

BORDERNETwork IBBS among Sex Workers (SWs) in 7 EU countries

Bridging research to practice while scaling up HIV/STI testing

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OBJECTIVES

- To enhance evidence of HIV/STIs prevalence in SWs;
- To study closely intersections between sex work, drug use, mobility, to analyse further social determinants of risk;
- To conduct comparative cross-country analysis of 6 UNGASS and 5 additional indicators.

DESIGN AND METHODS

Survey locations:

Berlin, Bratislava, Bucharest, German-Polish border area, Riga, Stettin, Sofia and Tallinn;

Sample:

- Combination of Respondents-driven (RDS) and service/venue-based convenient sampling;

Field phase:

- A qualitative structured face-to-face behavioural interview (85 items) combined with
- Blood tests (HIV, Syphilis, HCV, HBV, additionally Chlamydia (Latvia and Bulgaria), Gonorrhoea (Bulgaria) and Herpes Simplex II (Latvia).

RESULTS

Recruited sample: 1042 sex workers - 955 FSW and 87 MSW

Preliminary results based on 923 FSW:

1. Nationality/citizenship: (see right)

Nationality	N
Slovak	195
Romanian	193
Bulgarian	125
Latvian	118
Estonian	82
Allien's passport in Estonia	58
Without citizenship in Estonia	32
Russian	34
Poland	29
Ukraine	21
Germany	10
Hungary	9
Belarus	2
Other	4
No Answer	11
Total	923



RESULTS

2) Health Insurance: Fast 60% (59,4%; N=548) have no health insurance/health coverage

3) Access to and uptake of HIV/STI Services:

- 9% (N=83) do not know where to go for an HIV test
- 14,6 % (N=135) have never been tested for HIV
- 59,6 % (N=551) have been tested for HIV within the last year (UNGASS 8)
- 82,2% (N=759) received the result of the last HIV test (UNGASS 8)
- 51% (N=471) have not visited gynaecologist/sexual health specialist in the last year
- 74,2% (N=685) have not visited an STI specialist in the last year

4) STI-Diagnosis in the last year- self -reported:

- 22,2 % (N=205) had symptoms/suspected to have an STI in the last year, 14,5% (N=134) visited a doctor

5) Sex work and condom use

- 35,3 % (N= 332) state that between 1 and 3 of the last 10 clients asked for sex without a condom
- 31,7% (N=293) stated that None of the last 10 clients asked for sex without condom
- 19,5 % (N=181) stated that between 4 and 6 of the last 10 clients asked for sex without a condom
- 10,1% (N=93) stated that at least 7 of the last 10 clients asked for sex without condom
- **92% (N=849) used a condom with the most recent client UNGASS 18**

6) Drug use and risks:

- 39% (N=360) reported to have ever injected drugs
- 30,2% (N=279) - during the last 7 days
- 7,9% (N=73) - used a syringe/needle already used by someone else in the last month
- 6,2% (N=57) - did that in the course of the last year
- **Still: 35,1% (N=324) did not use syringe/needle already used by someone else by last injecting UNGASS 21**

7) Knowledge/Attitudes HIV/STIs:

According to 85,2% (N=786) a healthy looking person can be infected with HIV UNGASS 14

Still: 13,2% (N=92) answered incorrectly or do not know

Proportion of correct answers to:

- ...using condom correctly every time by sex - 95,4% (N=881)
- ...having sex with only one uninfected faithful partner - 82,8% (N=764)
- ...sharing a meal with HIV-infected person - 81,8 % (N=755)
- ...mosquito bite - 63,4% (N=585)

CONCLUSIONS

Vulnerability of sex workers and their prevention, treatment and care needs should remain in focus of both HIV research, prevention and policy.

An urge for joint actions - against the light of current Europe-wide trends towards abolitionist prostitution legislation, claiming sex work a gender violence phenomenon, disregarding sex workers' rights of self-determination and disallowing their civic participation and empowerment.

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