

MISCONCEPTIONS

ABOUT

SEX WORKERS



HINDER EFFECTIVE HIV PREVENTION PROGRAMMES

THE LANCET series on HIV and sex workers

Misconceptions about sex workers hamper effective HIV prevention programmes

THE MYTH IS...

BUT THE TRUTH IS...

THE IMPACT BEING...



All sex workers are women

FALSE



Sex workers may be male, female, transgender or non-transgender and from diverse backgrounds⁷

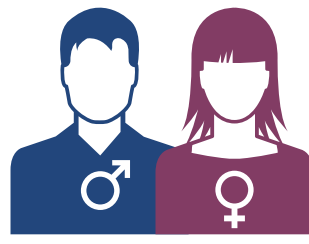


Heterogeneity of epidemics across various groups⁷



Male sex workers are all gay

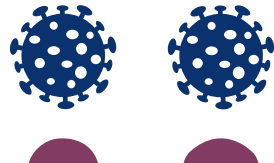
FALSE



Often male sex workers with male clients don't identify as gay or bisexual and have female intimate partners⁵

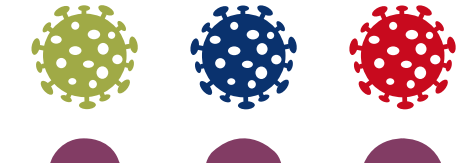


Heterosexual identity in male sex workers represents increased risk among their non-paying female partners⁵

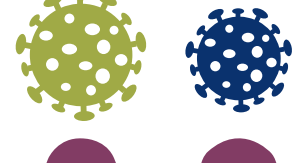


Transgender female sex workers face the same risk of HIV as male sex workers

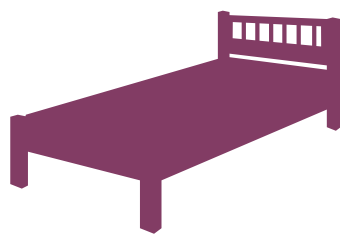
FALSE



Transgender women have distinct biological HIV risks from male sex workers or non-transgender women⁶



Transgender female sex workers demonstrate about **1.5 times** the risk of HIV compared to male sex workers⁶

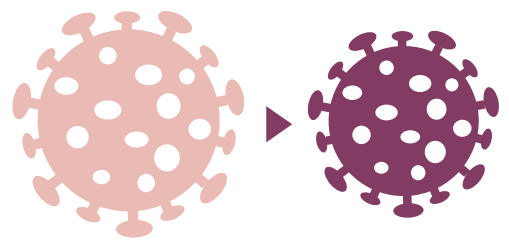


Sex work is not a real job

FALSE



Sex work is officially recognised as an occupation in Brazil, entitling sex workers to labour rights³

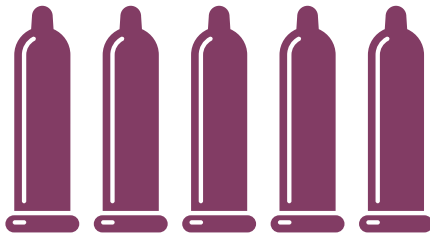


Community empowerment among sex workers reduced the odds of HIV by **32%**³

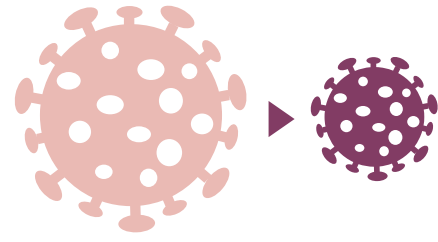


Sex workers won't use condoms

FALSE



Greater success in condom uptake has been reported in sex workers than any other affected population²



Condom promotion in South Africa has reduced HIV in sex workers by more than **70%**²



Criminalising sex work prevents HIV spread

FALSE



Police harassment forces hurried transactions which jeopardise condom negotiation^{1,4}



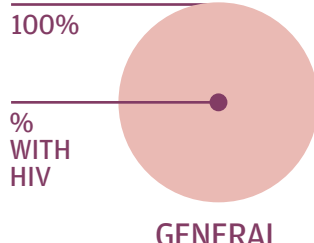
One third of sex workers don't carry condoms as they are used as evidence of illegal sex work^{1,4}

THE HIV BURDEN

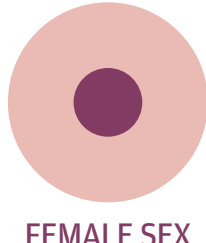
Sex workers have higher burdens of HIV, although epidemics are reflective of, and impact on, surrounding adult populations.

HIV PREVALENCE

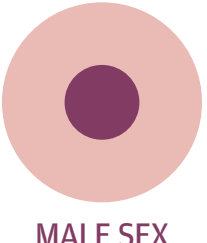
WORLDWIDE



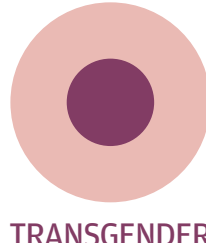
GENERAL POPULATION
0.8%⁹



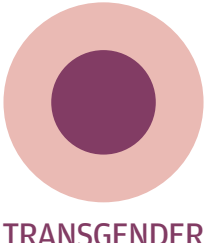
FEMALE SEX WORKERS
11.8%¹



MALE SEX WORKERS
14%⁹



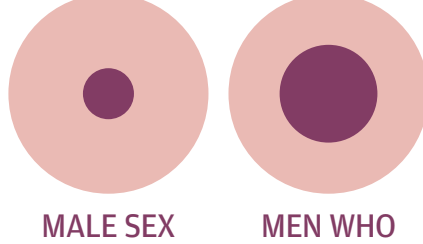
TRANSGENDER WOMEN
19.2%⁶



TRANSGENDER WOMEN WHO HAVE SEX WITH MEN
27.3%⁶

EPIDEMIOLOGICAL TRENDS AMONG MALE SEX WORKERS AND OTHER MEN WHO HAVE SEX WITH MEN¹ VARY BY REGION

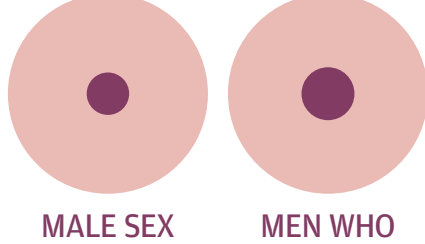
SYDNEY



MALE SEX WORKERS
6.5%

MEN WHO HAVE SEX WITH MEN¹
23.9%

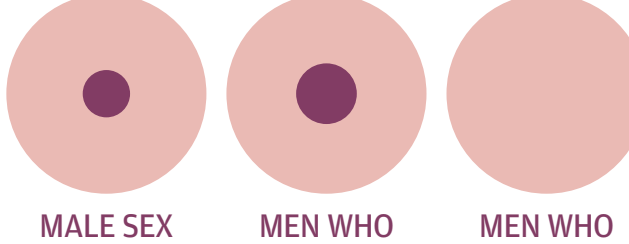
SHENZHEN



MALE SEX WORKERS
4.5%

MEN WHO HAVE SEX WITH MEN¹
7%

TEL AVIV



MALE SEX WORKERS
5.6%

MEN WHO HAVE SEX WITH MEN¹ (high risk)
9.2%

MEN WHO HAVE SEX WITH MEN¹ (low risk)
0%

¹men with no history of sex work who have sex with men

HOW MUCH COULD HIV INFECTIONS BE AVERTED?*

DECriminalISING SEX WORK



33-46% reduction¹

SAFER WORK ENVIRONMENTS



21-45% reduction¹

SCALE-UP OF ANTI-RETROVIRAL THERAPY



9-34% reduction¹

ELIMINATION OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE



17-20% reduction¹

*modelled potential improvements in reducing HIV among female sex workers and clients within a decade

Read the full series at www.thelancet.com/series/hiv-and-sex-workers

SOURCES

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8. Strathdee SA, Crago A-L, Butler J, et al. Dispelling myths about sex workers and HIV. Lancet 2014; published online July 22. DOI: [http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736\(14\)60980-6](http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(14)60980-6)
9. UNAIDS. Global report: UNAIDS report on the global AIDS epidemic 2013. Geneva: Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS. UNAIDS/JC2502/1/E, revised November 2013.