and his behavior, the way he looks at the woman, is so demeaning he tries to do everything”

“Suddenly something gets into their head, they start to take off the condoms and splash the sperm in all different corners...”

How rarely does this happen?

“One client like that per three weeks, a month.”



Tatyana

Tatyana is 26 and was trafficked to Israel twice. She worked as an escort and call girl and saw four to ten clients per day. She only had one day off per month.

RW14

Slide 11

RW14 some higher education in business

even after her first bad experience, she still considered a second trafficking to be her best opportunity

Rachel Weber, 11/4/2007



In Tatyana's own words

“...Once I and a girlfriend got to a call to Arabs, they took our phones, locked us and then the driver arrived with a friend and they helped us out. They [the Arabs] didn't want to let us go.”

RW7

“I left when he didn't agree and wanted sex without a condom. I left and made a 'rejection,' and I paid from my own money for this call.”

RW8

“I was treated so cruelly there and I was locked up. And in general, ... I couldn't do anything. But... there was no option to go another place because I did not yet know back then...didn't speak the language and...didn't know anyone...If they went out somewhere, they locked me up in the apartment.”

RW9

Slide 12

RW7 Note: frequent violence reported about Arab clients and some SWs try to avoid them

Due to casual sex not being okay in the Arab community and men not being married until their late 20's or early 30's

Rachel Weber, 11/4/2007

RW8 common for women to be fined- here she was also sometimes penalized by not being allowed to work for a day in addition to the fines- this is a tough penalty for protecting your health when you are trying to pay off your debt and get your freedom/earn more money

Rachel Weber, 11/4/2007

RW9 When she was resold- she had only been in the country six months

Rachel Weber, 11/4/2007



Elena

A 19 year old University student, Elena was trafficked to Israel when she answered an ad to work as a waitress in Germany. She was forced to work as a call girl seven days a week. She worked 14 hour days and serviced 12-20 clients.



In Elena's own words

“...After a few hours we crossed the border and arrived to Tel Aviv. There I was told there what I'm going to do and when I tried to object they threatened me and my family.”

RW11

“...Some clients take it [the condom] off during intercourse and then I just ran to take a shower.”

RW1.

“...A client insisted not to use a condom and raped me when I refused; my boss didn't care because the client paid.”

“Once I was poisoned by a client...Actually I don't remember much. I was half lost, I got my things, left the apartment, the car was waiting outside, by the time I got home I was all shaking, and I couldn't get back to myself during a couple of days.”

RW1:

Slide 14

- RW11** normal to be trafficked through Egypt and cross desert into Israel, for women recruited a home, especially by acquaintances, there is real fear of retribution against their families:
Rachel Weber, 11/4/2007
- RW12** point out this practice routinely reported by women- whether a relatively secure independent, legal worker or a relatively new and vulnerable victim of trafficking (and everyone in between)
Rachel Weber, 11/4/2007
- RW13** it's inaudible in the transcript but she was raped here too. Interviewer didn't ask for more details because she was so upset
Rachel Weber, 11/4/2007

Conclusions:

- Client behavior behind closed doors can be difficult to predict and control, making sex workers vulnerable regardless of other factors
- Sex worker relationships with pimps, drivers, and security personnel can be complicated; their actions may protect or harm sex worker health
- Trafficking victims experience an added dimension of powerlessness that has important implications for programs and policy


VG1

VG1

You could cut this first two bullets, which is already stated in the beginning and not all the a unique of a finding.

I think you should be able to find important threads between the three stories that give analysis to the quotes. The quotes tell the story, your conclusions should really show a level of analysis of the stories. You could start with the third bullet, and then add two more bullets that show what kind of added dimension you are talking about.

Vivian Go, 11/4/2007



"...there's a sense of some fear inside...that something might happen. I try not to think about this, 80, even 90 percent of the time I don't think of this, if I work in good company, if the door is good...I never work alone.... But if there's say, unpleasant feeling, or I see unpleasant people...something hurts inside."

-Inessa



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