

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS:

SURVEYS OF:

MEN WHO HAVE SEX WITH MEN IN JAMAICA &

WOMEN WHO EXCHANGE SEX FOR MONEY

**MEASURE Evaluation
Ministry Of Health
Jamaica**

JULY, 2009

Preliminary Report: Recommendations will be added after discussions of findings with Regions and at National Level.

Table of Contents

MSM Survey Summary..... 3

Sex Worker Survey Summary..... 13

MSM Tables by HIV Status

MSM Tables by Age

Sex Worker Tables

INTRODUCTION TO MSM Survey

There is an urgent need in Jamaica to develop effective prevention programs to limit the spread of HIV. Many approaches are needed to contain the epidemic including targeted approaches for most at risk populations (MARPs). According to UNAIDS these populations include, but are not limited to, injection drug users (IDUs) who share HIV contaminated drug injection equipment, individuals who abuse other substances such as non-injection drugs and alcohol, commercial sex workers (CSWs) and their sex partners, youth and street children, persons detained in corrections facilities, men who have sex with men (MSM) and patrons of high-risk venues (UNAIDS 2007). Prevention efforts require current information about the HIV and STI epidemic within MARPs.

The epidemic in Jamaica has features of both a generalized and concentrated epidemic. It is estimated that, as of 2007, 25,000 persons or approximately 1.3% of the Jamaican adult population is HIV infected and that almost two thirds of HIV infected persons are unaware of their status. HIV prevalence has been estimated to be between 25 and 35% among the MSM population, thus the particular importance of focusing on this high risk population.

METHODS AND FIELDWORK

This report describes the first round of third generation surveillance among a cohort of MSM. Third generation surveillance tracks HIV and STI prevalence among a cross-section of MARPS and also links individuals tested at different points in time through a unique identifier.

There were two phases to the MSM survey. A pilot was done in SERHA which commenced on March 20, 2007 and completed July 17, 2007. The second phase which covered SERHA, SRHA and NERHA commenced on October 26, 2007 and ended January 10, 2008. A total of 201 individuals were interviewed.

The survey included the questionnaire and the collection of biomarkers. Participants could receive results from the biomarker testing in a manner that was acceptable to them. Respondents were tested for gonorrhea, Chlamydia, syphilis, HIV, and trichomoniasis. All participants were asked to voluntarily participate. Those who did not wish to participate could refuse. Those found infected were treated free of charge or, in the case of HIV infection, referred according to the national protocol for treatment. The Ministry of Health provided ethical approval for this surveillance protocol. The questionnaires are included in the appendix.

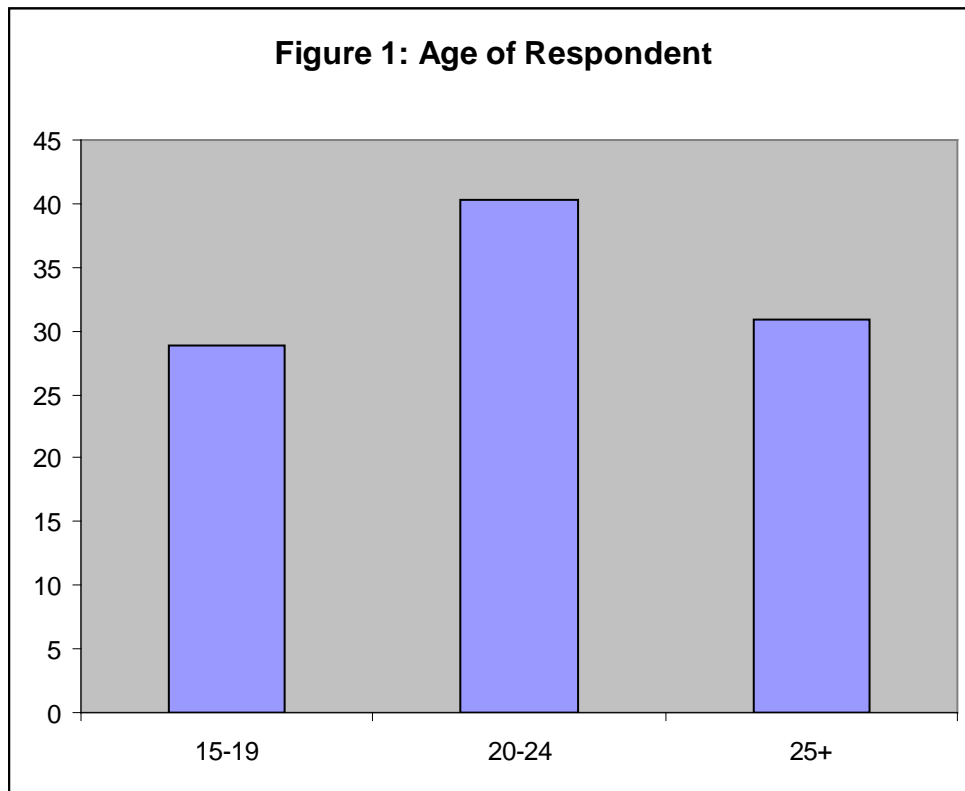
RESULTS

Site Characteristics

Interviewers identified the type of site where each interview was conducted. The most common sites were doctor's private office (18.4%), health center/hospital (16.4%), private home (15.4%), Ministry of Health office (8.5%), street site (7.5%) and recreational park (4.0%).

Respondent Characteristics

Figure 1 shows a breakdown of respondent's by age. About 40% of respondents were between the ages of 20 and 24, 28.9% were 15 to 19 and 30.9% were over 25 years of age.

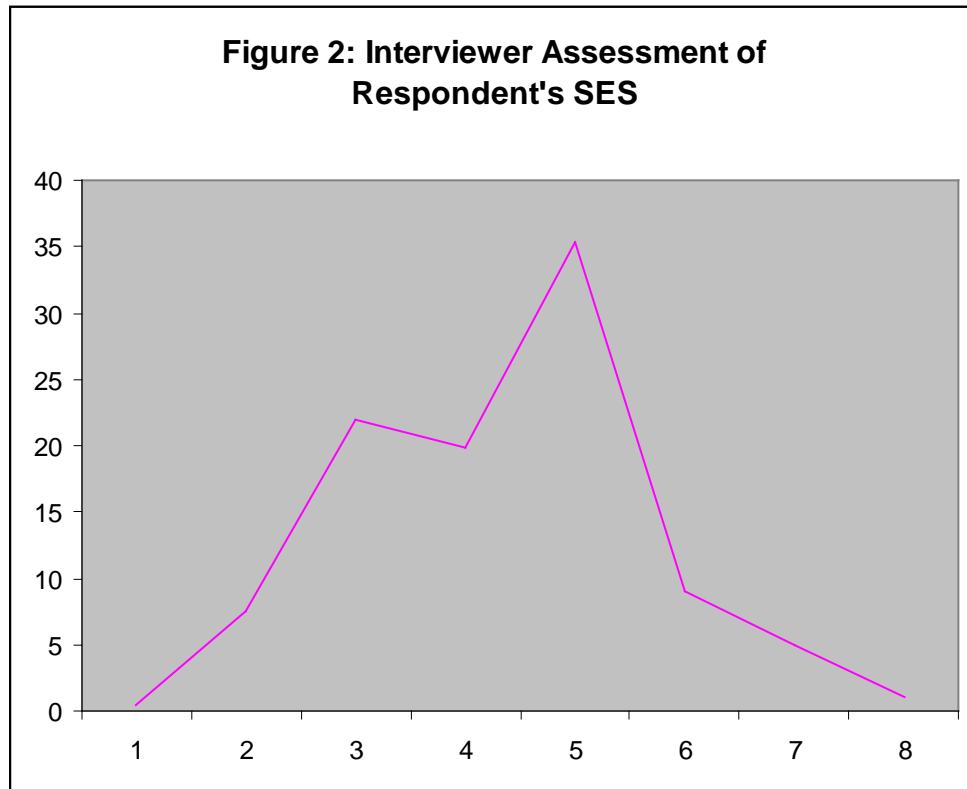


When asked whether they were currently married or living with a woman who is a female sex partner, only 8% of respondent's answered affirmatively. The majority of respondents (83.6%) had no children.

About half (50.7%) of respondents indicated that they were unemployed, 35.3% were working full-time and 13.9% were working part-time. About one-third (33.3%) of respondents indicated that they were currently in school. Those in school were asked what level they were currently in, while those not currently in school were asked the last school/level they attended. Over half of respondents (54.2%) were either currently in or last attended all age/secondary high school. The percentages currently in or last attended

a tertiary level educational institution and skills training were 23.4% and 16.9%, respectively. Over two-thirds (68.2%) had ten or more years of schooling.

Interviewers were trained to assess the socioeconomic status of respondents on a scale of 1-10 with 10 being very rich and 1 being very poor. Figure 2 presents this data and the distribution is presented in Table 2. The mean was 4.3.



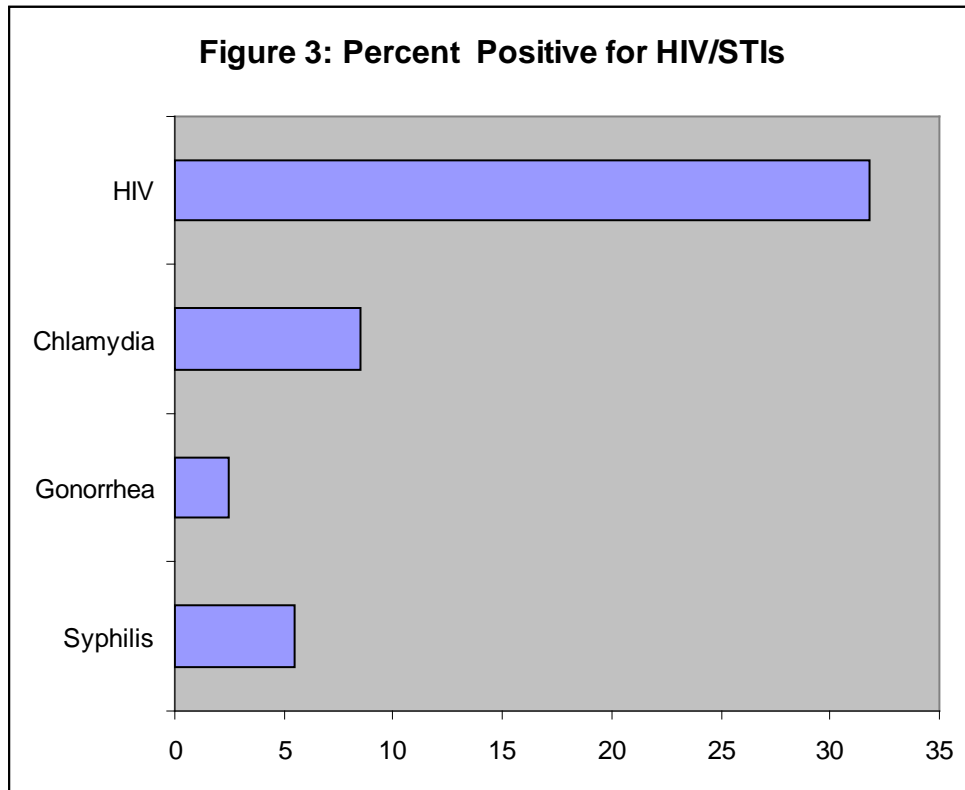
Respondents were also asked if they had ever spent a night in jail or prison and if they ever had to sleep outdoors or in a shelter because of homelessness. Approximately 18% of respondents had ever spent a night in jail or in prison while 15.4% indicated they had ever slept outdoors or in a shelter because of homelessness.

Sexually Transmitted Infections and HIV

Respondents were asked if they had specific STI symptoms currently and also whether they had these symptoms in the past 12 months. The most commonly reported current symptoms were pain with urination (4.8%) and warts (4.8%). The most commonly reported symptoms in the past 12 months were pain with urination (22.9%) and discharge from penis (19.4%). Overall 24.9% of respondents indicated that they had ever been told by a doctor that they had a STI.

Respondents were tested for HIV and several STIs. HIV prevalence was quite high at 31.8%. Prevalences for chlamydia, syphilis and gonorrhea were 8.5%, 5.5% and 2.5%,

respectively. These results are presented in Figure 3. Results were missing for about two-thirds of the respondents for trichomoniasis.



Health Care-Seeking Behavior and HIV Testing

Respondents who currently had symptoms were asked what if anything they had done to treat those symptoms. Those who did not have current symptoms but had symptoms in the past 12 months were asked what if anything they had done to treat the symptoms. Only 20.9% told their main partner, while 20.4% had gone to a private doctor and 11.9% had gone to a health center.

Over half of respondents (57.7%) had an HIV test with 30.8% having had a test within the past 12 months. Most respondents who had ever been tested had gotten the test results, only 4.0% did not get their result. About 15% of respondents did not get counseled when tested for HIV.

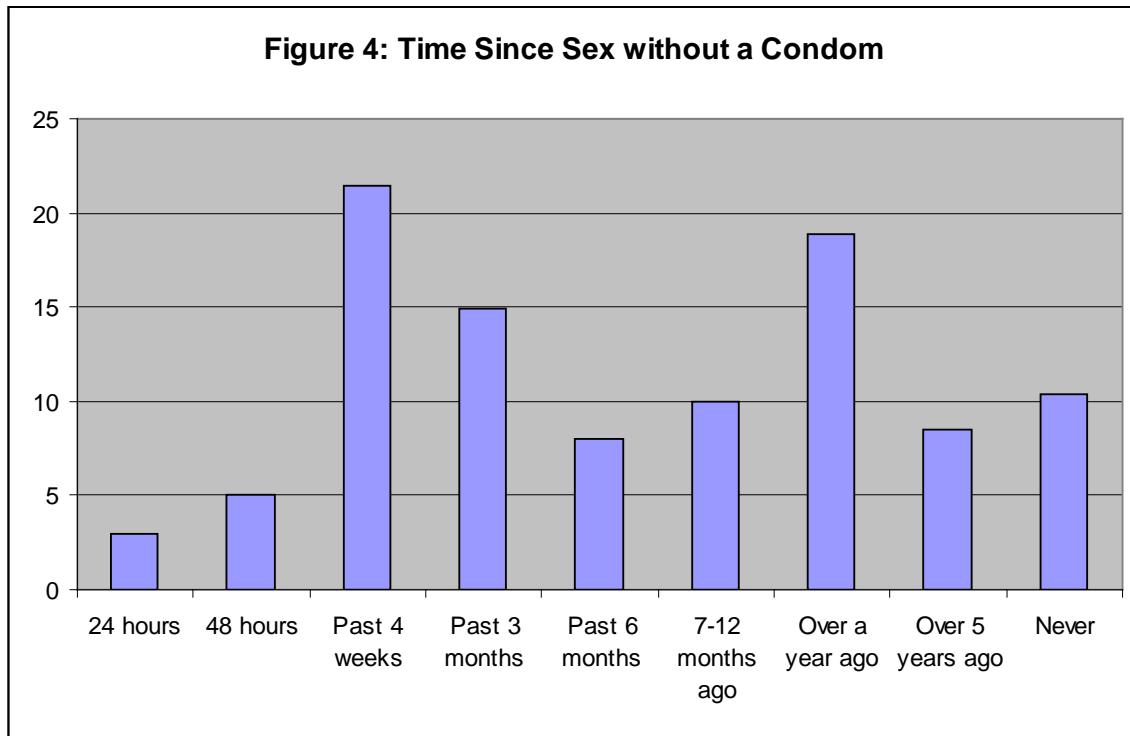
Exposure to HIV Prevention and Self-Reported Ability to Avoid Risk

About two-thirds (66.2%) of respondents had been counseled or attended an HIV/AIDS educational session. Close to two-thirds (64.2%) had seen a risk card. When asked if they were able to avoid risky behaviors, 68.2% strongly agreed and 19.4% somewhat agreed. The vast majority of respondents (97%) believed that a healthy appearing person can have HIV.

Use of Condoms and Lubricants

When asked if they kept condoms at home, 82.6% of respondents answered affirmatively. Interviewers asked respondents if they had a condom with them and if so, could they see it. About 22% of respondents had a condom with them which was seen by the interviewer while 1.0% said they had a condom, but the condom was not seen by the interviewer. This variable was also stratified by HIV status and chlamydia status. For HIV status, 25.0% of those HIV negative had a condom that was seen compared to 20.4% for those who were HIV positive. In terms of chlamydia status 29.4% of those who were negative had a condom now compared to 21.9% of those who were negative.

Respondents were asked about the last time they had sex without a condom. These results are presented in Figure 4. Approximately 29% had indicated they had sex without a condom in the last 4 weeks or less.



Several questions were about lubricants. About 91% indicated that they had ever used a lubricant during anal sex. About 47% of respondents said they always use a lubricant. The most common lubricants were KY jelly (55.7%), lotion (36.8%) and vaseline (32.8%).

Several questions were asked about condom use. Respondents were asked if they had used a condom at last sex with their main male partner. About 29.4% responded affirmatively, however, 46.8% actually reported that they did not have a main male

partner. Respondents were also asked about condom use at last sex with their main female partner. About 10.4% responded affirmatively, however 46.8% reported that they did not have a main female partner. A question was asked on whether the respondent had anal sex at least 3 times with a man other than their main partner, and if so did they use a condom. About 67% indicated that they did not have such a partner while 28.4% indicated that they did have such a partner and used a condom with that partner. Condom use at last sex was the same at 59.2% regardless of whether the respondent was in the bottom or top position.

Respondents were asked about the number of times they had sex without a condom in the past 4 weeks. About 66% indicated they did not have sex without a condom in the past 4 weeks. The mean number was 1.6 with a range from 0 to 50. Respondents were also asked if they had ever not used a condom in the past 4 weeks because they thought they did not need one because of knowing that both oneself and one's partner were either HIV positive or HIV negative. The majority of respondents (87.6%) indicated that this was not a reason for not using condoms.

More than two-thirds of respondents had never exchanged cash for sex, but of those that had about 60% used a condom. Over 78% of respondents said they did not have any difficulty letting a partner know they would like to use a condom. Similarly about 79% indicated they did not have a problem using a condom with a person for whom they had a strong feeling.

Use of Alcohol and Drugs

Respondents were asked several questions about the use of drugs and alcohol in the past 3 months. Few respondents replied that they used crack/cocaine, ecstasy, crystal meth, Viagra or heroin. Whereas 22% indicated some use of ganja/marijuana and 73.2% had some use of alcohol. No respondent had ever injected drugs.

A question was asked about the frequency of visiting bars/clubs in the past 12 months. About 3.5% attended on more than weekly basis, 21.9% on a weekly basis, 22.4% on a monthly basis and 23.4% on a less than once per month basis. About 28.9% had not gone in the past 12 months.

Main and Regular Partnerships and Condom Use

Over half (53.7%) of the men interviewed had a main sexual partner. For 36.8% of respondents, their main partner was male while for 10% their main partner was female. Seven percent had both a male and female main partner. Those having a main male partner were asked when they last had sex with that partner. Similarly those with a main female partner were asked when they last had sex with that partner. These results are presented in Table 8.

About two-thirds of those with a male partner used a condom at last sex, while over 60% of those with a female partner used a condom at last sex. Respondents were also asked if there was another man (other than their main male partner) with whom they had anal sex at least three times in the past three months. About two-thirds (35.8%) answered affirmatively.

Respondents were asked about condom use at last sex with their main partner. About 42% said they used a condom while 31.8% did not have a main partner. They were also asked about condom use with their main partner in the last 3 months. About one-quarter (25.9%) always used a condom while 38.8% indicated having no main partner.

Respondents were also asked whether the last time they had sex with a man was that man their main partner or new partner. About 41% indicated it was their main partner while 31.3% indicated it was a new partner. About 27.4% replied that he was neither a main partner nor a new partner.

Respondents were asked both if they knew their partner's status and whether their partner knew their status. About 40% indicated that their partner knew their status while 36.3% said they knew their partner's status.

Places where Male Partner were Met and Condom Use with Those Partners

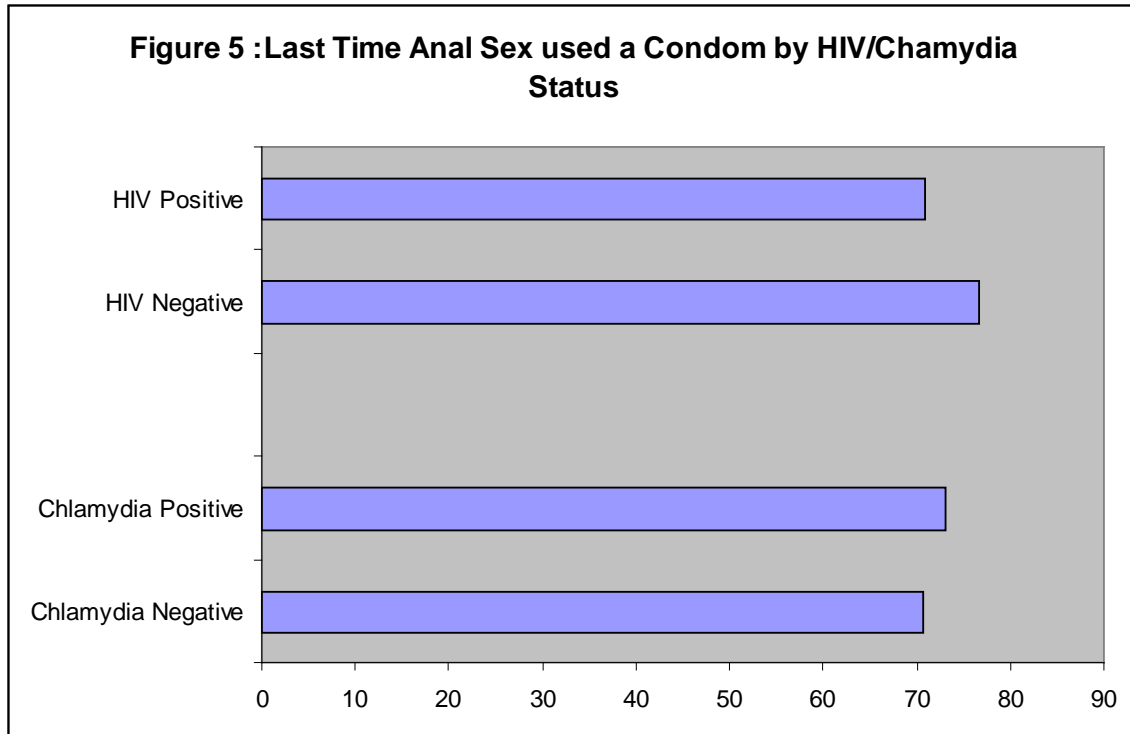
Men were asked if in the past 12 months they had met a partner at an MSM party, private home, bar or club, over the internet or in the street. The most common meeting places were private homes (34.3%) and street (31.9%). They were also asked if they used condoms the first time they had sex with that new partner. In each place the majority used a condom at first sex with their new partner.

Respondents were also asked if they had anal sex with a man in several different locations in Jamaica – Kingston, Ocho Rios, Montego Bay, Negril and Mandeville. Kingston was by far the most commonly mentioned at 75.6%.

Number, Type and Age of Partners in the Past 4 Weeks and 12 Months

Respondents were asked about their number of partners and number of new partners in both the past 4 weeks and the past 12 months. About 42% of men had one partner in the past few weeks while 27.4% had two or more partners in the past two weeks. In terms of new partners 16.4% had one new partner and 9.5% had two new partners in the past 4 weeks. The majority of men (80.1%) had two or more partners in the past year and over half (54.2%) had two or more new partners in the past 12 months.

About three-quarters (72.6%) had used a condom at last anal sex. This variable was also stratified by HIV and chlamydia status. Results are presented in Figure 5.



Respondents were also asked about female partners in the 4 weeks and past 12 months. Approximately 71% had no partners in the past 4 weeks and 43.3% had none in the past 12 months. Over half indicated using a condom with a female partner at last sex. About 16% of respondents indicated that they had sex with a woman they were married to or living with.

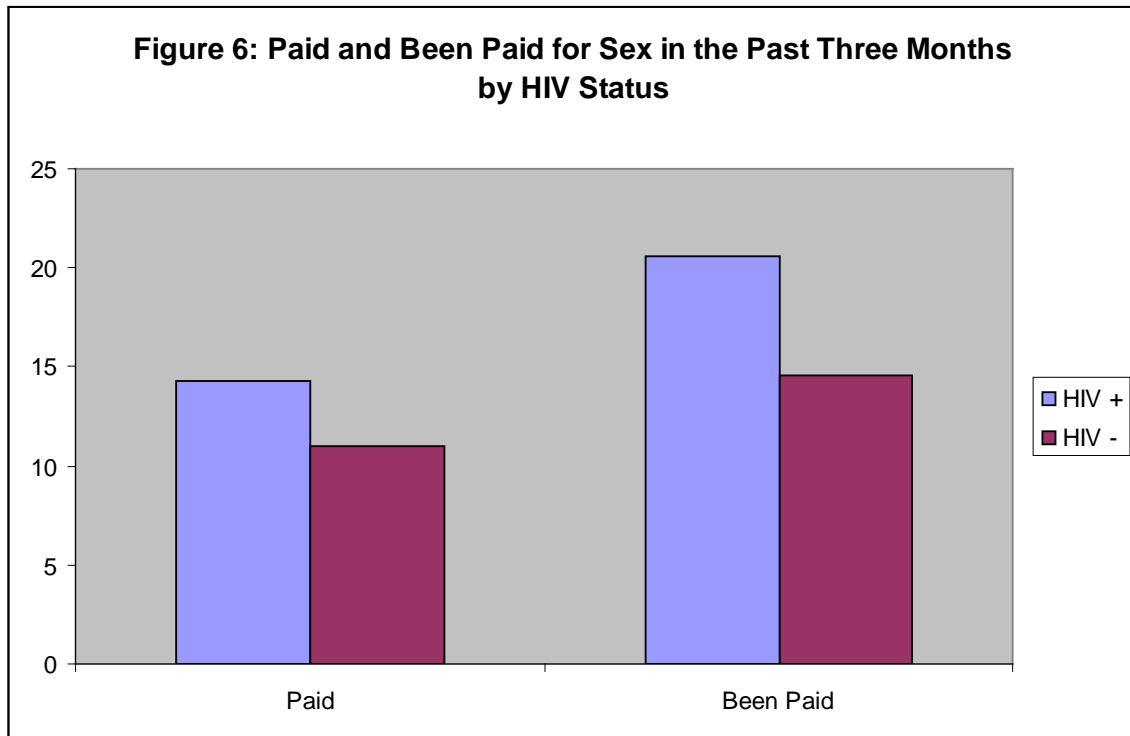
Respondents were asked about risky behaviors including one night stands and having sex with two different men within a 72 hour period. About 59% of respondents answered that they had at least one one-night stand. Sixteen percent had sex with two men within 24 hours.

Respondents were asked the ages of both their youngest and oldest partners. The mean age of the oldest partner was 32.3 with a range from 17 to 79. The mean age of the youngest partner was 20.9 with a range from 13 to 43.

Questions were also asked about whether a respondent had helped a person with whom then had sex with by giving them money for expenses such as lunch or bus fare. Likewise they were asked if they had been helped in the same manner by someone with whom they had sex with. Approximately 39.3% had helped someone while 49.3% had been helped.

When asked if they had paid cash money to a person for sex in the past three months, 11.9% responded affirmatively. Likewise when asked if they had been paid cash money for sex, 9.7% responded affirmatively. This variable was also stratified by HIV status.

Those who were HIV positive were more likely to have both paid for sex and been paid for sex compared to those who were negative. These results are presented in Figure 6.



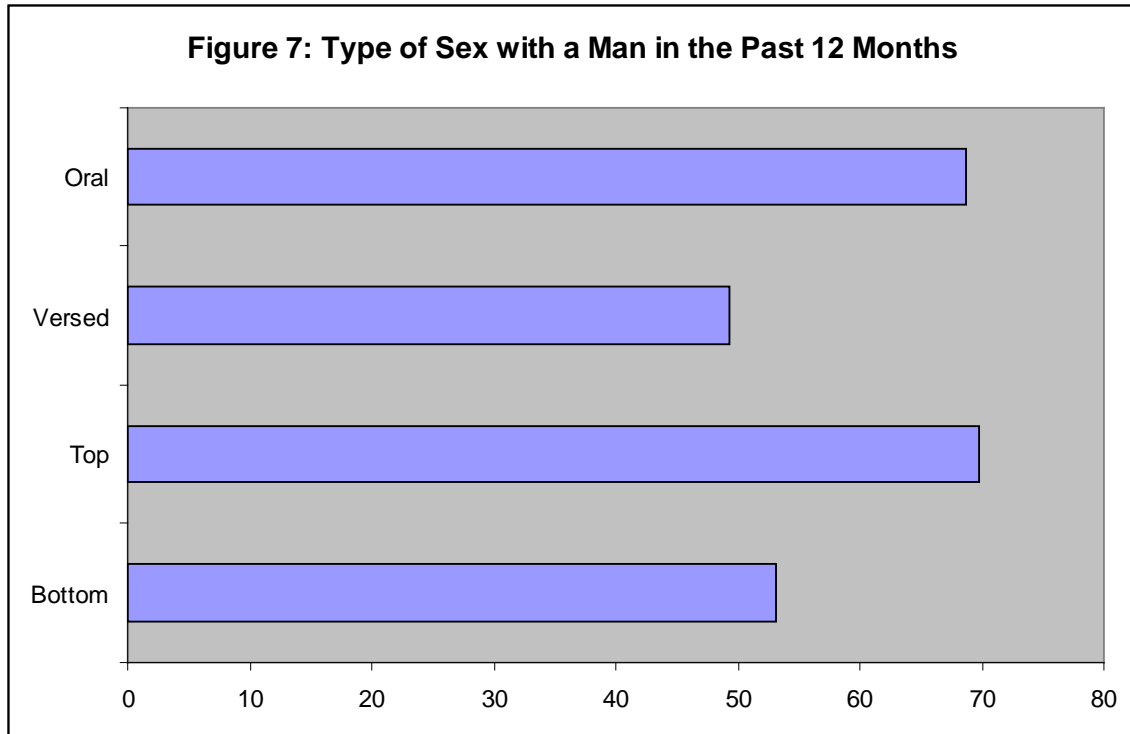
Respondents were asked how they identify their sexual orientation. About two-thirds (62.7%) described themselves as bisexual while 33.3% identified themselves as homosexual.

Respondents were asked the ages they first had sex with a woman and with a man. Over half of respondents indicated having first sex with a man and woman at less than 18 years.

Type of Sexual Behavior

When asked about the last time they had anal sex with a man about equal numbers indicated being on top (48.3%) and bottom (49.3%).

Respondents were asked what kinds of sex they had with a man in the past 12 months. Responses are presented in Figure 7.



Information Related to Violence and Stigma

Respondents were asked several questions related to violence and stigma. About 14% of respondents said they had ever been raped, 14.9% indicated having been a victim of physical violence, and 48.8% of verbal abuse. When asked about their comfort level of telling people of their status, 52.2% indicated they were not comfortable with anyone. About 60% would be willing to buy food from a HIV+ shopkeeper.

CONCLUSIONS

HIV among this cohort of MSM was high as expected at 31.8%. Despite the high prevalence only 20.8% had a HIV test in the past year.

There were some indications that those who were HIV positive had particularly risky behaviors. Individuals who were HIV positive were less likely to use a condom at last anal sex than those who were HIV negative. In terms of having a condom now, 25.0% of those HIV negative had a condom that was seen compared to 20.4% for those who were HIV positive. In addition those who were HIV positive were more likely to have paid cash for sex and been paid cash for sex in the past 3 months compared to those who were negative.

Several risky behaviors were noted. Respondents were asked what they had done the last time in the past 12 months when they had a symptom of a STI. Only 20.9% told their main partner. And only 32.3% had either gone to a health center or private doctor. About 59% of respondents reported that they had at least one one-night stand. Reporting of two or more partners in the past year was high at 80.1%. Reporting of two or more new partners was also high at 54.2%.

Respondents were asked several questions about condom use. About 29% indicated they last had sex without a condom within the past 4 weeks. About two-thirds of respondents with a main male partner used a condom at last sex while for those with a main female partner it was 60%.

The most common meeting places for MSM were private homes and the street. It would be important to link prevention efforts to these most common meeting places. Alcohol use among this cohort was high with 73.2% reporting some use.

Another key issue facing MSM in Jamaica is stigma. Two-thirds of respondents identified themselves as bisexual while 33.3% identified themselves as homosexual. More than half of respondents (52.2%) reported that they were not comfortable revealing their status to anyone.

INTRODUCTION to the Sex Worker Survey

There is an urgent need in Jamaica to develop effective prevention programs to limit the spread of HIV. Many approaches are needed to contain the epidemic including targeted approaches for most at risk populations (MARPs). According to UNAIDS these populations include, but are not limited to, injection drug users (IDUs) who share HIV contaminated drug injection equipment, individuals who abuse other substances such as non-injection drugs and alcohol, commercial sex workers (CSWs) and their sex partners, youth and street children, persons detained in corrections facilities, men who have sex with men (MSM) and patrons of high-risk venues (UNAIDS 2007). Prevention efforts require current information about the HIV and STI epidemic within MARPs.

The epidemic in Jamaica has features of both a generalized and concentrated epidemic. It is estimated that, as of 2007, 25,000 persons or approximately 1.3% of the Jamaican adult population is HIV infected and that almost two thirds of HIV infected persons are unaware of their status. Higher HIV prevalence (9%) has been recorded in CSW, thus the particular importance of focusing on this high risk population.

METHODS AND FIELDWORK

Third generation surveillance tracks HIV and STI prevalence among a cross-section of sex workers and also links individuals tested at different points in time through a unique identifier.

The survey was conducted between August 16, 2008 and November 9, 2008. A total of 336 participants were recruited: 101 from SRHA, 101 from NERHA, 100 from WRA and 34 from SERHA. This report restricts analysis to the 277 individuals who have been paid cash money for sex in the past six months. This cohort of CSWs will provide critical information about the HIV epidemic in Jamaica which can be used to guide interventions that promote safe sex and a reduction in the transmission of HIV and other STIs.

The survey included the questionnaire and the collection of blood and urine. Participants could receive results from the biomarker testing in three weeks in a manner that was acceptable to them.

RESULTS

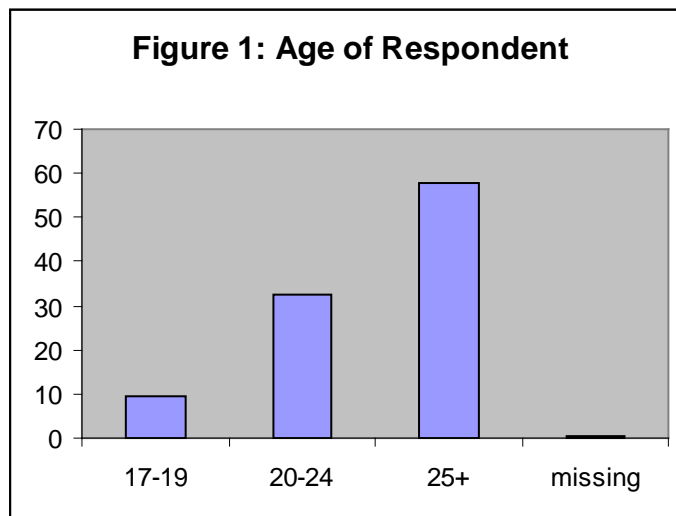
Site Characteristics

Interviewers identified the type of sites where the interview was conducted. Nightclubs were the majority of sites (71.8%), followed by street corners (11.9%) and massage parlors (2.5%). About 83% of the sites were places where alcohol is served, 74.7% had beds on site and 82.7% had a site manager. The majority (87.4%) of sites were indoor only.

In terms of HIV prevention, only at half of the sites were condoms visible while only 32.9% had visible HIV/AIDS posters. This perhaps represents an opportunity for prevention programs to link with such sites.

Respondent characteristics

The vast majority (98%) of the sex workers interviewed were female. Only 5 of the 277 were male. Figure 1 shows the age breakdown of respondents. Approximately 58% of respondents were 25 and over, 33% were 20-24 and 9% were 15-19. Age was missing for only one respondent.

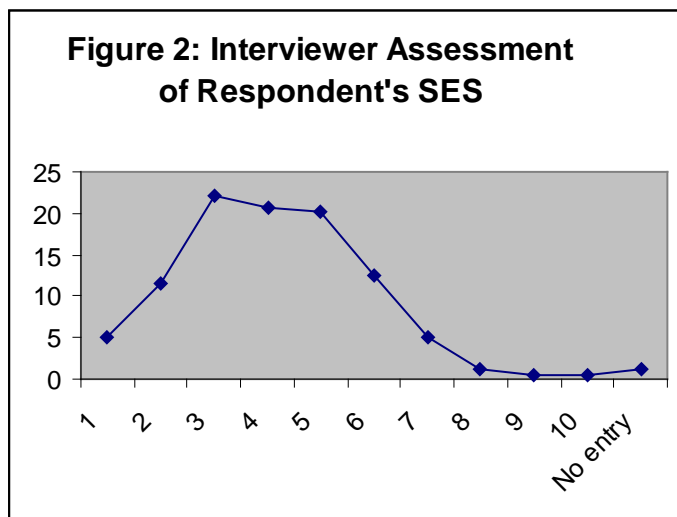


The majority (96.4%) of respondents identified themselves as dancers/entertainers or sex workers. About 97% were new respondents who had never been interviewed in previous PLACE studies. Nearly all respondents indicated that they would be willing to be contacted again in 6-12 months.

In terms of education about three-quarters of respondents had between 9 and 11 years of schooling with 92.4% reaching secondary school or high school. Respondents lived in 10 different parishes. The most common were Kingston/St.A (20.6%), St. Catherine (17.0%) and Westmoreland (15.9%). The full distribution is presented in Table 2. Few respondents (5.8%) had ever been married while 26.4% indicated that they were either currently married or living with a partner.

Twenty percent of respondents had indicated that they had ever slept outdoors because of homelessness. About 32% indicated that they had ever spent a night in jail or prison. Twenty-one percent reported that they had ever been raped. These questions are sensitive so under-reporting is a possibility.

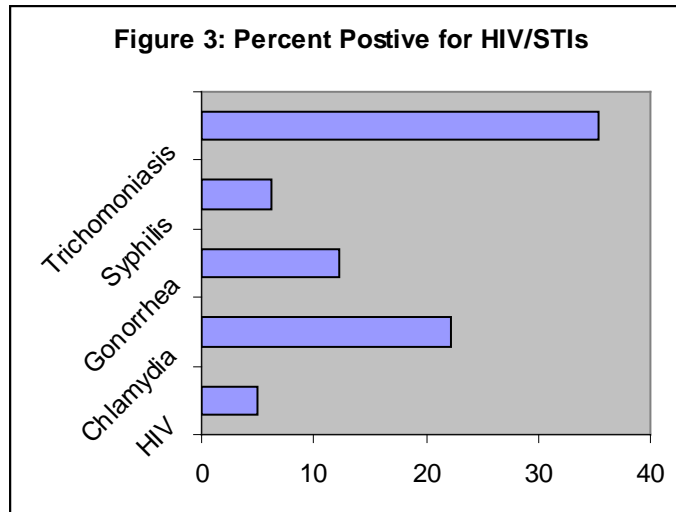
Interviewers were trained to assess the socioeconomic status of respondents on a scale of 1-10 with 10 being very rich and 1 being very poor. Figure 2 presents this data and the distribution is presented in Table 2. The mean was 4.1.



Sexually Transmitted Infections and HIV

Respondents were asked if they had specific STI symptoms (genital discharge, ulcer, sore, warts, pain or burning during urination) in the past 3 months or anytime in the past year. Approximately 37% indicated they had such symptoms in the past 3 months and an additional 17.3% indicated they had such symptoms not in the past 3 months but in the past 12 months. Twenty-six percent of respondents were told by a health worker that they had a sexually transmitted disease in the past 12 months. An additional 16.6% had been told they had a sexually transmitted disease by a health worker but this was not in the past 12 months.

Out of the 277 respondents, 243 were tested for chlamydia, gonorrhea, trichomoniasis, syphilis and HIV. The 33 respondents recruited at the Manpower Workshop did not undergo testing. Trichomoniasis was the most prevalent STI with 35.4% of respondents testing positive, followed by chlamydia with 22.2% of respondents testing positive. The prevalence of syphilis was 6.2% and gonorrhea 12.3%. Five percent of respondents tested positive for HIV. Overall fifty-six percent of respondents tested positive for at least one STI or for HIV. Results are presented in Figure 3.



Health Care Seeking Behavior and HIV Testing

Respondents were asked several questions about what they did the last time they had an abnormal discharge, ulcer or sore. Twenty-two percent went to a public health provider while 20.6% went to a private doctor. About one-quarter of respondents had sex while they had symptoms, and 6.5% obtained drugs without a prescription.

Knowledge of where to get a HIV test was high at 96.4%. Approximately 72% of respondents had a HIV test in the past year and an additional 16.6% had a test but not in the past year. About three-quarters of respondents had gotten tested and gotten the test result. Over half (56.3%) of respondents got the test result and told their main partner while 5.4% got their test result but did not tell their main partner.

Exposure to HIV Prevention Programs and Self-Reported HIV Knowledge

Figure 4 presents data on exposure to HIV Prevention Programs. A majority of respondents had talked with a Ministry of Health (MoH) worker about HIV risk (84.5%) and HIV testing (84.1%). Close to half (49.1%) of respondents had attended an HIV/AIDS education session in the past 6 months. Approximately 63% had seen an AIDS prevention poster at their worksite, 81.6% had participated in a condom demonstration and 65.7% had seen an HIV risk card.

Knowledge that a person who looks healthy can be infected with HIV was relatively high at 94.9%. Over three-quarters (78.3%) of respondents correctly indicated that it is not possible to get HIV from mosquito bites and 86.3% correctly indicated that a person can not get HIV by sharing a meal with someone who is HIV positive. Seventy-eight percent of respondents had the knowledge that sex with only one faithful uninfected partner can reduce HIV risk.

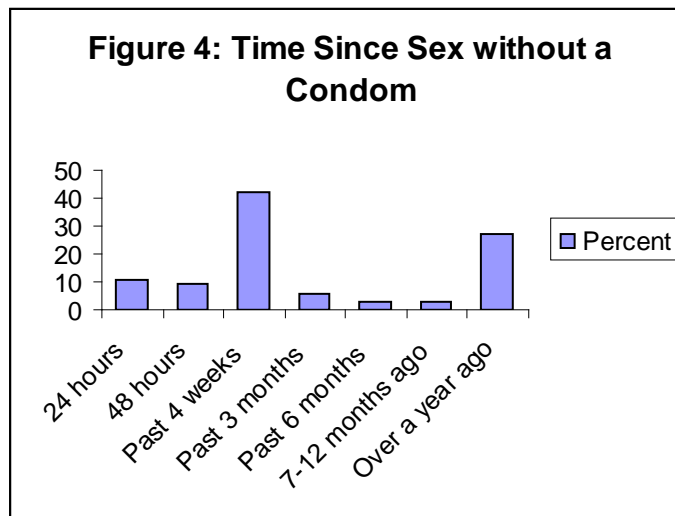
Use of Condoms

Respondents were asked whether they had a condom with them. If they answered yes, they were then asked if the interviewer could see the condom. Thirty percent of respondents indicated they had a condom, but the condom was not shown to the interviewer. About 51% had a condom which was shown to the interviewer.

A large percentage (80.1%) of respondents had gotten a free condom at a work site in the past 4 weeks, while 47.3% had purchased a condom at their work site in the past four weeks. About three-quarters (75.8%) had never used the female condom.

Questions were asked about sex in the past 24 hours and sex in the past 24-48 hours. About 40% of respondents indicated they had sex with a condom (or always with) a condom) in the past 24 hours, while 8.7% had sex without a condom in the past 24 hours. In terms of 24-48 hours, 46.6% had sex with or always with a condom, while 11.9% had sex without a condom.

Respondents were asked when they last had sex without a condom. Results are presented in Figure 4. A sizeable percentage of respondents (61.4%) indicated they last had sex without a condom within the past 4 weeks or less.



The majority of respondents (97.5%) answered they had used condoms at last sex with a new paying partner. About 91% indicated they used a condom at last sex with their regular paying partner, however, 23.1% indicated they did not use a condom at last sex with their main partner. It should be noted that 20.2% reported having no main partner. Later in the interview respondents were asked four sensitive questions and asked to mark their answer on a card rather than giving an oral response. In this section respondents were asked the same question about condom use at last sex with their main partner. Similar results were obtained with 25.3% responding they had used a condom and 59.6% indicating they had not. About 11.9% circled “Not Apply” and 3.2% did not answer the question.

Family Planning Methods Other than Condoms

Women were asked if they were using family planning method other than condoms. About 64% indicated they were not, while 20.9% were using pills and 13.0% were using injections.

Use of Drugs and Alcohol and Operating out of Bars and Clubs

Respondents were asked about their alcohol and drug use during the past 4 weeks. About 50% of respondents had drinks containing alcohol on a daily basis, 21.7% on a weekly basis, 18.1% on a less than weekly basis and 11% indicated not taking alcohol in the past 4 weeks. Only one respondent had injected a non-prescription drug in the past 6 months, and only one respondent had used crack or cocaine during the past 6 months. The percentages using ganja and ecstasy in the past 6 months were 60.6% and 30.0%, respectively.

About 70% of respondents had worked in a bar or club at least 4 times a week during the past 4 weeks. Fourteen percent had not worked in a bar or club at all in the past 4 weeks. The mean number of bars/clubs that respondents operated from was 2.5. The full distribution is presented in Table 8.

Main and Regular Partnerships Including Condom Use

About three quarters of respondents (77.6%) had a main partner, while 26.4% were currently married or living with their partner. Only 23.1% had used a condom at last sex with their main partner, and 50.2% believed that their main partner had sex with another person in the past 6 months.

Places where Operated as Sexworker and Condom Use with those Partners

Respondents were asked which parishes they operated from – solicited clients to pay cash in exchange for sex. The most commonly reported places of operation were St. Elizabeth (33.1%), St. James (30.9%), St. Ann (27.3%), Westmoreland (23.0%), Kingston /St. A (19.8%) and Manchester (18.3%). About 4% had operated outside of Jamaica in the past 6 months.

The majority of respondents (97.1%) indicated that they had used a condom at last sex with a new paying partner. About 90% had used a condom at last sex with their regular paying partner. Respondents were also asked about these same two questions during the section of the questionnaire, where they put their answers on a card. Using these method yielded the same percentage (90.3%) indicated they used a condom at last sex with a regular paying partner. Using this method 93.5% respondents indicated using a condom at last sex with a new paying partner.

Number, Type and Age of Partners in Past 4 Weeks and 12 Months

As mentioned previously this report has been restricted to individuals who responded that they had been paid for cash in the past 6 months. Of these individuals 94.2% had been paid for cash as recently as the past 3 months and an additional 5.8% had been paid for cash not in the past 3 months but in the past 6 months.

Questions were also asked about the ages of the respondent's oldest and youngest partners in the past 12 months. The mean age of the oldest partner was 45.7, and ages ranged from 17 to 87. The mean age of the youngest partner was 21.9, and ages ranged from 7 to 45. Distributions are presented in Table 10.

Respondents were asked their number of sex partners and number of new sex partners in the past 4 weeks. Distributions are presented in Table 10. The mean number of sex partners in the past 4 weeks was 13.1 with a large variation from 0 to 160. The mean number of new sex partners in the past 4 weeks was 6.4 with a range from 0 to 61. The number of repeat sex partners was 6.5 with a large range of 0-150.

During the section of the interview where respondents wrote their answer on a card, they were asked whether in the past six months they had sex with both men and women, men only or women only. About three-quarters (76.2%) of respondents had sex with men only while 191.1% had sex with both men and women. All five male respondents indicated having sex with women only in the past six months.

Age at First Sex and Age at First Sex for Cash

Respondents were asked their age at first sex and their age at first sex for cash. These distributions are presented in Table 11. The mean age at first sex was 15.1 and the range was 6 to 24. Respondents were also asked their age at first sex for cash. The mean age at first sex for cash was 21.6 with a range from 10 to 40.

Conclusions

Results from the study indicate that CSWs are truly a most at risk population (MARP) in Jamaica. HIV prevalence was 5% while the prevalence for other STIs was higher at 35.4% for trichomoniasis, 22.2% for chlamydia, 12.3% for gonorrhoea and 6.2% for syphilis.

In terms of risky behaviors, respondents reported a mean of 13.1 sex partners in the past 4 weeks. The range was 0 to 160. Condom use was high with paying partners – 97.1% with new paying partners and 90.0% with regular paying partners. However only 23.1% of respondents had used a condom at last sex with their main partner. Another risk behavior was that about one-quarter of respondents indicated that they had sex the last time they had an abnormal discharge, ulcer or sore.

Alcohol use was common among this population with about 50% of respondents indicating they consumed alcohol on a daily basis. About 70% indicated they had worked in a bar or club at least 4 times a week during the past 4 weeks. Efforts to combat the HIV epidemic in Jamaica must clearly focus on CSWs. Targeting interventions for CSWs and the venues where they meet partner would be essential prevention strategies.