

# »» *Let's Go* *for a* *Walk*

## Sexual Decision-making among Clients of Female Entertainment Service Workers in Phnom Penh, Cambodia

Population Services International (PSI)  
Family Health International (FHI)

Cambodia



# Let's Go for a Walk »»



“We just invited one another by saying, ‘Let’s go for a walk.’ But it was not going for a walk; it was going to find women.... If I wanted to or my friends wanted to, we just gave the word, ‘Let’s go for a walk!’ Then we went out to meet at Preah Kosamak hospital or at a brothel.... We never had clashing ideas in going for walks. If someone wanted to go for a walk somewhere, everyone would go together, and when someone wanted to look for a woman, everyone would go together.”

## Motorcycle taxi driver

“There is a person in my group that I tease when he doesn’t go. First we eat with each other. While we’re eating, I try to persuade him to go. I threaten him, saying ‘If you don’t go, you have to pay for all the food’.... I start to mock him, saying, ‘You’re a coward, like a tortoise in the shell. You don’t know anything about sex.... Are you gay? Let me touch your penis.’ When we use the same words over and over, sometimes he gets angry and says, ‘Let’s go. I don’t care how much I have to pay, let’s just go there.’”

## Soldier

“For me, I have one way to make my friends accept my decision. I sneak to the toilet and call my wife, telling her to call me back and say that she is not well. When she calls, I turn on the speaker to let them listen. In this way, they let me go right away because my wife is waiting and we do not know how she is. She is alone and sick so they tell me to hurry back home.”

## Quality control manager

“Let’s Go For a Walk: Sexual Decision-making among Clients of Female Entertainment Service Workers in Phnom Penh, Cambodia” is made possible by the support of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the Department for International Development (DFID). The contents of this report are the sole responsibility of Population Services International (PSI) and Family Health International (FHI) and do not necessarily reflect the views of USAID, the United States Government or DFID.

# Table of Contents



Acknowledgements.....	i
Abbreviations and Acronyms.....	ii
Executive Summary.....	iii
Key Findings and Illustrative Recommendations.....	viii
Introduction and Objectives.....	1
Methods.....	3
Khmer Masculinities .....	5
Motivations for Sex-Seeking.....	9
Group Dynamics and Sexual Decision-making.....	11
Decision-making Patterns .....	15
Self-efficacy and Locus of Control.....	17
The Importance of Alcohol.....	20
Tactics for Opting Out.....	20
Patterns of Partner Selection.....	22
Sex in Groups.....	23
Risk Perception .....	25
Condom Findings .....	27



Conclusions .....	31
Three Archetypes .....	33
Tha.....	33
Rith.....	35
Sok.....	37
Three Typical Scenarios.....	39
Scenario 1 .....	39
Scenario 2 .....	40
Scenario 3 .....	41
References .....	43
Appendix A: Typical Venue Sequences.....	45
Appendix B: Expressions Relating to Sex.....	49
Appendix C: Sample Narrative Discussion Guide.....	52
Appendix D: Sample Second Discussion Guide.....	57



# Acknowledgements



**T**his report is the culmination of the efforts of numerous individuals and organizations. The research was generously supported by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the UK Department for International Development (DFID).

**Reid Smith** was the principal researcher on this study and prepared this report. He is grateful to **Dr. Kathryn O’Connell** (PSI Regional Researcher, Southeast Asia) for keeping a supportive and even keel through throughout the process. **Caroline Francis** (Deputy Director, FHI Cambodia) provided important input in all stages of the study design and dissemination process. **Long Dianna** (PSI/Cambodia Strategic Information Department Manager) and **Jason Theede** (Research Consultant) assisted with in-country team leadership. Thanks also to **Jacqueline Devine** (former PSI/Cambodia Deputy Country Representative), **Andrew Boner** (former PSI/Cambodia Country Representative), and **Chris Jones** (PSI/Cambodia Country Representative) for supporting the research at various points from design to data collection to dissemination.

Consultation on the research design and recruitment of entertainment worker participants were provided by **Kun Reth** (FHI) and United Health Network staff: **Uch Ponh** (CWPD), **Meas Chanthan** (USG), **Duch Pisey** (USG), **Pon Sopheap** (MEC), **Ung Prahors** (MEC), **Sar Yary** (MEC), and **Ly Channavy** (MEC).

Data collection was carried out by the PSI/Cambodia qualitative research team: **Ly Vandy**, **Hav Panhavy**, **Lay Kundi**, and **Nut Samphois**, and managed by **Keo Piseth**. Interns **Un Vicheka** and **Seng Reasmey** served as note-takers and translators.

**Hav Panhavy**, **Ly Vandy**, **Un Vicheka**, and **Seng Reasmey** bravely and assiduously participated in the data analysis and the initial presentation of findings.

Finally, all those involved in this project would like to thank all of the men and women who shared their stories, their laughter, and their fears, without which reports like this would be impossible. Through their voices, they make it a little more likely that the fight against HIV/AIDS in Cambodia will succeed.

# Abbreviations and Acronyms

100% CUP	100% Condom Use Program
CMAG	Cambodia Mine Action Group
EE	Entertainment Establishment
EW	Entertainment Worker (woman who exchanges sex for money)
FHI	Family Health International
KTV	Karaoke
IEC	Information Education Communication
NAA	National AIDS Authority of Cambodia
NCHADS	National Center for HIV/AIDS, Dermatology and STDs
PSI	Population Services International
SAMS	Sexually Active Men with Sweethearts
SES	Socioeconomic Status
STI	Sexually Transmitted Infection
TRaC	Tracking Results Continuously Survey

# Executive Summary



Cambodia is a noteworthy success story in responding to HIV/AIDS, in particular through the emphasis on “most at risk populations” as key targeted HIV-prevention groups. However, evidence shows that the epidemic continues to be driven by the commercial sex industry and male clients have largely been missing from the response.

HIV-prevention efforts in Cambodia have principally focused on the role of female entertainment workers in transmitting the virus to the general population. This has meant that male clients of entertainment workers have often been overlooked and underserved by HIV-prevention activities and messaging. Data collected from men who frequent entertainment venues, such as beer halls or karaoke bars, reveal that more than half report paying for sex in the last 12 months and around 40% report having three or more commercial partners in that timeframe. Relatively little is known about the decision-making processes of men who purchase commercial sex in Cambodia.

The goals of this study are fourfold: (1) to explore the sexual decision-making processes of men who regularly patronize high-risk entertainment venues; (2) to identify key behavior patterns and social inducements that lead high-risk men to frequently have sex with entertainment workers; (3) to locate decisive junctures in the course of men’s socializing when a decision to not seek the services of an entertainment worker could be made; and (4) to produce a series of personalized archetypes that can be used by programmers to frame behavior change messaging for entertainment establishment-based HIV-prevention interventions.

Forty-eight men (age 21-35) who said they had had sex with an entertainment worker within the preceding six months were selected for interview by PSI researchers. Each was scheduled to complete two interviews: a narrative interview covering a typical evening of socializing, and an interview that covered influencers, the dynamics of opting in or out of sex, condom habits, and positive

deviants. Twelve men were interviewed one-on-one and 36 participated in small group discussions. Sixteen brothel-based and non-brothel-based entertainment workers, chosen by United Health Network program staff, were also interviewed. Entertainment workers were included in the hope that they could provide insight into men's sex-seeking decision-making processes. Data were collected from February-April 2007.

## Two Ideals of Masculinity

Strongly dissonant strands exist within Khmer masculinity. These exist in tension within individual men, among groups of men, and at the societal level. Power and prestige are accumulated within men's groups by demonstrating maximum commitment to the group, which is understood by most men as socializing, drinking alcohol, and sex-seeking as a group. This strand can be labeled *pleasure-indulgent masculinity*.

In contrast to this aspect of Khmer masculinity, there is an ideal that derives from traditions of filial piety, social harmony, and self-control. This strand, *self-restraint masculinity*, is most evident when men are asked for their individual opinions about men who don't frequently seek sex "outside" and men they admire. There is a note-worthy contrast between the private value systems men articulate and the standards that groups of men impose on one another. Individual men characterize men who opt out in very

positive terms. However, when asked to say what other men say about such men, the tone shifts immediately and terms like "gay," "womanly," "like a girl," and "cowardly," are repeatedly cited. To date, studies of commercial sex-seeking behavior and attitudes in Cambodia have focused exclusively on *pleasure-indulgent masculinity*.

Although there is widespread acceptance among men in the study that it is "natural" for men to "go for a walk" (seek commercial sex), it is also widely believed that recurrent drunkenness and transactional sex-seeking violate social mores. There exists among the men in the study a reservoir of desire to not feel compelled to go for sex every time some members in their social group want to go.

## Group Norms

Among the study participants, most men's socializing groups are comprised of friends and are stable from outing to outing. A few men in the study said their social group included men from their home village. Other men had met through work or school, though only one man in the study said he regularly socializes with office colleagues.

It is common for men to pool their money at the beginning of the evening. The money is counted and decisions are made about what is possible with the amount collected. The money pool is a means of producing consensus about how many stops and what activities will occur in an evening. A man



who is determined to seek sex can put in extra money and have more input in the decision about whether to end the evening before continuing to a guesthouse or brothel for sex.

### Opting in or opting out?

The expectation that all men will stay with the group from the start to the end of the night is normative. This places the burden for choosing to opt out on a man who does not wish to continue for sex. Group solidarity is enormously important to the men in the study. An individual's decision-making with respect to seeking sex with the group is viewed as a measure of his commitment to maintaining group harmony and solidarity. Once a dynamic is established in a group whereby strong group cohesion dictates substantial control over individuals' decision-making about sex, it becomes more difficult for members to negotiate their way out. The prominence of persuasion verging on coercion is downplayed by most men in the study but clear from the data.



Men fear that if they refuse to go for sex with their social group, they won't be invited in the future and the friendships may cease. While many men in the study say they are just teasing when they try to convince their companions to continue for sex, the threat to end or curtail a friendship is taken quite seriously by most men *on the receiving end*. The strong cultural tradition of avoiding direct conflict makes forthright refusals rare, and leads men to concoct an array of reasons and excuses that they hope will allow them to exercise their intention to not have sex on a particular evening. The use of money as a lever to convince reluctant men is common; the most effective reasons men deploy to opt out of sex include: a sick wife or child; an obligation to a relative; the need to travel outside Phnom Penh; or an obligation to attend a ceremonial function.

Several men in the study say they often accompany their friends to a guesthouse or brothel but wait outside with the motos and do not have sex. The unifying factor among the few men who *regularly* accompany their friends to guesthouses and brothels but do not engage in sex is that they have made a policy-level decision to never or rarely have sex with entertainment workers. Many men in the study have a fatalistic attitude toward trying to opt out of sex. They say that when their friends pressure them strongly, they are powerless to resist and must continue to the brothel

or guesthouse and have sex. In contrast, several men in the study report that after they started declining to accompany their friends for sex, their social group became accustomed to them coming along for all parts of the evening up to the guesthouse or brothel.

## Male Sex-Seeking Patterns

The data reveal two principal decision-making patterns that result in men seeking sex when out socializing in Phnom Penh. The first results from having discussed a plan for the evening in advance, *instrumental sex-seeking*. The second pattern, contingent *sex-seeking*, involves the combination of alcohol, peer pressure, and the presence of sexily-clad women to produce a decision to seek sex where it was either not intended or not explicitly made the goal of the evening's socializing. Students and military personnel in the study say they usually do not know in advance whether an evening of socializing will include sex "outside". In contrast, lower-socioeconomic status men tend to plan ahead and know at the evening's outset whether sex will occur.

Men in the study report very high HIV/AIDS risk perception. Nearly all men in the study perceive themselves to be at risk of contracting HIV through sex. Men in the study show no concern about transmitting the virus to their sex partners, except for

some married men, who do worry about infecting their wives (and children). Men who do fear transmitting the virus to their wives, however, perceive that the danger emanates from the entertainment workers they have sex with, rather than from their own behavior.

Most men remain confident in their ability to sort "safe" from "unsafe" women, though the category of "safe women" appears to have shrunk significantly over the past five years. As long as this sorting mechanism remains in place, men seeking sex who do not want to use condoms will always be on the lookout for women they believe are safe. One unintended consequence of the 100% CUP and the strong focus on entertainment workers in HIV-prevention efforts is that men have come to equate HIV transmission exclusively with "unsafe women" (and entertainment workers in particular). Men do not perceive themselves to be making contradictory statements when they say, on the one hand, "One should use condoms because one cannot tell if a woman is HIV-positive," and on the other, "With that (kind of) woman I do not have to use condoms because she meets criterion A, B, or C."

The centrality of alcohol in men's social lives cannot be overstated. Men in the study believe that alcohol increases their level of sexual desire and causes them to be more attracted to the women around them.

Drunkenness often causes men to ignore worries—and elevated risk perception—that would otherwise limit their sex-seeking behavior.

As the risks to married women and other non-commercial partners have become more central to HIV-prevention efforts, men's role in and responsibility for the transmission of HIV needs to be addressed more forthrightly in behavior change messaging. Men do worry about transmission after unprotected encounters, but it is most often their own health that they worry about.

The data show progress in terms of the connection between personalized risk assessment and condom use, strengthened acceptance that condoms *should* be used in all transactional sex, and increased social support for condom use. Anxiety about being seen with condoms remains a barrier to the practice of carrying and using them. Some men report that once an entertainment worker becomes a man's sweetheart, she no longer insists he wear a condom. How safe men consider this behavior to be appears to be in flux.

# Key Findings and Illustrative Recommendations



1. There exists among the men in the study a reservoir of desire to *not* feel compelled to go for sex every time some members in their social group want to go. Currently, many men feel that when their friends pressure them strongly, they are powerless to resist and must continue to the brothel or guesthouse and have sex. Few men say they *never* want to go for sex, but many men want to have more control over when they agree to go with their group.

- Develop outreach programming that targets the divide between private and public notions of masculinity. If more men engaged in conversations wherein their private thoughts were publicly recognized and validated, it would likely diminish their need to lie and make excuses to their social group when they choose not to seek sex with them. Efforts to facilitate discussions with men *in their social groups* can open

paths of conversation about choice-making within the group context. From such discussions, men can develop the confidence and skills to opt out of sex after an evening of socializing has begun. More important in the longer run, group norms can be targeted for modification.

- Enlisting establishment owners to support programming promoting safer behavior among clients will magnify the value of entertainment establishment-based efforts by creating an environment that encourages safer sexual decision-making. At minimum, establishment-based programming will require the permission of establishment owners in order to conduct discussions in their establishments. In addition, mobilizing establishment owners to place or sell condoms on their premises may alleviate the anxiety that many men say prevents from them consistently carrying condoms.



- Clients should be targeted in the early evening, when they are together with their peers, but not yet too drunk to listen and reflect on their socializing patterns.
  - Lower-socioeconomic status men, such as moto taxi drivers and laborers should be targeted around paydays, to which their sex-seeking socializing is frequently linked.
2. Strong group pressure is seen by many men as preventing them from acting on their own will to sometimes opt out of transactional sex. However most men feel they face their social group alone, and appear to be unaware that a desire to sometimes opt out of sex is common among men. The presence of these desires must become an open subject of conversation within social groups in order to prevent men from feeling that they are facing the unified group alone. Hence addressing men when they are gathered in their social groups will maximize the effectiveness of behavior change interventions.
- Facilitated conversations among peers *in the places where they socialize* can be used to boost men's self-efficacy to opt out of sex. Currently, there is little or no social support for opting out of transactional sex when men are socializing with their friends. The men in the study who do opt out appear to have unusually strong self-efficacy and ability to resist peer pressure. Helping men to discuss the difficulties they have when they attempt to opt out of sex can contribute to efforts to recast acting on one's will to opt out as an act of strength (or character), rather than one of cowardice. Younger men (25 and under) should be targeted as they are least often willing to risk group disapproval and most susceptible to peer pressure.



3. Strongly dissonant strands exist within Khmer masculinity. One strand, *pleasure-indulgent masculinity*, rewards maximum commitment to the social group, which is demonstrated through socializing, heavy drinking of alcohol, and “going for a walk” (seeking commercial sex). Another strand, *self-restraint masculinity*, derives from traditions of filial piety, controlling one’s urges, and social harmony.
  - Develop messaging that highlights the costs of *pleasure-indulgent masculinity* to self, family, and society. A significant number of men in the study are embarrassed or ashamed of their drinking and sex-seeking behavior. A shame-based, though realistic, campaign will likely ring true to many men who feel caught between allegiance to their social group and to a frayed-but-still-operative moral code.
4. Men reap real and important rewards in terms of self-esteem, belonging/identity, and happiness from *pleasure-indulgent masculinity*. Ignoring these rewards will lead to ineffective messaging. Attempts to minimize the importance to men of the power, pleasure, and social acceptance they gain will always be swimming upstream so long as men lack viable alternatives.
  - Develop messaging that enhances the profile of *self-restraint masculinity*. It is vital that such messaging does not come across as moralistically “preachy” in tone. Rather, scenarios that do justice to the complexity of men’s conflicting feelings about sexual decision-making will resonate more authentically with high-risk men. Men need and want tools to increase self-efficacy when negotiating their way in and out of group socializing. Role models who are fun-loving, group-dedicated members *who also possess the ability to say no to sex* could de-stigmatize men who opt out while also showing them how to retain their active social lives and strong group bonds.
5. Money pooling is a powerful means of producing consensus about how many stops and what activities will occur in an evening of men’s group socializing. It also privileges dominant group members and those who are most zealous about sex-seeking.
  - Messaging targeting high-risk men should address the influence of money pooling over social and sexual decision-making. Men appear unaware of the social dynamics entailed by money sharing. Communications that emphasize the ineffectiveness of

opt-out claims based on money scarcity could help direct men to tactics more likely to increase decision-making success.

6. Men in the study report very high HIV/AIDS risk-perception. Nearly all men in the study perceive themselves to be at risk of contracting HIV through sex. However, most men in the study use a sorting mechanism to distinguish “safe” from “unsafe” sex partners. As long as such a mechanism remains in place, men seeking sex who do not want to use condoms will always be on the lookout for women they believe are safe.

- Develop messaging that addresses the cognitive searching process that men use to give themselves permission to not use condoms with presumed-to-be safe partners. HIV-prevention messaging that exclusively focuses on changing the incorrect belief that “virgins” and women who don’t have sex very often are “safe”, risks missing, or even aggravating, a more systemic problem: men’s eagle-like watchfulness for the appearance of “safe” women.
- As men in the study worry about bringing shame to their families and friends if they contract HIV, an opportunity may exist to broaden the concept of risk to include the risk

of losing face or social standing. In HIV-prevention programming, the concept of risk-perception is generally considered only at the individual level. For men who engage in transactional sex in Cambodia, HIV also poses a risk at the collective level. Messaging that focuses on the risk to family and friends may be an effective way to increase men’s risk-perception and increase the level of social support for safer behavior within social groups.



7. An unintended consequence of the 100% CUP and the strong focus on entertainment workers in HIV-prevention efforts is that men have come to equate HIV transmission exclusively with “unsafe women” (and entertainment workers in particular). With the exception of married men who worry about infecting their wives and some younger men who worry about getting sweethearts pregnant,

men in the study did not articulate concern about whether they might be harming their partners.

- Develop messaging that addresses forthrightly the role that high-risk men (in particular sexually active men with sweet-hearts—SAMS) play in HIV transmission. Getting men to take responsibility for their sexual health (and that of their partners) will be difficult or impossible so long as they don't consider their own role in the transmission of HIV and STIs.

8. Men in the study report that condoms are ubiquitous and easily purchased. However, younger men in particular are reluctant to carry condoms for fear of sweethearts, peers, or parents discovering them. The belief that men who regularly carry condoms are “naughty” is widely held and the cause of acute worry among younger men in the study. The fear of this stigma can leave men unprepared when a sexual encounter begins. The combination of deferred planning and inhibition about carrying condoms makes them vulnerable to being unprepared when a sexual encounter begins.

- Although most men perceive condoms to be easy to acquire at the moment when they are needed, messaging targeting preparedness could lower the stigma of carrying condoms and reduce the reliance on having them around at the exact place and time they are needed. Parents and women with sweethearts should also be targeted regarding the value of preparedness, as it is their opinions (or the fear of them) that inhibit men from carrying condoms.

9. Older men's sweethearts are likely to be non-brothel-based entertainment workers and these relationships usually begin as paying ones. Younger men in the study, particularly students, tend to have sweetheart relationships with students or other young women from “good backgrounds.” This finding is not new, but these are the partners with whom the men in the study say they are least likely to use condoms.

- Messaging targeting consistent condom use in sweetheart relationships should spotlight entertainment workers-turned sweethearts and young women from “good backgrounds.” This messaging has a logical link with efforts attempting to instill in men a sense of themselves as potential transmitters of

infection, as these are the women (apart from wives) with whom men have an emotional bond and who they are most likely to care about potentially infecting.



10. Men in the study are aware that making decisions about sex while drunk can lead to problematic behavior—they know that it leads them to be less likely to wear a condom or wear one properly—but they treat this as something outside their control. In addition, drinking to the point of extreme drunkenness is considered normal for many men in the study.

- While perhaps outside the scope of the current study, a key to changing men's sexual-decision making is changing the way they consume alcohol and the license that alcohol provides for them to act in ways that they would not when sober (or less drunk). Getting men to drink more moderately so that they are less likely to “forget” to wear a condom and more able to use one properly could be important to longer-term efforts to improve men's sexual health and safety.

# Introduction and Objectives



**HIV**-prevention efforts in Cambodia have chiefly focused on the role of female entertainment workers in transmitting the virus to the general population. This has meant that men who have sex with entertainment workers have often been overlooked and underserved by HIV-prevention activities and messaging. In terms of the epidemiology of HIV in Cambodia, it makes sense to focus on those who are most at risk (entertainment workers) and those with the greatest potential for transmitting HIV to others. However, in the quest to reach entertainment workers the risks and experiences of male clients have been under-studied and under-programmed.

The research that forms the basis of this report represents a partnership between Population Services International (PSI) and Family Health International (FHI) in collaboration with other United Health Network partners<sup>1</sup> to shed light on the sexual decision-making processes of high-risk men in urban Cambodia. The United States Agency of International Development

(USAID) and UK Department for International Development (DFID) provided financial support for this research. This study follows a somewhat similar one, “Behind the Pleasure: Sexual Decision-Making among High-Risk Men in Urban Vietnam” undertaken in Vietnam by FHI in 2005.

Cambodia represents a great success story on the world stage in combating the HIV/AIDS epidemic, lowering the prevalence rate from 3.1% in 1997 to the current estimate of 0.9% (NCHADS, 2006). The 100% Condom Use Program (100% CUP) has played a significant role in reducing HIV prevalence among those at greatest risk of HIV: female brothel-based entertainment workers. Despite this success, recent HIV surveillance data show that HIV prevalence is higher in urban areas of Cambodia and that men in the wealthiest Cambodian households are five times as likely as men in the poorest households to be HIV-positive (CDHS, 2005). PSI’s 2006 targeted behavioral survey among high-risk men, aged 18-40, frequenting entertainment venues in Phnom Penh found that

<sup>1</sup> Medicine de l’Espoir Cambodge (MEC), Urban Sector Group (USG) and Cambodia Women for Peace and Development (CWPD)





more than half of these men reported having transactional sex in the last 12 months with brothel-based partners (53%; mean of 7.9 partners), with approximately 40% reporting three or more commercial partners in the last 12 months (PSI/Cambodia, 2006). Among women working in entertainment venues, transactional sex is also common. The majority report ever exchanging sex for money (62.3% in 2006), according to findings from PSI's 2006 targeted behavioral survey of women working in karaoke establishments in Phnom Penh and Siem Reap (PSI/Cambodia, 2006). These sexual encounters between clients and non-brothel-based entertainment workers have a lower rate of condom use (BSS 2003, PSI/Cambodia 2005, 2006), as evidenced by some men and women who perceive these relationships as 'trusting' (PSI/Cambodia 2002, 2005, 2006). A qualitative study similar to that presented in this report was conducted in Vietnam by FHI in 2005, and findings indicate that sexual decision making—men's decision to seek sex—occurs in entertainment venues, where men typically gather and women work (FHI, 2005).

The current study was designed to understand high-risk men's group socializing practices so that messaging can be designed to reach them where they gather, and in a manner that will resonate with their individual and group social and sex-seeking practices. To that end, the study has four main objectives:

- 1) To explore the sexual decision-making processes of men who regularly patronize high-risk entertainment venues.
- 2) To identify key behavior patterns and social inducements that lead high-risk men to frequently have sex with entertainment workers.
- 3) To locate decisive junctures in the course of men's socializing when a decision to *not* seek the services of an entertainment worker could be made.
- 4) To produce a series of personalized archetypes (composite characters) that can be used by programmers to frame behavior change messaging for entertainment establishment-based HIV-prevention interventions.

# Methods



The recruitment of participants was undertaken through a combination of purposive sampling at establishments where men typically begin their evenings of socializing, including soup restaurants, palm wine stalls, and beer gardens, and snowball sampling via men contacted at these establishments. Forty-eight men between 21 and 35 years of age were selected by the study researchers for interview. All but two of them said they had had sex with an entertainment worker within the preceding six months.<sup>2</sup> Half were single; half married. Men were divided into higher- and lower-socioeconomic status (SES) categories based on their occupations, their monthly incomes, and impressionistic self-presentation factors such as clothing.<sup>3</sup>

Each man was scheduled to complete two interviews. The first interview was narrative in form, asking them to recount a typical evening of socializing that resulted in sex for at least one member of their group.<sup>4</sup> The second interview covered influencers, the dynamics of opting in or out, condom habits, and positive deviants.<sup>5</sup> Twelve men were interviewed one-on-one and 36 participated in small group discussions.

Small group discussions were selected to address several issues that often negatively affect research conducted using traditional focus group discussions with 8-12 participants. In societies such as Cambodia, where consensus is prized over the articulation of differences in feelings, opinions, and experiences, large focus groups tend to

<sup>2</sup> There was some leeway given to recruiters to allot interview spaces to men who said they personally had not had sex with an entertainment worker or sex worker, but who said that members of his group had done so in the preceding six months. This was done for two reasons: 1) there was a concern among the research team that men would self-underreport in a brief screening conversation; 2) some men whose group-mates have sex with entertainment workers but who themselves refrain from commercial sex were viewed as potentially offering insight into the decision-making process. Both conjectures proved well-founded.

<sup>3</sup> There was some confusion about how to categorize students, some of whom also work. Although initially divided into lower- and higher-SES categories, a decision was made to group them with the latter, while considering them a sub-group in their own right. The students in the study, regardless of reported income, socialize in relatively expensive, high-status locations. In addition, empirically, in terms of their habits and attitudes, the students in the study had less in common with motorcycle taxi drivers and cyclo drivers, than with merchants and white-collar workers.

<sup>4</sup> See Appendix C.

<sup>5</sup> See Appendix D.

amplify dominant participants' contributions. There is a strong tendency for participants in larger groups to echo the first speaker's words. This is particularly a problem in studies such as the present one, where data collection is carried out by relatively inexperienced moderators, who themselves are used to valuing consensus over frank discussion of difference. Small groups of two to four participants ameliorate (but do not eliminate) these problems: participants feel less intimidated to relate their unique stories; and group management is easier for moderators.

Small group discussions foster some of the group processes that traditional focus groups were designed to capture. Participants speak about their personal experiences in front of people they would not normally share such intimacies with. Researchers, meanwhile, can gain insight into topics that may be difficult for men to address, as well as the reactions of men to hearing the experiences of men similar to themselves.

The narrative interviewing method was chosen to produce rich, personalized accounts. These are essential to gaining insight into how individuals relate to groups and how decisions are made. In addition, by engaging participants in experiential storytelling, narrative interviewing is well-suited to creating realistic and precise archetypes because it enables participants to discuss what they know about their own lives, rather than trying to supply researchers with answers.

Men who participated in the group discussions did not know each other in advance

of the interviews. Small group discussions included three participants for two reasons: 1) to mimic the conversational dynamics of men's social groups, which preliminary discussions among the research team indicated typically numbered 4-5; 2) to allow each man ample opportunity to tell his story. All interviews with men were conducted by male PSI research staff.

Sixteen entertainment workers were selected for one-on-one interviews to gain their perspective on decision-making and the group dynamics of clients. UHN partners assisted with the recruitment of entertainment workers. Four brothel-based entertainment workers, four massage women, four beer promoters/waitresses, and four karaoke workers were interviewed. All interviews with entertainment workers were conducted by female PSI research staff.

Data collection took place between February and April 2007. The interviews were audio-recorded and the translated transcripts were analyzed by the principal researcher using Atlas.ti software and by the PSI research team using standard Microsoft Office applications. Analysis responsibilities were divided. The PSI research team carried out analysis with the goal of drafting person archetypes. The principal researcher, with input from PSI and FHI, was responsible for the main findings, report drafting, and archetype oversight.

Ethical approval for this study was granted by the National Ethics Committee for Health Research, reference 013NECHR, on 14 February 2007.

# Khmer Masculinities



“You look at those girls walking along the riverside and you say they’re pretty. But they aren’t as pretty as my girlfriend. Their beauty cannot compare with hers. My girlfriend has big breasts and fine, white skin.”

“You are exaggerating! I saw your girlfriend. She has an ugly face.”

“You guys are nothing. Having sex with a prostitute is much better. Just do as I do: after getting drunk, I have sex with a prostitute and after that I can go back home.” [Unmarried, 26-year-old jeweler]

\* \* \*

A friend said, “You ate five dishes? I had seven last time.” And another said, “You ate seven? I even had one cooking pot.” Then I said, “You only had one pot but I even had a frying pan”.... [Our friends] just laughed. They said, “You had five plates, and you had one frying pan. All of you are useless. You all just stayed by yourselves and slept without doing anything till morning.” [Unmarried, 23-year-old student]

Masculinity is both a set of ideals Cambodian men aspire to and also a living, evolving set of identities, practices and representations of men and boys (Connell 2000). Recent scholarship on masculinity has emphasized its plural nature. In all societies, multiple masculinities exist, often in conflict with each other.<sup>6</sup> Where cultural conditions are in a state of flux—certainly the case in contemporary Phnom Penh—novel and established patterns of masculinity will compete for men’s attention. This process impacts individual men at the level of decision-making. In addition, over time, as men’s individual decision-making practices shift to accommodate changing environments, those practices develop into new social norms.

<sup>6</sup> Although this is perhaps most apparent where men present themselves in forms that are radically different from mainstream norms (e.g., *ktooeys*, transgender males), recognizably “manly” masculinities often diverge significantly along social class, urban-rural, or regional lines.



Strongly dissonant strands exist within Khmer masculinity. These exist in tension within individual men, among groups of men, and at the societal level. When they are with their socializing groups, men in the current study highly value heavy alcohol consumption, sexual appetite, conquest, performance, and pleasure indulgence. This finding is supported by the studies of others who have delved into men's sex-seeking habits (Bearup 2003; Ramage 2002; Tarr and Aggleton 1999). Men who have sex many times in one night, who are skillful at convincing women to have sex with them, and who are always enthusiastic about seeking sex are admired by their group mates. In their social groups, men in the study are on the watch for signs of weakness, such as an unwillingness to consume large quantities of alcohol or to seek commercial sex. Men displaying such signs are "punished" with taunts and teases about being gay, womanly, *ktooe*y, cowardly, or fearful of one's wife. Power and prestige are accumulated within men's groups by demonstrating maximum commitment to the group, which is understood by most men as socializing, drinking alcohol, and "going for a walk" (sex-seeking) *as a group*. This strand can be labeled *pleasure-indulgent masculinity*.

In contrast to this aspect of Khmer masculinity, there is an ideal that derives from traditions of filial piety, social harmony, and self-restraint. When asked about their personal values, men in the study over-



I think [a man who opts out of sex] is able to manage his time very well. After going to several places, he refuses to go to the other place. Even though I go, I admire him for his ability to manage his time. Others just follow their desires. [Married, 35-year-old soldier]

\* \* \*

I think it is good if men are not engaging in this type of service. This way it will be very beneficial to our family. [Unmarried, 26-year-old civil servant]

\* \* \*

I think that [my friend who doesn't join us for sex] is good since he is able to control his urges. When a man can control himself not to have sex, it is good for him since it enables him to avoid many problems.... The man who doesn't have sex with outside girls is regarded as the best man in the society. [Unmarried, 23-year-old student]

whelmingly cite showing respect to elders, not going out for sex or not doing so excessively, taking responsibility for one's actions, being responsible to family and society, behaving honestly, and demonstrating a future-oriented outlook.



This strand, here labeled *self-restraint masculinity*, is most evident when men are asked for their individual opinions about men who don't frequently seek commercial sex and men who are admirable. In the study, few men say they admire men who have many sex partners or who frequently have sex with commercial partners.

Men in the study are aware that “outside” sex-seeking is not highly prized by society, by families, or even by many men outside their socializing groups. In addition, many of the men in the study say that they themselves do not hold men who frequently seek commercial sex in high esteem.<sup>7</sup> These competing notions often complicate men's sexual decision-making. For younger, single men in the study, many of whom live at home or with relatives, following the pleasure-indulgent strand causes conflict with parents or other elders. Married men describe near-constant friction between demonstrating loyalty to the peer group and to their wives.

There is a noteworthy contrast between the private value systems men articulate and the standards that groups of men impose on one another. This dissonance is most noticeable in the men participating in the study when they are asked to say what they think about men who rarely go “outside” for sex, and then are asked what other men they know say about such men.



After work, [a good man] comes home... and when he goes somewhere, he tells his wife the time he's supposed to be back or that he will not be back home that night. Well, this is why I respect him because he doesn't go out wastefully like us. He's not like us. [Married, 27-year-old office administrator]

\* \* \*

It's good if we don't have sex with prostitutes.... Yeah, so then we can communicate with other people. Sometimes, some people, both men and women, don't like talking to us when they know we often go to have sex. [Unmarried, 23-year-old mobile phone technician]

Individual men characterize men-who-opt-out in very positive terms. When asked what they think about men when they separate from the group, most men in the study say that they understand that people have obligations that they cannot avoid. Most men in all sub-groups in the study also express admiration for men who frequently resist the urge to have sex “outside.” However, when asked to describe what other men say about such men, the tone shifts immediately and terms like “gay,”<sup>8</sup> “womanly,”<sup>9</sup> “like a girl,”<sup>10</sup> and “cowardly,” are repeatedly cited.

<sup>7</sup> The sample for this study was intentionally skewed toward men who say they have sex with entertainment workers. Thus, the strong presence of self-restraint masculinity strand of Khmer masculinity in their formulations is all the more notable.

<sup>8</sup> *Ah ngi* and *peday*.

<sup>9</sup> *Ah ktooey*.

<sup>10</sup> *Ah srey*.

*What do you think of a man who doesn't go for sex?*

I think he's good because he can control his urges well. I really admire him.

*What do other men think or say about such men?*

They say he's a coward and he doesn't even know how to have sex. [Unmarried, 25-year-old student]

Some men can laugh off these taunts to their masculinity. Others, however, react strongly and are moved to prove their heterosexual prowess to their group mates. Younger men, in particular, are likely to respond to the teasing by accepting the challenge.

Although there is widespread acceptance among men in the study that it is “natural” for men to seek sex outside of relationships, it is also widely believed that recurrent drunkenness and transactional sex-seeking violate social mores. Men, particularly younger men and those from higher-SES strata, are aware that what they do with their social groups is something that could bring dishonor to their families.

There is a reservoir of desire to *not* feel compelled to go for sex every time one or two members in a social group want to go. Very few men in the study say they *never* want to go for sex. Being social, an important value that cuts across both strands of Khmer masculinity, implies that they should stay with the group when some members seek sex. However, being social also entails not causing problems in the family, community, or society. And some men in the study identify excessive sex-seeking to be the cause of social problems.

The two strands of masculinity are not found in equal measure in every man. In the study, men who are leaders in their socializing groups tend to act as the voice of hedonism. Within groups, these men tend to be the loudest, most confident, most sexually experienced men. Frequently, they are also the men willing or able to spend the most money. And, because sexual desire and the promise of sex are ubiquitous within the social milieu in which these groups operate, these men tend to have the most impact on group decision-making.



In my group, there is no one who doesn't think about finding a girl. As I am the leader, we all stay together. [Unmarried, 26-year-old private sector employee]

\* \* \*

I usually ask them to go with me, as I am the leading person. I usually get them together, hence I'm like the big brother in the group. And if I refuse to go with them, they would think that I should not be the big brother in my group anymore. [Married, 35-year-old soldier]

To date, studies of commercial sex-seeking behavior and attitudes in Cambodia have focused exclusively on the pleasure-indulgent half of this dualism. In particular, the normative nature of transactional sex-seeking that is a central element in pleasure-indulgent masculinity has been stressed. From a public health perspective, actions may speak louder than words. However, the way the men in this study—men who regularly seek commercial sex—describe and define masculinity opens the space for an aspirational appeal to self-restraint masculinity.

The divide between private and public notions of masculinity is an area for messaging to target. If more men engaged in conversations where their private thoughts were publicly recognized and validated, it would likely diminish their need to lie and make excuses to their social group when they choose not to seek sex with them.

## Motivations for Sex-Seeking

While many men in the study report experiencing anxiety in trying to meet the expectations of family and society while maintaining strong ties to their social group, nearly all men also believe that a desire to have multiple sex partners and to experience a variety of sexual sensations is part of being a man in contemporary Cambodia. As a result, men in the study tend to see the motivations for seeking sex “outside” as self-evident. Men in the study see a logical and straightforward progression from gathering to drinking to drunkenness to being aroused by scantily clad women in the entertainment establishments (EEs) to talking about sex to seeking sex. Many men say they are powerless to resist temptation once they are drunk, their friends start to discuss their urges and pretty women in the EE surround them.

*When you called him a coward, how did he reply?*

He said, “If you want to know whether I’m a coward or not, call a girl right now and I will do something for you to see.” [Unmarried, 26-year-old private sector employee]

\* \* \*

[We called him] filthy words such as “coward” and “chicken-hearted guy” . . .

*How do they feel when hearing such bad words?*

Some say, “You look down on me? Wait, I will go out with you too.” But some others who are confident, they don’t go with us. [Unmarried, 21-year-old student]

Yes, when we arrive, my friend calls to a girl “Hey! Can you bring 1 or 2 bottles of beer to me, please?” When we are drinking and eating, a prostitute always goes back and forth; as we are getting drunk, my friend says “You should have sex with that girl”.... When we are drunk, those girls are beautiful to us. Alcohol dazzles our eyes; someone who is black we see as white and beautiful as an operatic actress. (Laughing) [Married, 35-year-old soldier]

\* \* \*

We drink and drink together. When we feel light-headed and then see girls, someone says, “Wow! What beautiful girls!” When he looks at them for a long time, he’ll say, “After drinking, where will you all go? Let’s have sex today.” Then he urges us to go for it. And when we’re drunk, when someone reminds us, the others will have the desire, his urge will lead us to have sex. [Unmarried, 25-year-old student]

While drinking at EEs,<sup>11</sup> men say they get aroused by beer promoters and other “sexily dressed women.” Many men proceed to karaoke places or nightclubs. At both locations, women are available to sit with, dance with, and fondle. Reduced inhibitions from drunkenness and elevated peer pressure from the members of the group most committed to going for sex is sufficient motivation for most men in the study to dismiss whatever financial, scheduling, or moral misgivings remain.

A conservative sex culture, the prevailing perception of men’s sexual needs, habitual inebriation, and the abundance of sex objects in the nighttime social environment form a powerful mixture. Although men in this study and others speak openly and, at times, graphically about their sexual desires and experiences, many men in the study expressed embarrassment or shame about their nocturnal pursuits. Despite considering enthusiastic sex-seeking to be the norm for men like themselves, respondents use terms such as “naughty” and “bad” to describe their drinking and sex-seeking habits.

Men are interested in exploring different ways to have sex than are considered moral or acceptable with wives or “nice girls,” but sex “techniques”<sup>12</sup> other than *kbach boran*<sup>13</sup> are generally seen as exotic, experimental,

and decadent by both men and some of the entertainment workers interviewed for the present study. The illicitness of non-standard sexual activities is one factor that leads men—particularly married men, who do not expect their wives to practice non-traditional sex techniques—to seek transactional sex with partners more likely to allow them to experience alternative sexual sensations.

I tell the men, “If you use the normal style, I can have sex with you.” Before I go with them, I tell them I don’t like to have sex for long or to use styles. If they agree, I will go. If they don’t, I can’t.

*Use styles? What are the styles they use?*

Regarding the styles, I’ve only see them on video. They raise our hands or feet up. Sometimes, they want us to sleep face down, and they are behind us. There are different styles. But I saw on a video and find it hard to follow, so I tell them I can’t have sex with them if they use styles. [Massage parlor-based EW]

\* \* \*

[We say to each other] “This man is good, when he has sex with us, he doesn’t use techniques and he gives us a lot of money.” [Brothel-based EW]

A few men and women in the study report engaging in oral sex, though they were clearly embarrassed to be speaking about it. None of the participants mentioned anal sex.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>11</sup> See Archetypes (pp. 25-30) and Typical Scenarios (pp. 31-34) for more elaborated descriptions of men’s interactions with entertainment workers and their effects on decision-making.

<sup>12</sup> The pornographic video, “36 Positions,” has been the source of much “knowledge” about different “techniques” for sex. It is reported to have been imported to Cambodia in the late 1980s (Tarr 1997, quoted in Ramage 2002) and to have been disseminated widely and quickly. Although it was officially banned shortly after it arrived in Cambodia, respondents in studies covering the past ten years have repeatedly cited it as inspiration for desiring to experience varied sexual techniques or “styles.” Informal discussions with Khmer men indicate it continues to be widely known.

<sup>13</sup> “Normal style” is the best approximate English translation.

<sup>14</sup> The interviewers generally did not vigorously follow-up question regarding the specifics of sexual activities. While this may be due in part to interviewer inexperience and caution, it also stands, in part, as evidence of the continuing curtain of silence that surrounds people’s sex lives in Phnom Penh.



# Group Dynamics and Sexual Decision-making



Among the study participants, most men's socializing groups are comprised of friends and are stable from outing to outing. A few men in the study socialize with one or two other men, but most men have four to six companions on an evening out. A few men in the study said their social group included men from their home village. Other men had met through work or school, though only one man in the study said he regularly socializes with office colleagues.

In many men's groups there is a leader. This is often the oldest member of the group, sometimes the one with the most money, and usually the boldest.

"Do not consider your wife more important than your friends." Mostly, we talk like this. "With your friends you have been together for many years; but your wife, you just got married a few years ago. And you're now taking your wife to be more important than your friends? What, your mother-in-law? Oh, please. My mother-in-law never dares with me. Do not be more afraid of your mother-in-law or your wife than me." [Married, 27-year-old office administrator]

It is common for men to pool their money at the beginning of the evening. The money is counted and decisions are made about what is possible with the amount collected. The money pool is a means of producing consensus about how many stops and what activities will occur in an evening. A man who is determined to seek sex can put in extra money and have more input than those who put in less—whether they intend to seek sex that night or not—in the decision about whether to end the evening before continuing to a guesthouse or brothel for sex. Pooling money also allows social group

We discuss among each other how many girls we will take so that the money that we have raised earlier from each other will be enough. If we haven't discussed with each other, we don't know how much money we have and how many girls we should take.

*How do you help your group to make the decision?*

I just finalize it.... For example, if they can only pay for girls for two or three members, I pay for the rest up to four members. [Unmarried, 26-year-old private sector employee]



membership to remain quite stable, since having less money on a certain night doesn't preclude a man from equal participation.

If there are a few people in the group who don't want to go, it's difficult to make them go. But, if there's only one guy who doesn't want to go, it's easy.... He'll say, "No, let's not go." But, we urge him... we say the same thing again and again. We also say if you go you can pay only half when we pool the money. Sometimes, spending only a little money can make him feel interested. [Unmarried, 23-year-old mobile phone technician]

The expectation that all men will stay with the group from the start to the end of the night is normative. This places the burden for choosing to opt out on a man who does not wish to continue for sex. Younger men, in particular, tend to lack the confidence to say no to their group when they want to opt out. Men report significant variability among groups in terms of how obligated men feel to continue for sex. Another way of stating this is that a wide range of self-efficacy is reported by men.



If I wanted to have sex, I would talk to my group. I'd say, "Uh, let's have one today." One said, "I won't go," and another said, "You will so go because it's his money." I said, "Today, I'll pay for you." So we talked about going to get a girl outside and where we would take her and so on. [Married, 31-year-old motor taxi driver]

In younger men's groups, if several men express their desire not to continue for sex during the decision-making process, the group will usually disband for the night and none of its members will go for sex. In such circumstances, the lever of offering to pay for those who wish to opt out is less tenable, as the cost of paying for several men is onerous. For this reason, when multiple men state that they do not wish to proceed to seek sex, the other members of the group often accept that it will not happen on that night. No respondents said they planned ahead with other members of their group who might not wish to seek sex.

Although nearly all men in the study describe pressuring reluctant companions to stick together throughout the evening and especially to join them to have sex, many men casually drop into their reports the fact that one or more members of the group go home before they arrive at a guesthouse or brothel.

There is no problem if one person does not go, but other six go because in the group we know who likes to go, and who does not like to. For example, one guy is meek; we just call him to go with us in order to have more people and to sing karaoke or to hug the girls happily. [Married, 34-year-old chicken seller]

Most men downplay the seriousness of the taunts, teases, and threats that are addressed to men who express reluctance or the intention not to go for sex. This is particularly the case when a sex-committed man describes what he says to reluctant companions. When the same man describes

what other men say to him when he wants to go home, however, he is likely to say that the pressure to conform makes it difficult to act on his intentions.

Group solidarity is enormously important to the men in the study. An individual's decision-making with respect to seeking sex with the group is viewed as a measure of his commitment to maintaining solidarity. In addition, groups of men usually make decisions together, which foster solidarity by subordinating individuals to the will of the group. When one member asserts the privilege to make individualistic decisions, other members act assertively to rein him in.



All friends have to be brave together. Otherwise they cannot be friends with each other.

*Brave, what does that mean?*

Brave means that if one of our friends says "Let's go to find girls," the others must go too. [Unmarried, 26-year-old private sector employee]

\* \* \*

We'd grab his hand and get him on a motorbike. When we arrived at the eating and drinking place, it would be too late for him to refuse. So, our ideas became one. [Unmarried, 26-year-old private sector employee]

One reason why persuading one's friends to stay together is important to men in the study is because for many men, going to seek sex alone is sordid and shameful. When done in groups as part of socializing and under the cloak of nighttime drunkenness, sex-seeking is viewed as a "natural" part of men's social character. It is important, therefore, to ensure that members of a group stay together to avoid being viewed (by oneself as well as others) as the type of man who goes alone.

I don't think it's important to force others to go.... We are all grown-ups. Forcing is not necessary. If they want, they can go; but if they don't, they don't need to go. In fact, the only reason [for persuading them] is so our friends don't think that we've gone to eat that [sex] alone. [Married, 28-year-old rice seller]

Many married men experience conflicting allegiance between their wives and families, and their friendship ties. Most men cannot clearly articulate this tension; they express an either/or mindset when men in their group appear to be prioritizing wife and family over the socializing group. Selfishness and unfairness are the idioms through which this conflict is experienced by many married men in the study, as primary emotional ties are, for some men in the study, not located in the home.<sup>15</sup>

Once a dynamic is established in a group whereby strong group cohesion dictates substantial control over individuals' decision-

<sup>15</sup> This dynamic might be positively explored in a drama or other longer form medium, where it doesn't have to be reduced to a few seconds in a spot or a printed material, and where it could give men tools to discuss the conflict with their friends and also communicate more honestly with their wives.

making about sex, it becomes more difficult for members to negotiate their way out. Several men described belonging to groups that allow minimal leeway for men to choose as individuals. In one case, the premium placed on solidarity was strong enough that the leader, who usually called the group to gather, was equally subject to its authority. The prominence of persuasion verging on coercion such as this is downplayed by most men in the study. It appears that they believe being unable to make their own choices is a mark of weakness. This belief seems to apply to their group dynamics as well as the interactions in the interviews for this study. Thus, many more men are willing to describe successfully compelling reluctant group members to join the group for sex than they are to admit that they are incapable of exercising their will to opt out.

In terms of staying together for the entire evening, including going as a group for sex, group cohesion is maintained through a combination of enticement, persuasion, and mockery. Enticement comes in the form of lascivious descriptions of women and sex, and offers to pay the fee to hire an entertainment worker. Men report that when their friends start talking about sex they get aroused and become more inclined to go for sex. When a man is wavering or threatening to leave the group, an offer to pay often reels him in. The most commonly reported technique to prevent a reluctant man from leaving is to insult his masculinity. This takes the form of attaching anti-masculine labels to the reluctant group member. The goal, which appears often to be achieved, is to rile his sense of manly pride so that his desire to prove himself outweighs whatever concerns led him to try to opt out in the first place.



One day, I really didn't want to have sex because I was upset about a work problem. I just wanted to listen to music and dance but my friends wanted to have sex. They said, "Today, we're going to have sex. Are you with us?" and I said, "I don't want to go today. I just want to listen to music and dance." Then they said, "If you don't go with us today, don't ever call us again!" They were extremely aroused and I was a bit afraid because I used to threaten others, and now I was being intimidated. So I decided to go with them. [Unmarried, 26-year-old private sector employee]

There is a person in my group that I tease when he doesn't go. First we eat with each other. While we're eating, I try to persuade him to go. I threaten him, saying "If you don't go, you have to pay for all the food".... I start to mock him, saying "You're a coward, like a tortoise in the shell. You don't know anything about sex.... Are you gay? Let me touch your penis." When we use the same words over and over, sometimes he gets angry and says, "Let's go. I don't care how much I have to pay, let's just go there." [Married, 32-year-old soldier]

## Decision-making Patterns

The data reveal two principal decision-making patterns that result in men seeking sex when out socializing in Phnom Penh. The first results from having discussed a plan for the evening in advance with group mates that includes, explicitly, the goal to seek sex, usually by bringing a woman to a guesthouse or visiting a brothel. This can be characterized as *instrumental sex-seeking*. Instrumental sex-seeking creates more certainty and produces less anxiety and fewer tactics for evasion among men who are ambivalent about seeking sex. While most men say they are enthusiastic when their friends invite them to an evening of sex-seeking-oriented socializing, men in the study describe being more able to say no when they are called or visited by a peer who wishes to plan a night that includes sex before the night has commenced.



We gather together and we chat... because our goal is: today I want to have sex with a girl. So, I go to meet my friend and see whether he has money. We know that we want to have sex already at the start. [Unmarried, 30-year-old motorcycle taxi driver]

The second pattern involves the combination of alcohol, peer pressure, and the presence of sexily clad women to produce a decision to seek sex where it was either not intended or not made explicitly the goal of the evening's socializing. This can be characterized as *contingent sex-seeking*. Contingent sex-seeking, even when men know there is a very good chance that the evening will result in sex, shifts decision-making accountability from individual men to the social group, the environment, and, particularly, the effects of drunkenness. Deferring the decision—or deferring acknowledgment of a tacit decision—appears to be a way for many men to evade responsibility for their actions. It also enables men to follow the wishes of the group, which promotes solidarity and avoids or postpones conflict.



I just go with my friends and after drinking, we start to have sexual desire. With the addition of bright colors of the night and sexiness of the girls, we cannot control our feelings, so we go to find a girl for sex. [Unmarried, 22-year-old civil servant]

\* \* \*

I didn't know in advance because it wasn't until we got drunk that we'd know who wanted to go have sex. [Married, 35-year-old soldier]



There are strong patterns in the data regarding which sorts of men decide in advance that an evening will result in commercial sex, and those for whom the decision is deferred until the evening is underway and the three triggers of drunkenness, desirable women, and peer sex talk are present.

Students in the study say they rarely know in advance whether an evening will result in sex. They are also least likely to carry condoms with them. Although they report frequently reminding each other about the value of having condoms with them, they remain acutely worried about being revealed as “naughty” to parents, girlfriends, or peers. The combination of deferred planning and inhibition about carrying condoms makes them vulnerable to being unprepared when a sexual encounter begins.



In my group, first we gather together not because we have an intention to have sex. We just gather to enjoy drinking and eating, but when we drink a lot and see beautiful girls, we start to have a desire, and then it leads us to finding a girl for sex. [Unmarried, 25-year-old student]

\* \* \*

We don't have an intention to have sex. First we just gather together to go out. If someone wants to drink, he just drinks a little bit. But, at that time, when we see a beautiful girl, we have a desire to find a girl for sex. [Unmarried, 22-year-old student]

Most of the military men in the study say they usually don't know in advance whether an evening of socializing will include transactional sex. They tend not to discuss the program for the evening until after they have been drinking and feel that sex “happens by chance.”

Lower-SES men in the study, including cyclo drivers, motorcycle taxi drivers, laborers, and security guards, say they know in advance when sex will occur. This may be because they must do the cost accounting beforehand in order to know whether transactional sex is within their means. Instrumentally planned socializing evenings are usually linked to payday for lower-SES men.

Mostly we shared the expense. We thought in advance and planned. We planned what to eat...

*I want to clarify at what point you had the urge to find girls for sex; at what time? Early in the evening or after you drink beer?*

Mostly we think about that before we drink. In fact we think about girls before beer.

*You planned in advance?*

That's right. We thought about going to drink beer, then getting one girl each, and planned in advance. [Married, 28-year-old security guard]



## Self-efficacy and Locus of Control

The high value placed on group cohesion makes opting out of sex during the course of an evening of socializing very difficult for all but the most self-confident men. Men fear that if they refuse to go for sex with their social group, they won't be invited in the future and the friendships may cease. While many men in the study say they are just teasing when they try to convince their companions to continue for sex, the threat to end or curtail a friendship is taken quite seriously by most men on the receiving end. And this appears to be with good reason. Many younger men report that if a social companion refuses to accompany the group for sex several times, they will not be asked again in the future. For students living away from their home provinces, in particular, the prospect of being cut off from social ties is distressing.

I say, "You are a coward! If you are in my group, you have to share everything. Having sex is a simple thing." [Some people will then go with us] but some others will not because they know they are only teasing words. They are used to them. [Unmarried, 21-year-old student]

\* \* \*

They say, "If you don't go with us, we don't need to go anywhere together anymore. Everything ends now." So, we have to force ourselves to go with them. [Unmarried, 25-year-old student]

\* \* \*

When we invite them two or three times and they reject us, the next time we usually ignore them. The consequence for them is that they will little by little become far away from their friends. [Unmarried, 22-year-old student]

A few older, married men in the study express confidence in their ability to say yes to sex sometimes and no others. However, most younger men fear being dropped by their friends if they decline to seek sex two or three times in a row. Some older men in the study also expressed fear of the consequences of saying no to their friends. For them, though, the fear is that the bonds of friendship will weaken until the relationship dissolves, rather than being abruptly dropped by the group.

We spoke in advance: "After drinking, where will you go?" I asked. He said "I will go to have sex." I said "Hey! I'm not going to go." He said "You have to go. I'm going, so you should go, too." When he says it like that, we have to go; if we don't go, it means that we are against him. Thus, our friendship will be broken up. Therefore, to keep up our friendship strong or to avoid an argument between us, we have to go to have sex. [34-year-old chicken seller]

The strong cultural tradition of avoiding direct conflict makes forthright refusals rare, and leads men to concoct an array of reasons and excuses that they hope will allow them to exercise their intention to avoid sex on a particular evening. According to some men in the study, a straightforward "no" is tantamount to ending the friendship. However, men are unanimous in saying that some reasons are truly justified for splitting off from the group. Among the most accepted are: a sick wife or child; an obligation to a relative; the need to travel outside Phnom Penh; or an obligation to attend a ceremonial function.

Sometimes it was reasonable when I spoke out. They let me go because I said my son is sick or my wife is sick, and then they let me go home at once. [Married, 31-year-old motorcycle taxi driver]

It is notable that none of the most accepted reasons for opting out stem from the feelings or even activities of the man who is attempting to opt out. Men do report, however, a second tier of variably acceptable reasons for opting out that have to do with the health and family situation of the person opting out. These include: illness; a bad hangover; a lack of sexual desire stemming from too much recent sex; the desire to not further inflame an angry wife. The degree to which men's social groups accept these reasons has to do with how the speaker is positioned within the group; whether he is someone who can normally be counted on to "go for a walk"; and the strictness of the particular group.



When they say, "Hey my friend, let's go sing karaoke," if we say, "No I can't. My wife is not happy," it's still difficult [to not go] because our friends would say, "What? Are you afraid of your wife?" If they say this, it's hard to respond. But I can say it in another way, "If you want me to go with you, do you want to see me dead or alive? I'm still hung over from drinking with you yesterday." Then our friends would not pressure us to go any more. [Married, 35-year-old soldier]

The use of money as a lever to convince reluctant men is common. One tactic that groups of men use to convince a reluctant man to continue for sex is to tell him that it is okay if he leaves but if he does, he has to pay for the other men to continue. Whether such threats get enforced or not, it is clear that many men take them very seriously, saying that once their group-mates threaten them with the bill, they feel compelled to stay.

If I try to refuse, they still plead with me to go. Even if they agreed with my refusal they would say, "You can choose not to go with us but you'll have to pay for all the food on the table, and also the fee for each girl that we take out." When they say this, it makes me unable to refuse, and I have to go. [Married, 32-year-old soldier]

In many groups comprised of married men, a man saying that he wishes to opt out of sex because his wife will be angry or because he doesn't want to cause his wife grief is an ineffective tactic. It generally invites taunts about being weak or fearful and is seen by groups of men as an illegitimate reason for not continuing for sex. Knowing this, many men concoct alternative reasons that will bring less scorn and will honor the importance of group socializing. Many men in the study are keenly aware that certain reasons are acceptable to their group while others are met with derision.

Men report that claiming poverty is an ineffective opt-out tactic due to money pooling and offers to treat that are difficult to turn down. Snubbing another man's offer to pay is considered rude by many

No reason can change my mind if I know clearly that I don't want to go with them.

*Are there any reasons that can persuade you to go with them in the end?*

I will not go out with them unless they say “We'll go to a brothel. We'll pay for everything including drinks tonight. You don't have to pay.” If they say that, I will go with them. [Unmarried, 26-year-old jeweler]

men and violates the norm that dictates that men should pay according to their ability on a given night. A high degree of fortitude is required for a man—even one who has resolved not to seek sex—to refuse a friend's offer to pay for the evening.

Older, higher-SES men appear to give more leeway for opting out to men in their social groups. They report a wider range of acceptable reasons for not continuing to seek sex, such as exhaustion and work responsibilities, much more readily than do other groups. Older, higher-SES men also seem less likely to threaten to cease being friends with a man who opts out. Older, higher-SES men do express difficulty in saying no to their friends when they are

invited to “go for a walk,” but the threats to end friendships appear less in these men's accounts than they do in younger and poorer men's.

One of the ways that men—particularly married men—rationalize their socializing is by placing the motivation and control for their behavior outside themselves. This can result in men having sex when they began the evening by saying they weren't interested in doing so. This method of placing the locus of control for decision-making outside themselves shifts responsibility for men's drinking and sex-seeking habits onto the EE environment—the alcohol, the alluring women, the sex talk—and also onto socializing men's wives. To accomplish this shift, men rationalize that because they are very drunk it is either unsafe to go home or that they will receive an angry reception once there. And being sexually aroused but without another outlet, they say they have little choice but to go with their friends to a guesthouse or brothel. From the men's perspective, it is self-evident that when aroused and in a red-light district, sex will occur.

If I call [my friend] two or three times and he still doesn't come, I won't call him the next time. We don't need to call if he doesn't want to go! Sometimes I feel respectful of his feelings because I'm afraid he'll say, “Why do you call me so many times?”

*So if he doesn't go, he'll continue his relationship with the group?*

Yes, his relationship with the group continues. [Married, 35-year-old vegetable shop owner]

Sometimes, when we meet friends, we chat about work and about our desire to have sex. Sometimes we ask, “How is your wife? Does she give you a good feeling?” When we feel a little drunk, it is very easy that our urges will go to other people. When we drink a lot, we ask [sex] from our wives, but they are [annoyed] with us that we smell of alcohol. So as we want it and as our wives reject us, it makes us have feelings for others. So it's better to release it outside than just to sleep when we arrive home. [Married, 27-year-old quality control manager]

## The Importance of Alcohol

The centrality of alcohol in men's social lives cannot be overstated. For most men, the only times they can conceive of not drinking when out with their friends is when they are ill. Men say alcohol enhances bravery, allows them to experience happiness, and makes them feel closely bonded to their friends. Men in the study believe that alcohol increases their level of sexual desire and causes them to be more attracted to the women around them.

Drunkenness often causes men to ignore worries—including elevated risk perception—that would otherwise limit their sex-seeking behavior. Even personal contact with someone suffering from AIDS is not enough to convince some men to listen to their family or fears after they are heavily drunk.

Whenever we meet, we drink alcohol. We will have a lot of friends as long as we can drink. If we can't drink, we won't have many friends. We would be alone like we are living in society without any relatives. [Married, 35-year-old cyclo driver]

\* \* \*

I think drinking's necessary. Our meeting would be meaningless without it... drinking is the central point of the meeting. If we drink only pure water, we would find nothing more to talk about. In contrast, when getting alcohol into our bodies, we find it easier to chitchat and to make the atmosphere in the group more exciting. [Unmarried, 23-year-old student]

## Tactics for Opting Out

Men in the study describe a range of tactics for getting their groups to "allow" them to go home before having commercial sex.

A handful of men in the study say they often accompany their friends to a guesthouse or brothel but wait outside with the motorcycles and do not have sex. This form of opting out requires maximum decisiveness and willpower. At this stage of the evening—generally after midnight—most men in the study would have had a great deal to drink and would be in close proximity to women who have been, or could be, paid to have sex. The unifying factor among the few men who *regularly* accompany their friends to guesthouses and brothels but don't engage in sex is that they have made a policy-level decision to never or rarely have sex with entertainment workers. In addition, these men, if married, appear to be unafraid of or minimally impacted by their group-mates' taunts about fearing their wives. The one unmarried man in the study who regularly accompanies his group to karaoke and guesthouses but doesn't have sex is terrified of AIDS due to seeing the "horrible" sight of a formerly plump neighbor waste away from the illness.

Sometimes we go all together. And sometimes we feel scared since my parents and relatives talked about my [AIDS afflicted-] uncle and we also witnessed that. At that time, we thought that he was very rich and happy, yet the disease isn't curable. However, a bit later, we forget those things. And when we're drunk, we forget their advice. We still go. [Married, 35-year-old soldier]

A few married men relate being persuaded to accompany their friends to the guesthouse after being assured that it isn't necessary for them to have sex, but that it is very important to demonstrate solidarity by at least going with the group to its final destination. In the absence of a strong policy-level commitment to not engage in transactional sex, these men say they sometimes go inside and have sex when they did not intend to.

Other instances when men stay with their group for the entire evening but don't engage in transactional sex include when they are too drunk or "don't have the feeling." Younger men in the study report more instances of group-mates being too drunk to have sex; older (and married) men in the study report that some men in their groups opt out while waiting outside a guesthouse or brothel because they are "afraid of their wives" or "don't like girls much."

Sometimes they agree to go but they don't have sex, they just go there to accompany friends because they do not have sexual desire and are afraid of their wives waiting at home. [Married, 28-year-old rice seller]

\* \* \*

If my friends invite me, I go there to dine and sing. In the late evening, after dining and singing, my friends say, "Let's go to have sex." Then I say, "No, I'm afraid of my wife. If you want to go, I can accompany you, but I am not going to have sex." [Married, 35-year-old-soldier]

Men also report many less effective tactics for opting out. For most married men, saying they are worried their wife will be angry if they stay out late or have sex "outside" mainly invites ridicule and enhanced peer pressure from group-mates. Single men living at home are only accorded slightly more leeway if they say their parents will be angry with them if they stay out late. In such cases, the group attempts to persuade the reluctant man to accompany them to the guesthouse to have "only one dish" (sex one time) and then go home.

The claim of being too busy to socialize is ineffective because it represents a tacit prioritization of other activities over the peer group. When a man says to his group-mates that he feels ill and so cannot drink, other members of the group say either that it is okay to not drink but that he should still come out to eat and partake in social activities, or that feeling ill means that he should have only two or three drinks but accompany them for the whole evening.

For example, a friend said he couldn't drink so we said it was not reasonable that he couldn't drink because he drinks every day. If he said he was busy and then we saw him at home then we knew it was just an excuse. If he said he was sick then it was okay.... If he said he couldn't drink, then we told him, "We're only asking you to sit with us." [Married, 35-year-old soldier]



Many men in the study have a fatalistic attitude toward trying to opt out of sex. They say that when their friends pressure them strongly, they are powerless to resist and must continue to the brothel or guesthouse and have sex. In contrast, several men in the study report that after they started declining to accompany their friends for sex, their social group became accustomed to them coming along for all parts of the evening up to the guesthouse or brothel, and then returning home without engaging in commercial sex. These men report peer pressure to stay with the group for sex diminishes rapidly after establishing a new pattern and reputation. It appears to be unnecessary for men to *never* go for sex in order to create new sets of expectations among their socializing groups. Rather, to change the dynamic, it appears to be sufficient for a man to establish with his group that he cannot be counted on to accompany them for sex even when he lacks a certifiably acceptable excuse or reason.

[After refusing sex] people will ask us to go two or three more times and after that they won't ask to go any more. But there won't be any rejection for eating. When we talk about going to karaoke and having girls around us, then I won't decline to join, but I don't go with them to have sex because at that point people now discreetly disappear. [Unmarried, 27-year-old private sector employee]

\* \* \*

Usually, after we refuse two or three times, then no one dares to ask again. People may say that they will go and look for a girl and ask "Are you going to come with me?" But they know that the response will be negative, so they won't force me like before. [Unmarried, 26-year-old government employee]

## Patterns of Partner Selection

Non-brothel-based entertainment workers have played an increased role in commercial sex activity in Phnom Penh over the past decade and most men in the study express a clear preference for them when they can afford and succeed in "wooing" them. However, in all sub-groups in the study, more men report that sex with brothel-based entertainment workers is the norm. Although there are now many more non-brothel-based entertainment workers in Phnom Penh than brothel-based ones, the number of partners each brothel-based woman has may be so much higher that any given commercial sex encounter may still be more likely to involve a brothel-based than a non-brothel-based entertainment worker.

Older and wealthier men report being relatively more likely to have non-brothel-based partners than do less wealthy men. The soldiers in the study (all of whom are age 29 or older), in particular, report a high frequency of non-brothel-based partners. Older men in the study appear to prefer non-brothel-based entertainment workers because they provide more companionship and may become sweethearts. Younger men in the study who have sex with non-brothel-based entertainment workers say they prefer them to brothel-based entertainment workers because they are more willing (or more easily duped) to have sex with a group of men and to have intercourse multiple times in an evening without charging money for each sex act.

The men in the study who say they have sweethearts<sup>16</sup> tend to be older and wealthier. The types of women men reported as sweethearts vary by sub-group. Older men's sweethearts are likely to be non-brothel-based entertainment workers and the relationships usually begin as paying ones. Younger men in the study, particularly students, tend to have sweetheart relationships with students or other young women from "good backgrounds."

## Sex in Groups

Over the past five years there have been numerous reports on the ubiquity of gang rape, or *bauk*, in the press (see, for example Hoenig 2003) and in studies for civil society groups (Tong 2004; Bearup 2003; Wilkinson and Fletcher 2002; Ramage 2002). *Bauk*, the Khmer script symbol for "plus," is the "practice of one or two men hiring a woman for the night and then taking her back to a guesthouse where several more men are waiting" (Wilkinson and Fletcher 2002). Most accounts of *bauk* highlight the trickery and explicit non-consent involved. In the current study, men do not make an ethical distinction between sex involving multiple men and one woman that involves trickery and physical or psychological coercion (that is to say, group rape), and sex involving multiple men and one woman where the woman's consent has been secured at the

point of negotiation. The men who talk about procuring one woman for several men in their group do recognize the practical problem of securing her consent, something that has become more difficult with the attention *bauk* has received and entertainment workers' fears of being tricked. Several men do relate *bauk* narratives in a manner that indicates they are aware that such behaviour is "naughty" and different from episodes where the entertainment worker knows in advance that multiple men will be involved. In the current study, the majority of sex-in-group narratives involve prior consent of the woman.

If I go to the [brothel] only, it's like spending 10,000 riel for just a short time. But if take a girl to sleep for the whole night, I [don't like to go alone]. I have the feeling that I'm not happy because every time when I go, I go in a group. All the full night, we have fun with each other, and with the girl who has sex with us, anyone who wants to embrace her, can embrace her. Going alone is not fun. [Unmarried, 23-year-old mo-bile phone technician]

\* \* \*

When we have sex in a group, it's kind of fun. If we have sex pair by pair, we only have sex with a girl, so we can't joke with one another. And sometimes the girl doesn't know how to joke. Having sex in a group is fun since my friends are very close to each other. For example, in the double room, we can both have sex and chat with each other. It's fun and we can chat the whole night. [Unmarried, 26-year-old pharmaceu-tical company employee]

<sup>16</sup> While questions specifically addressing sweetheart relationships were not part of the study design, some men talked about their sweethearts in the course of describing sex partners and condom use patterns.

There are two versions of having sex with multiple men. In the first, a group of two to five men will bring one woman to a guesthouse and have sex with her serially. Younger men frequently report having this type of sex in a group, usually with a karaoke worker or a park-based entertainment worker. The first explanation men give for this is economic. However, many younger men report that having sex with their friends in the room is more fun and enhances group bonds. Because so much of men's socializing emphasizes spending time with the primary group, for many men in the study, the entertainment worker's presence is valued principally for how the sensations of sexual pleasure add to group happiness. This is particularly the case for younger men in the study, though a few men in their 30s also describe enjoying sharing a woman for sex on occasion.

The second version of sex involving multiple men is nearly exclusively reported by younger men, particularly the students in the study. These men describe bringing one entertainment worker per man to a guest house, but renting double rooms so that couples can have sex in parallel. This is also described as, in part, a way to save money, but is considered a way to deepen the sexual and social experience.

We love each other. So, sometimes though we have money, we rent a room for two or three couples be-cause we don't want to stay separated. When a friend does something, the rest of us want to know, even about that thing. [Unmarried, 21-year-old student]

\* \* \*

Usually, we take one room with two beds... one bed for each [couple] and when we have sex, we always turn off the light.... When we hear the sound, it makes us want more. It's that reason that makes us take one room with two beds. When our friend has sex and we hear, it makes us really want our partner. [Unmarried, 26-year-old salesman]

Men in the study are casual about reported rapes and non-consensual incidences of *bauk*, and all of the non-brothel-based entertainment workers report an acute fear of being tricked into *bauk* assaults. It appears that increased awareness of the prevalence of *bauk* has had an effect on the negotiation process that leads to sex. Non-brothel-based entertainment workers are wary of going with a large group of men, and men trying to "woo" non-brothel-based entertainment workers know that women fear being gang raped.

They asked these [karaoke] girls but they refused.... They refused to go out. Normally, if we wanted to take two karaoke girls out and we had six or seven people, they didn't go. They were afraid that we would have *bauk*. [Married, 34-year-old chicken merchant]

## Risk Perception

Men in the study report their HIV/AIDS risk perception is very high. Nearly all men in the study perceive themselves to be at risk of contracting HIV through sex. Only one man in the study (of 48) says he habitually does not use condoms when having sex with entertainment workers. Men in the study show no concern about transmitting the virus to their sex partners, except for some married men, who do worry about infecting their wives (and children). Men who do fear transmitting the virus to their wives, however, perceive HIV/AIDS to emanate from the entertainment workers they have sex with, rather than themselves.

If the girl is a sex worker, I cannot have sex with her [without a condom], so in that case I have to control myself. I will not let myself fall in a deep well. If neither of us has a condom and we have plans to make love together, I do not need to use a condom if the girl has never had sex before or if she doesn't have sex very often. [Unmarried, 21-year-old student]

Risk perception is often subject to conversation within groups. Some men try to opt out based on heightened risk perception—often when they fear transmitting HIV to their wives. In response to a statement of fear, however, other men in the group will often advise the fearful man that if he is careful and uses a condom, there is nothing to worry about. In this way, the generally heightened risk perception leading to consistent condom use functions as an enabling mechanism for groups to stay together through the purchase of sex.

They say they want to have sex, too. But they would feel sorry for their children and wife, who are at home, if they infect them with the virus or diseases when they are drunk and careless in having sex outside. “It is okay,” we tell them. “If you put the condom on, it will be okay.” When we continue persuade them sometimes they agree to go and have sex with us. [Married, 35-year-old soldier]

Most men remain confident in their ability to sort “safe” from “unsafe” women, though the category “safe women” appears to have shrunk significantly over the past five years. In the past, non-brothel-based entertainment workers were often viewed as “safe” by sex-seeking men. Men in this study say they need to use condoms with non-brothel-based entertainment workers because they cannot be sure which other men they are having sex with. Still, the men in this study describe methods of judging prospective partners’ HIV status similar to those reported in studies over the past decade. However, there appears to be a shrinking number of types of women who remain in the “safe” category. While this is an improvement over the situation of a few years ago, *as long as the sorting mechanism remains in place, men seeking sex who do not want to use condoms will always be on the lookout for women they believe are “safe.”*

One unintended consequence of the 100% CUP and the strong focus on entertainment workers in HIV-prevention efforts is that men have come to equate HIV transmission exclusively with “unsafe women” (and entertainment workers in particular). This has reinforced some men’s reliance on sorting “safe” from “unsafe” women as a means of protection against HIV. Because

efforts to increase condom usage have centered on raising men's risk perceptions, when men feel they are at lower risk, there is an opening for them to think that condoms are not necessary, which gives them an incentive to search for exceptions to the "If I don't have a condom, I won't have sex" mantra that nearly all men in the study initially proclaim.

[With a girl I just met] I still use a condom, but as soon as I know that she is a virgin, I will remove it.

*How do you know she is virgin?*

I examine her body, eyes, lip, breasts, nipples and vagina. [Married, 28-year-old security guard]

\* \* \*

The secret of a person who is used to having sex can be revealed—it's heard from mouth to mouth. I was told what to look for to determine if a girl has had sex often or not. I know that because ... for a girl, we can look at her breast. If her breast and her hips are not firm, that means that she has had sex many times already. [Unmarried, 21-year-old student]

Having internalized the sorting system, men are now able to hold in their minds both generally high risk-perception along with clear ideas about when this sense of peril need not apply. Men do not perceive themselves to be making contradictory statements when they say, on the one hand, "One should use condoms because one cannot tell if a woman is HIV-positive," and on the other, "With that (kind of) woman I do not have to use condoms because she meets criterion A, B, or C."

HIV-prevention messaging that exclusively focuses on the incorrect belief that women who don't have sex very often are safe risks

missing—or even aggravating—a more systemic problem: men's eagle-like watchfulness for the appearance of "safe" women with whom they believe using a condom is unnecessary. This category has certainly become smaller over the past decade, as the 100% CUP and HIV-prevention messaging focusing on the dangers of entertainment workers have gained acceptance. The first, though still problematic, shift was for men to consider non-brothel-based entertainment workers safe alternatives to brothel-based entertainment workers. Now, there is strong evidence that men have begun to view non-brothel-based entertainment workers as less than safe. However, men's desire to find exceptions remains intact. Hence many men view sweethearts—including sweethearts who are non-brothel-based entertainment workers—as safe (or at least safer). And other men, who have begun to perceive sweethearts that are beer promoters or karaoke workers to be unsafe, maintain the exception for virgins, students, and women from the countryside. So long as men's sex-seeking focus is on finding safer partners with whom they believe they do not need to use condoms, the search will go on.

We never expect that we will have sex. We just woo. One of my friends entered X2 and he contacted a woman. They went out together once but did not have sex. They met again and had sex and it was by force. He forced her at Kien Svay, but the woman had already lost her virginity. When he raped her, he did not use condom. He was afraid. I told him, "I don't know how I can help you as you won't help yourself. I told you again and again to protect yourself." He was afraid but the woman turned out to be [HIV-negative]. He was single and now the two of them are in love. But he was lucky because she was okay. [Married, 28-year-old rice seller]



As the risks to married women and other non-commercial partners have become more central to HIV-prevention efforts, at some point<sup>17</sup> men's role in the transmission of HIV will need to be addressed more forthrightly in behavior change communications. Among men in this study there is an extreme lack of concern about the possibility that they might transmit HIV to their partners, especially to other "outside" partners who are not their wives. Men do worry about transmission after unprotected encounters, but it is almost always their own health that they worry about most.

Military personnel in the study all say they have received multiple HIV-prevention trainings, and frequently reference IEC messages about not being able to judge the HIV status of a woman by her appearance. Although they say most of the "correct answers," it appears that they are still coming to terms with the new, less black-and-white reality.

We think about girls who have HIV/AIDS, but who get the Anti Retro Viral injected.... How can we recognize them, for they similarly have fair complexions under the colorful lights? [Married, 29-year-old soldier]

At the extreme margin of risk perception are two married men who say they have ceased engaging in transactional sex due to personalized fear of contracting HIV. A combination of personally knowing someone with HIV, having an active sex life with their wives, and perceiving their own health risks induce in these men the

resolution to resist the pressure from their social companions to seek commercial sex.

I just gave my friends a ride because I have a motorcycle and they don't. If they decided to sleep at the guesthouse, I went back home. If they said, they needed only one hour or so, I waited for them.... I feel afraid... especially of AIDS.... I've come to understand that the reason [for our risk] is because we have a lot of girls, which leads us to be infected by HIV/AIDS. I've also seen that many people hanged or shot themselves because they were living with HIV, so I dare not to do that. Before, I had sex once or two times too but only with village girls I wooed. But now, when my friends ask me to have sex, I dare not to go. I always refuse.... I've already had several blood tests. My friends always say, "You are so thin. You are dying. You've been infected by HIV." [Married, 29-year-old soldier]

## Condom Findings

Many of the current study's findings regarding condoms reinforce those of earlier studies, notably "A Sign of the Times" (2004), "Strong Fighting" (2002), and "Love, Sex, & Condoms in the Time of HIV" (2002), as well as PSI's ongoing TRaC surveys (2006). Evidence in the current study indicates progress in terms of the connection between personalized risk assessment and condom use, strengthened acceptance that condoms *should* be used in all transactional sex, and increased social support for condom use. Anxiety about being seen with condoms continues to depress self-efficacy for carrying condoms.

Condom use is self-reported to be near 100% for most men with commercial

<sup>17</sup> This issue was highlighted by Wilkinson and Fletcher in 2002. The evidence in the current study and others indicates that little progress has been made in getting men to view themselves as integral to the transmission of HIV.

partners, though most interviewees say they know of exceptions in their social groups. Many men report having experienced occasions when they had the opportunity for sex but had no condom and did not go through with it.

I said, “If you have sexual intercourse, you should buy condoms.” He said, “Why should I use condoms, my girlfriend is nice and beautiful and she just came from the countryside.” So I said, “You cannot trust her; you don’t know how many times she has had sex with others.” He replied to me, “I had sex with her one time already, and there was no problem!” Then I said, “Even if it’s only one time, you have to be careful.” He listened to the group and the next time he used a condom. [Married, 28-year-old grocer]

The idea that men must use condoms with all partners (generally but not unanimously excluding wives) now competes with the idea that careful judgment can sort safe from dangerous women. Some men expressed both ideas in the same interview, indicating that while the concept “always use condoms” has been disseminated, it has not become part of the bedrock of men’s decision-making processes.

Condoms are viewed positively by most men. They are seen to be objects that enable them to pursue pleasure. There is overwhelming acceptance of their place in the nighttime socializing milieu.

Social support is reported to be very high in all sub-groups. Nearly all men in the study say that condom use is a subject they frequently talk about in their social groups. Social support appears strongest among

higher-SES men and uniformed personnel. Some men report that their friends who are not regular condom users ignore their advice. More, though, say that they are able to convince friends in their group to use condoms.

Several men in the study, dispersed across all sub-groups, report that intra-group reminders to use condoms during transactional sex come during debriefing bull sessions *after* sex has occurred. (“When you went in there, did you wear a condom?”)

Most men in the study do not differentiate between brothel- and non-brothel-based entertainment workers in terms of the need to use condoms with casual partners. An exception to this is reported by some older, wealthier men in the study with sweethearts who are entertainment workers. These men feel it is unnecessary to use condoms with a non-brothel-based entertainment workers who have become sweethearts.

Extreme drunkenness is named as the main reason men sometimes don’t use condoms with commercial partners. Other reasons men give for why they or their friends sometimes don’t use condoms with commercial partners include: diminished sexual sensation, discomfort wearing condoms, and the extreme beauty of a sex partner, or that, “Everyone else is using condoms so I don’t have to.” The importance this belief was highlighted by “A Sign of the Times” (PSI, 2004). While only two men in one interview talked about this, they did state that it is a commonly held belief amongst men they know.

**R2:** I have one friend who risked having sex though he didn't have condoms. At that time, the prostitute told him that she didn't have condoms and he just slept with her anyway. But, for me I told him that I didn't dare to do so and I went outside to buy some.

*Why did he decide to have sex without condoms?*

**R2:** He said wearing condoms was not comfortable enough!

**R1:** He also said that it's alright because it's only him who didn't wear condoms while the rest wore them.

**R2:** Yeah, that's true that he didn't wear condoms. He said it's okay if only he didn't use condoms. [Married, 29-year-old soldier]

**All:** (Laughing)

**R1:** Yeah, it's common that the people who don't use condoms say that. [Married, 35-year-old soldier]

Consistent use of condoms with girlfriends/sweethearts is, as expected, reported to be lower, though there are significant instances of men speaking forcefully of the need for condoms in these relationships as well. Echoing earlier studies, confidence in a partner's virginity or background, trust, and the fear of being viewed as a potential disease carrier are the major barriers cited for not using condoms with sweethearts. But there are also instances where men report that once a entertainment worker becomes a man's sweetheart, she no longer insists he wear a condom. How safe men consider this behavior appears to be in flux. Several men in the study report trying to convince their friends that entertainment workers are not trustworthy. Other men report they have insisted on wearing a condom with a sweetheart who doesn't want them to.

We said that we wanted to have sex with that [EW] but we didn't know her and so if we didn't use a condom she wouldn't agree. She wouldn't agree to have sex without using a condom.... [My friend] said, "No need to use a condom." But that girl refused it at once. She said though we wouldn't protect ourselves, she would help us to protect ourselves. She wouldn't have sex with us without condom unless we had her to be our sweetheart. Then we could have sex with her without one.... [My friend] had a prostitute to be his sweetheart. Then he had sex with her without condom all the time. He told me that girl had already had a blood test and I told him, "Don't be over confident. Having blood test proves nothing because she is a sex worker. If you can have sex with her without using condom, others also can." [Married, 31-year-old motorcycle taxi driver]

A few men in their early 20s report using the withdrawal method with sweethearts as a proxy for condoms and think this can prevent disease transmission as well as pregnancy.

Self-efficacy is an issue in terms of carrying condoms but not for purchasing them. The need to carry condoms is offset in the minds of many interviewees by the perceived ubiquity and low cost of condoms, both in brothels and guesthouses, and for sale nearby. Younger, unmarried men fear that their parents (and, to a lesser degree, their girlfriends) will discover them with condoms; most married men fear their wives' reactions.

Social norms within men's socializing groups in terms of condom use are strongly in favor of 100% condom use with commercial partners. Most men not only think they must use condoms (in order to proceed with sex) with commercial partners, but they also think they *should* use them. External social norms remain a barrier to condom use, however. As younger men fear their parents' reactions to condoms (and the use to which the condoms

are put) so acutely, the possibility of working to change what parents conclude when they know their children (sons) carry condoms is a possible indirect way of increasing social support for carrying condoms.

Among married men, some interviewees believe that it is important to always use condoms with commercial partners (a few also mention sweethearts) to protect their wives (and families) from HIV. This is not a widely expressed view but may be a place where the fear of stigma and bringing shame to the family, which loom large in the minds of most men who engage in commercial sex, can be deployed. This fits together with some of the core beliefs of Khmer ideal masculinity: to bring honor to the family, to act responsibly, and to have a long-term perspective on the future.

Fears that if one member of a social group contracts HIV/AIDS all members will be viewed negatively is another conjunction where social stigma intensifies social support for condom use and reducing risky sex practices.

I usually encourage my friends by telling them that when they are with a girl, they have to be careful because we go out together and if someone fails to protect himself and gets the disease, I will be named as well. People would say, “Well, I see one of the men in that group has got HIV/AIDS. I think the others will be sooner or later infected.” I don’t want them to say that, so we have to protect ourselves together. We have to be safe in order not to be criticized. [Married, 35-year-old soldier]

Concern about their future—and fears about the cost of contracting HIV—is an important motivator of consistent condom use with direct and indirect SWs among

some younger men. In addition, several unmarried men in their mid-20s say that young people should use condoms even with their sweethearts, to prevent pregnancy, which they understand will cause problems for the woman’s future.<sup>18</sup>

One notable change from earlier studies is the reported infrequency of men attempting to buy their way out of condom use with entertainment workers. No men in the study reported trying to do this—though their reluctance to speak about exchanging money for sex with non-brothel-based entertainment workers may be a masking agent. While some brothel-based entertainment workers reported that men continue to try to convince women of this, none reported that men’s efforts are successful. In both cases strategic under reporting may be occurring, as the men and women interviewed are likely aware that such attempts are the “wrong answer” to tell an interviewer from a public health organization strongly identified with condoms.

The currency of most myths surrounding condoms once-prevalent in Cambodia appears to have diminished significantly. No men reported that they think: condoms cause HIV/AIDS or are deliberately infected with HIV; there is a cure for HIV but condom companies suppress it; HIV/AIDS is a myth; condoms are pierced in the factory; condoms are weak and break easily; HIV is easily transmissible via haircuts and manicures; menstruation (“changing the blood”) allows HIV-positive women to live longer than HIV-positive men. One myth that continues to have wide currency is the specter of a vengeful, HIV-positive entertainment worker who pierces condoms to infect her clients.

<sup>18</sup> Evidence that, as a result of the massive dislocations in Cambodian history, Khmer people rely unduly on short-term thinking (FHI, 2002) has either weakened or was initially overstated.

## Conclusions



The results of the present study reveal the importance of understanding the complex, at times contradictory, character of Khmer masculinity for HIV-prevention programming that targets men who have sex with entertainment workers. Peer pressure and the importance of group identification for the men interviewed make it difficult for them to opt out of commercial sex when socializing with their peers. Reluctance to risk abandonment by friends if they opt out, as well as the strong Khmer cultural emphasis on group harmony and conflict avoidance make independent sexual decision-making difficult or impossible for all but the most confident and self-efficacious men. As a result, many men resort to concocting excuses, which are often unsuccessful, to avoid accompanying their group for transactional sex.

Seeking sex with entertainment workers is considered by men in the study to strengthen group bonds and to be a

demonstration of commitment to friendship. In the abstract, men in the study generally view men who abstain or rarely engage in transactional sex in positive terms. However, while out socializing men tease and taunt their group-mates as being gay or cowardly if they express reluctance to join the group for sex with entertainment workers. Pooling money at the outset of an evening of socializing is a powerful means of producing consensus about where to go and what activities will occur in an evening of men's group socializing. Money pooling also privileges dominant group members and those who are most zealous about sex seeking.

Drinking large quantities of alcohol, believed by most of the men to be indispensable when socializing, is viewed by most of the men as a strong trigger of sexual desire. This compromises men's decision-making ability, including with respect to consistent and correct condom use.



While men in the study have high risk perception in terms of contracting HIV from sexual encounters, and say they always or nearly always use condoms with commercial partners, they remain on the constant lookout for sex partners who they believe are safe and with whom they think they do not need to use condoms. To this end, many men in the study describe using a sorting system based on erroneous ideas about physical characteristics of virgins and healthy women. This is particularly significant with respect to sweetheart relationships. Men in the study indicate that condom use is lower in sweetheart relationships, including those with entertainment workers and younger women, who are presumed to be sexually inexperienced or virgins and hence “safe”.



## Three Archetypes: Tha, Rith, and Sok



### Tha

University student

**T**ha is 24 years old. He is a student at a university in Phnom Penh. Tha is single as are most of his friends. On most weekend evenings, he goes out with five or six friends. Some are students, and one works in a casino. They speak to each other on their hand phones during the day to make an appointment to meet at a soup restaurant or at a friend's house. They gather at 6 o'clock. Tha says they get drunk "so that our friendship becomes closer and closer." They have a lot of free time in the evening and they like going around to see the pretty girls riding motos and at the riverside. To talk about drinking, Tha and his friends use the code "to have a bit." Besides this phrase, they also use "have a glass" and "fanning the fire."

At the soup restaurant, Tha and his group talk about their studies, work, pretty girls, sex techniques, and tell jokes to create a joyful atmosphere in the group. Tha and his group mostly drink Anchor beer, unless they are short on money, when they drink Sneng Toun mixed with soft drinks or Muscle wine. They sit and drink happily, toasting each other when the conversation goes quiet. After getting a bit drunk, Tha gets bolder and talks to the beer promotion girls. He tries to make them laugh by teasing them, "Hey, where do I know you from? Oh, I can't believe you forgot me so soon!"

When they are quite drunk, after they've become aroused by watching the beautiful beer promoters, Tha and his group move from the soup restaurant to sing karaoke at a small place in Tuol Kork. When they arrive at the karaoke place, Tha and his

group touch the girls by "kissing, embracing, and squeezing them with our hands." They usually sing for one or two hours, depending on how much money they have.

Tha and his group say the main factors that lead them to have sex are drunkenness and talking with the beer promotion girls. When Tha and his group look at sexy girls, they get gooseflesh and their saliva flows. Seeing women with "sexy clothes which show parts of their breasts and hot thighs" makes them think of having sex. Tha says their desire to seek sex is triggered by wanting to relieve stress, discussions about girls, and his friends' invitations to have sex.

Tha and his group like using the signal words which related to sex such as: visiting relatives; going to pump water at the pond; giving water to the turtle; restoring your gun head; going for a chick; and going for a walk.

Tha and his group always put pressure on one another to persuade all the group members to go for sex together. If someone refuses to go they say, "If you don't go with us, let's end our friendship." He also tries to convince his friends by saying, "I'll pay for you so you must go"; "You were born a human so you must socialize"; and "Please, don't be such a show off." When one of his friends starts to leave, Tha "grabs his hand and pulls him on the motorbike," squeezing him between two people so he can't get away. To convince a reluctant man, Tha and his group tease him, saying, "coward, you're a man with a female character and a worrier... why don't you become a monk?"

When **Tha** doesn't want to go to have sex with his group, he tries various tactics to get his group to accept his decision. He tells them he has problems with health, family, work, money, or he lacks the urge. For health problems, he says he's exhausted, sick, or having a problem with his penis. Sometimes he says he doesn't have much money, he promises he'll go next time, or that he's afraid to be infected by AIDS. Sometimes, even though his refusal can cause a problem in his relationship with his group, he sticks to his guns and doesn't go with them.

The sex partners of **Tha** and his group are mostly brothel-based entertainment workers from Bun Pav, a guesthouse near Sorya Shopping Centre. **Tha** seeks sex using many different techniques. Sometimes, he takes a girl from karaoke, U2, or Sorya to have sex with his group, which allows them to have sex multiple times in one night for one price. He prides himself on being able to have sexual intercourse four times in one night.

After having sex, **Tha** and his group talk about the girls they had sex with. They say "How many times did you have sex?" "Was it hard?" "What techniques did you use?" "Did you use doggie style?" "I used all 36 techniques."

**Tha** and his friends always think about condoms when they socialize together in the evening because they think that condoms can prevent them from diseases. **Tha** always uses a condom whenever he has sexual intercourse with an entertainment worker. Some of **Tha**'s friends are afraid they might bring the disease to their homes, so they always remind each other to use condoms. "Man! When you have sex with a girl, don't forget to use condom. Your future is still a long way off. If you have sex without a condom, your future will end. If you're infected, you'll die. You have to think about your long future. If you don't think about that, you should think about your parents."

But, once in a while, **Tha** and his friends "forget" to use a condom when they are too drunk. Another reason **Tha** sometimes doesn't use a



condom is due to his trust in his sweetheart: "If we buy condoms to wear, it will damage our intimacy." **Tha** is knowledgeable about how to make sure a condom is dependable: "You check your condom whether it retains air or not." **Tha** and his group are always afraid that condoms might be damaged or torn, and they are also not confident in condoms provided by entertainment workers. They believe that a girl "might have AIDS and she may take a needle to make holes in the condom" in order to "contaminate them."

In **Tha**'s group, some men take condoms with them; others don't because they are embarrassed to keep condoms in their pocket. **Tha** doesn't think it's that important to carry a condom because he gets them on the street or at the guesthouse.

**Tha** admires men who socialize. Such a man must also "know what is good and what is bad in the society," be responsible for work, brave in facing the truth, and be a man of his word. He must schedule time to do work and also for his family; he must love his family and act responsibly to his family. He should be charitable and also be friendly, obedient, honest, sensitive, and humble. He should think about the future, be patient, and control his urges.

On the other hand, **Tha** doesn't respect men who aren't brave enough to have sex, who "refuse to go with us when we ask them," who "feel afraid, shy and can't face girls." These men "behave like girls" and **Tha** labels them a *ngii* or *Katoey*.



## Rith

Army officer

**R**ith is a 32-year-old army officer. Most men in Rith's socializing group are also military men.

Rith gathers with four or five friends two or three times per week, mostly on the weekends. Usually, they gather and eat and drink but don't seek sex, though they are tempted by the beautiful women who serve them beer and food. Rith says that he and his friends go for sex once a week or once every two weeks, but when he was single he used to go for sex almost every night. Although Rith is married, his wife lives in his home province. Unlike other married men in his social group, who live with their wives, Rith does not have to constantly manage his wife's views on his nighttime social activities; he considers only his money situation and level of desire when deciding whether or not to seek sex in the course of a night out with his friends.

Rith and his friends do not know at the outset of an evening out if it will involve sex. Rith says that without drinking, he absolutely won't seek sex and he views alcohol as the primary cause of his sex-seeking desire. Once he has alcohol in his body and there are pretty girls around serving drinks or waitressing, he and his friends will decide to go for sex without having a detailed conversation about it. "When we see waitresses wearing skimpy clothes while we are eating, we start to think about sex. We see her sexy body, her knee, then, we start to measure her vagina."

Even if Rith isn't thinking about sex when at the start of an evening, the conversation while eating at the barbecue or soup restaurant will always turn towards girls. This, combined with getting drunk, turns Rith's mind towards sex and he and his group start discussing which place they will go to find women to sleep with. "We should go to that place," Rith's friend says, "there are a lot of young new chickens there." Rith says this makes the group decide to go for sex.

When Rith wants to go for a night of drinking and sex, he sometimes has to strategize to make sure his friend can come with him. He starts the evening by going to his friend's house to have some drinks. While there, he tells his friend's wife that there is a ceremony at his relative's house and that he'd like her husband to accompany him there. Rith thinks that in most cases wives cannot "keep up with the tricks of their husbands." When speaking to other members of his group about the decision to seek girls for sex, Rith is direct, "Now that we are drunk, we should go find a girl to release our feeling." Most of Rith's friends always agree to go together.

However, Rith does have in his social circle one man who accompanies the group for eating and drinking, and often rides with them when they go to guesthouses for sex, but who never has sex with entertainment workers. Rith's friend says that since he can have sex with his wife for free, he "prefers to save his money for drinking and having soup."



When a member of **Rith**'s social group tries to opt out of the sex-seeking part of the evening, he tells the group that he has a sick relative in the provinces or that his health is not up to going because he has had too much sex recently. When this occurs, the group puts pressure on the man to stay, saying "You can choose to not go with us, but you have to pay for all the food on the table, and also the fee for each girl that we take out." More times than not, this proves persuasive and the group stays together. As **Rith** says, "there is no room for the word 'enough.'"

**Rith** and his group are not immune to the tensions that nighttime socializing places on their relationships with their wives. **Rith** says they have more sympathy for a man who wants to go home before seeking sex if they have seen his wife earlier in the evening. "Though we can have delicious food from heaven," he says, when we see the look on the wife's face and the problems socializing is causing, "we should not ask him to go out; we link the problem to ourselves."

Some men in **Rith**'s group feel the decision about whether or not to seek sex sets their feelings about their wife and family against their friends' desires to preserve camaraderie. **Rith** says that he's usually able to persuade these men to join him to go for sex. **Rith** does this by saying that if his friend uses a condom he doesn't need to fear infecting his wife and children with HIV. If that doesn't work, he might make a joke, "I'm not forcing him to step on a bomb; I just want him to go have sex." To persuade their reluctant companion, **Rith**'s group also accuses him of being gay. **Rith** teases him, saying that "Your wife's face looks like shit, I'm proud that you can even have sex with her." One time, **Rith** physically shoved his friend in front of the girl when he hesitated in the doorway of the guesthouse room.



Despite the intense pressure to not opt out of sex when out socializing, **Rith** admits that on an average evening only three of his group of five will go for sex. The other two will leave the group by saying that their health is not good, that they have to be somewhere early in the morning, or that they are afraid of catching "that disease which results from over-enjoyment."

**Rith** and his friends usually carry condoms with them in Phnom Penh. They are aware, though, that when they go to the countryside condoms will be more difficult to come by. This causes a dilemma: **Rith** wants to protect himself, but rural people "might have the idea that men who have condoms with them must be going to seek sex service for sure." **Rith** says that even when he feels like he will have sex outside Phnom Penh, he's still afraid of "those people's words since they don't understand us and simply think we're bad people." For this reason, he doesn't dare carry condoms with him when he goes to the countryside.

**Rith** and his friends have all received multiple trainings on HIV prevention and say they are aware of the danger from having many partners. They all say they use condoms every time with casual partners but some still refuse to do so with sweethearts, though **Rith** tries to convince them that it's important in order to protect their wives and children.





## Sok

### Cyclo driver

**S**ok is a 30-year-old cyclo driver. He is married. The men in Sok's group are other cyclo drivers and laborers.

Sok gathers with two or three friends in the early evening, after finishing his driving duties for the day. When it's starting to get dark and he feels like people will stop hiring his cyclo, he says to his friends nearby, "Let's go have one or two glasses." They chat about whether they have enough money for drinking and sex, and, if they do, they go to Orussey Market to drink and eat.

If Sok's friends invite him out for an evening but he doesn't want to go for sex, he'll tell them he's not feeling well. He knows that if he starts the night drinking together, he'll definitely go for sex later. In cases like this, Sok says his friends try to convince him because if all members of the group don't agree, none will go. Sometimes they are able to convince Sok and it causes him stress to try to balance the wishes of his group, whom he's known for a long time, and his family, whom he doesn't want to hurt. Usually, Sok says, if he doesn't want to go out, he's able to refuse even when they threaten to stop being his friend.

A few times per week Sok gathers with his friends to chat and drink some palm wine or, if they have enough money, beer, but he usually only goes out for the whole evening and to have sex on a weekend night near the beginning of the month, after he and his friends have received their salaries, which they call "winning the lottery." Sok and his

friends gather to eat, drink, and chat in order to relax from the work day. They are exhausted and they eat to regain their strength and ease their aching backs. Drinking makes them feel a little better and makes it easier to fall asleep.

Sok texts his friends to let them know he wants to get together. Not all of his friends have phones like Sok does; these men call him to set a meeting time and place. He tells them he wants to go for a "transfusion" when he wants to get together to drink, and "to change the oil" when he has enough money to pay for sex.

When Sok gets drunk, he starts to focus on the women around him and his mind becomes glued to the idea of sex. When a girl in a short skirt walks past, he says to his friends, "Oh motherfucker, her ass is very big." This gets them aroused and they go to find sex partners.



Before he got married, and when he had enough money, **Sok** went for sex several times a week. But now he worries about the effects on his health: “I heard a doctor say having sex many times makes people grow old very fast.” He likes to have sex with many different women because “a man should not eat sour soup many days in a row; one should try different foods.”



In **Sok**'s group they take turns paying for the evening's activities. After eating and drinking enough to be a bit drunk, **Sok** and his friends ride two or three on a moto to a brothel in Tuol Kork or sometimes Wat Phnom. They choose the place based on the price, which is usually 5,000 riel to have sex one time. Sometimes, if he is still unsatisfied after sex, he goes to another brothel and chooses another woman.

He does not worry about having sex with many women because he has condoms to protect himself. He uses two or even three if his sex partner seems



unsafe. **Sok** has seen many printed IEC materials, but even before he saw them, he knew about STIs and HIV, having seen many of his friends suffer from an STI that caused them to have bad smelling discharge seven days after going for sex. But, nowadays, **Sok** says that condom information is widely spread so that everyone he knows has a clear idea about the advantages of condoms. **Sok** often tells his friends, “Use condoms to protect yourselves because if you're infected by those diseases, it will be incurable and you will die for sure.”

There is one man that **Sok** knows, another cyclo driver, who says he never uses condoms. That man usually goes for sex several times a week by himself, finding women in the park or fruit sellers. **Sok** thinks it's amazing that this guy hasn't gotten a disease yet. He's proud and defiant about never having used condoms.

Most of **Sok**'s friends rely on their sex partners or the brothels to provide them because they fear being caught with a condom in the pocket and being thought of as a bad guy.

**Sok** almost always carries condoms from the start of the evening and says he won't have sex without one. One night, **Sok** felt the urge to have sex. But the girl told him that she didn't have any condoms. **Sok** wouldn't have sex without them and the woman wanted **Sok** to pay anyway. **Sok** says that she threatened him, so he paid her even though he didn't get to have sex.

# Three Typical Scenarios

## Scenario 1



**Beer Garden → Karaoke → Take  
karaoke girls to a guesthouse**

**Likely participants: Married,  
higher-SES men 27-35**

**M**y group of five friends meets at a beer garden on weekend evenings about 7 or 8 o'clock. While we drink Anchor beer and eat snacks, we chat about work, how money is, and about our struggles in business. Sometimes one member of the group brings up a problem he is having at home, but we don't talk about that for long because "it's not time to think about that stuff; we won't allow anyone to talk about it and affect our enjoyment." If things get quiet, someone will tell a joke and then we'll toast and finish our glasses. Once, we've had a few glasses, the conversation always goes toward girls. My friends and I just take a long look at the sexy singers and beer promotion girls and this make us feel sexually aroused. After that, there is nothing else to talk about besides girls. Some friends brag about wooing girls, or some talked about the beauty of girls. There is nothing more important than talking about girls. One of us will start to flirt with a beer promotion girl or waitress. "Do you remember me? Come sit and eat something with us." Beer promoters sit with us a while and we caress them. As I am a confident man, I negotiate directly about sex. Sometimes, they agree to leave with us to sing karaoke or go directly to a guest-house.

After we've had a lot to drink and it's getting a little late, maybe 10 o'clock, one of my friends says, "Let's go to karaoke for one or two hours." Therefore, we decide to go to karaoke. Another friend says he must go home because his wife will be worried and angry. We usually tell him, "You always put our wife and children above us. You do not think of us, even though we have not met each other for a long time." But we cannot force him to go with us because we

know that he has a lot of work to do; he works at 7 o'clock, so how can we force him to go with us? Even though we tease him, he still goes home early. There is nothing at karaoke except singing, girls, and dancing. While dancing at karaoke, we put our hands on the girls' shoulders and we start to move our hands like a squid or like the CMAG team searching for mines in the field. I insert my hand from the top or from the bottom, softly caress their bodies, squeeze their thighs. When we dance with and hug the girls, a new idea emerges. Because those girls are pretty, we ask them to have sex with us. After we make a deal over the fees, we agree to go to a guesthouse.

Four of us are left. It is 1 or 1:30 and we do not want to go back home because we don't want to knock on the door so late. We will disturb others. And if we stay at a guesthouse, we must have girls. So we ride our motos, one girl with each guy, to the guesthouse. Each of us gets a room and we sleep in pairs, one girl for each. As we go in I tell the others to be careful; that being safe is better than needing treatment. We are rarely careless. Sometimes we share girls. My friends and I take the girls to the rooms. Some minutes later, we see the missed call on our phones. Then we change girls because I want to have a different feeling. I want to know whether another girl has anything important. It ends in the early morning. We leave the guest-house in the early morning light. We leave individually. We give some money to the girls to take a moto. We don't talk then, but the next time we meet each other in the evening, we sometimes tell each other what techniques we used and how many times we had sex.



## Scenario 2

**Evening Restaurant → EW  
pick-up → brothel or guesthouse**

**Likely participants: lower-SES men,  
military men 21-35**



Near the beginning of the month, I meet up with one friend at his house. We have already made an appointment to “change the oil” and so, when I finish driving my cyclo in the late afternoon, I go to his house around 5 o’clock. We have a meal at a simple restaurant, usually a soup place that has good soup and is not expensive. Then we go home to have a bath and meet again at around 8 o’clock.

We meet when my friend gets his salary. I know his mind. When he gets his salary, he will want to go so I always prepare some money. Though it is not enough, I have to prepare in advance. After our baths, we gather at Soun Thmei. It’s a restaurant. It’s small but it’s fun. We drink palm wine there. If we have more money, we’ll drink beer. The other customers are mostly motorcycle taxi drivers and cyclo drivers. We know some of the other guys there who work near us. When we invite them over, some drink with us and others refuse because they have arranged to meet others. Sometimes the group grows to five or six.

My friend praised the waitress. He said she had a good figure and a smooth body. She told us his words made her blood pressure rise. She smiled and said she was black but she was tasty. So then seeing all of the sexy waitresses, we started to think about finding girls. When we are heavily drunk, we think we are not fully happy, so we go to find sex service. My friend says, “Let’s have a bowl of special meat.” If there are men who have joined us we’ll ask, “Now we’re going outside, do you want to go?” Among five of us, if one, two or three go, and the other two don’t, we will go. The others say they are busy and cannot go outside, so we don’t force them. There is no problem. In my

group there is no one who forces the other. They tell us they will be busy the next morning taking their wife, driving their customer, something like that. We cannot force them but we do joke with them and say, “If you don’t go, I will no longer be your friend.” The guy who says no may be afraid of his wife pulling his hair or scolding him, something like that. He says he’s sorry then goes home.

We go to Tuol Kork to get girls, or sometimes to the park. I used to take a girl to have sex with five of us. At that time when we left the restaurant we took a prostitute from the park. There were five of us with two motorbikes and we asked if she alone could stand with us. She said she could as long as we paid her well. Those girls had pimp to take care of them. Since we had five members he charged us \$20. We could negotiate with him. We said we were drunk so we had no energy to fuck her much. We offered him \$15 and he asked for \$17 or \$18. So we agreed with that price. Then there were five of us and only one girl so we took turn to have sex with her like the film performers that appear after one another. We fulfilled our desire and we always slept with her till morning. At 6 or 7 am we let her go back and we also went back to our places. We were always like that.

But now my friend and I usually take one girl for each of us. At the brothel my friend said to the girl, “Er... we don’t need to use a condom.” “No way!” the girl refused at once. She said though we didn’t care about protecting ourselves, she would help us to protect ourselves. She wouldn’t have sex with us without condom, unless we had her to be our girlfriend. After we were finished, we went home.

## Scenario 3



### Barbecue Restaurant → Nightclub → Guesthouse

Likely participants: single,  
higher-SES men 21-27

Well, for my group, I meet them on the weekend. But it's not every weekend that we meet since some weekends we don't have enough money and some have gone to their home province on the weekend, so sometimes we will move it to the weekday instead, Monday or Tuesday. We meet in the evening. We call each other in the early evening to see whether someone has a plan. We usually go to a barbecue restaurant called Moeng Heap, in Tuol Kork. And while we eat, we discuss how much money we should share for tonight, how many people we have, and where we should go. After the discussion, we pool our money. When we are drinking, we talk about simple things like our studies or jobs and so on. However, when we start to feel drunk, we also start to talk about girls like, "Have you got girlfriend?" Some of us said they didn't and others said they already did. Then, once we got heavily drunk, we said our personal signal — "Let's have one." We left at about 10 or 11 o'clock. Like what I said, the barbecue restaurant is just the place where we drink and discuss about money and where to go. So after leaving that place, we go to KTV.

Then when we left that the barbecue place, we felt like going dancing to release our drunkenness. So we went to French Bar. I like going there because it feels like a place for teenagers, but we don't go in the sense of being the Big Brother (Gangster). We go to dance only and because there were foreign girls in that bar. I like seeing them dance. There are both foreigners and Cambodians. When we meet foreigners, we talk with them in English for fun. In that place, there are lots of pretty girls. Our group likes to drink four or five bottles of Budweiser or Heineken.

Then we go to find girls to have sex. We go only when we have money or good luck. In my group, we go only when we all want to go. If there is one or two among five of us doesn't go, we go back home after drinking and maybe eating something a bit more if we feel hungry. Some guys try to leave because they're afraid of their family blaming them, they are unable to not go home at night, if we persuade them, they mostly go with us to only to have sex once or twice, and then they return home, as they're unable to stay with us till morning. We tease him, saying, "You're so afraid of your family you don't dare take a night off; afraid of being beaten by your mom, afraid of being yelled at by your father and not allowed to enter the house." Then that friend says that "I'm not like that but I still can't go."



We find girls in the park or near Sorya Market or in front of U2. They're not too expensive, the maximum one only \$15 for a pretty girl, and they also have girls for \$10 at U2, which is safe like Sorya. They don't cheat us. As soon as the money falls into the pimp's hands, the girl goes with us. And when we bring the girls to the guest houses we have to pay \$5 more for the room.

We encourage each other to use condoms. We say that using one is better than not because we are afraid. We cannot see HIV. It is dangerous all the time. We may lose our whole life if we are careless only one time. So we tell each other, and we all accept them.

Usually we have sex as a group. Sometimes, we have two couples in a double room. And sometimes, when there is only one girl, two or three of us will have sex with her. We do it that way to save money but also because it's kind of fun. If we have sex only in couples, we can't joke with one another. And sometimes the girl doesn't know how to joke. Having sex in [a] group is fun since my friends are very tight with each other. For example, in the double room, we can both have sex and chat with each other. It's fun and we can chat the whole night.

In the morning we tease each other. If we have a separate room, some friends will not believe us. Therefore, we can talk about it again in the morning and we can have more fun as well. We give the girl money for a moto, then we split up and go home.



## References

- Bearup, Luke S. (2003), "Paupers and Princelings: Youth Attitudes towards Gangs, Violence, Rape, Drugs and Theft," Gender and Development for Cambodia.
- Bühler, Markus, et al (2006), "Turning the Tide: Cambodia's response to HIV & AIDS 1991-2005," UNAIDS.
- Connell, Robert (2000), "Understanding Men: Gender Sociology and the New International Research on Masculinities," Clark Lecture, University of Kansas, 19 September 2000.
- Gorbach, Pamina M., et al (2006), "Changing Behaviors and Patterns among Cambodian Sex Workers: 1997-2003," *Journal of Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome*, Vol. 42: 242-247.
- Hoa, Tran Duc, et al (2006), "Behind the Pleasure: Sexual Decision-Making among High-Risk Men in Urban Vietnam," FHI working papers on HIV Prevention, Care, and Treatment in Vietnam.
- Hoenig, Henry (2003), "Cambodia's penchant for gang rape grows more common," *San Francisco Chronicle*, October 26, 2003.
- Lind van Wijngaarden, Jan W. de (2003), "Broken women, virgins and housewives: Reviewing the socio-cultural contexts of sex work and gender in Cambodia," UNESCO Bangkok.
- Lowe, David (2003), "Perceptions of the Cambodian 100% Condom Use Program: Documenting the Experiences of Sex Workers," Policy Project.
- NCHADS press release (28 June 2007), "Government announces official HIV prevalence rate," [www.nchads.org/pressrelease/28-06-07%20en.pdf](http://www.nchads.org/pressrelease/28-06-07%20en.pdf).
- Oppenheimer, Edna (1998), "Preventing HIV/AIDS: Outreach and peer education for direct commercial sex workers in Cambodia (1995-1998)," National Center for HIV/AIDS, Dermatology and STD (NCHADS), Phnom Penh, Cambodia.
- PSI/Cambodia (2005), "Tracking Results Continuously (TRaC) Survey among Sexually Active Men with Sweethearts (SAMS) in Phnom Penh, Cambodia. First Round".

- PSI/Cambodia (2006), “Tracking Results Continuously (TRaC) Survey among Sexually Active Men with Sweethearts (SAMS) in Phnom Penh, Cambodia. Second Round”.
- PSI/Cambodia (2004), “A Sign of the Times: Sexual practices and condom use among trust-ing relationships”.
- PSI/Cambodia (2002), “Love, Sex and Condoms in the Time of HIV: Sweetheart Relationships in Cambodia”.
- Ramage, Ian (2002), “Strong Fighting: Sexual Behavior and HIV/AIDS in the Cambodian Uniformed Services,” FHI.
- Tong, Soprach (2004), Study of Motodup Drivers’ Knowledge of *Bauk*, CARE and GADC.
- Tarr, Chou Meng and Peter Aggleton (1999), “Young People and HIV in Cambodia – Meanings, Contexts and Sexual Cultures,” *AIDS Care* 11(3): 375–384.
- Tarr, C. M (1997), “Imagining Desire: the sexual cultures of paid recreational sexual activity between young Vietnamese women and their young Cambodian male clients,” Issues paper prepared for the second technical consultation on transnational population movement and HIV/AIDS in South East Asian Countries.
- Van Landingham, Mark, et al, (1998), “In the Company of Friends: Peer influence on Thai Male Extramarital Sex,” *Social Scientific Medicine*, Vol. 47, No. 12: 1993-2011.
- Wilkinson, David and Gillian Fletcher (2002), “Sex Talk - Peer Ethnographic Research with Male University Students and Waitresses in Phnom Penh,” Unpublished document produced for PSI/Cambodia.

## Appendix A: Typical Venue Sequences

	Respondent	1	2	3	4	5
1	22-year-old cyclo driver	Friend's workplace, DN Guesthouse	Karaoke at Tuol Kok at place that also had rooms in back to have sex			
2	23-year-old cyclo driver	Soup Restau- rant at Dey Hoy Market	Bar XO	Riverside	Tuol Kok to pick up girl	GH behind Sorya Market
3	25-year-old unemployed	Friend's house near Old Market (check out new high tech stuff)	Drive motos around New Garden	Sorya Market (eat and drink soft drinks)/Oh Resey Market (eat and drink soft drinks)	Spark	Tuol Kork brothel
4	31-year-old motorcycle taxi driver	karaoke (one- stop-shopping, including sex in adjoining bathroom)				
5	28-year-old cyclo driver	Soun Thmei (evening rest.)	Kandal Market (Palm Wine Shop)	Wat Kos High School (drink beer)	Tuol Kork (karaoke)	Brothel (6) went home with friends, drank for 30 minutes, then slept
6	30-year-old cyclo driver	Chark Tamouk (bar) 6pm	Tuol Kok bar	Tuol Kok bargirl or DSW to GH	Grilled Beef Rest.	Take BP girl or park girl to GH
7	28-year-old security guard	Kbal Thnal (Evening Restaurant)	Disco/Bar Chhouk Tep (Dancing)	Guesthouse	Porridge Restaurant	
8	32-year-old motorcycle taxi driver	Own house or friend's house	Kbal Tnorl (grilled beef restaurant)	Tuol Kork (brothel)		
9	35-year-old cyclo driver	Orussey Market	Tom Nob at Tuol Kok (brothel)			
10	31-year-old cyclo driver	Riverside to drink wine	Park to find woman	Wat Phnom GH		
11	21-year-old student	Water Park	Beer Garen w/KTV	Bar (The Rock)	Guesthouse	

	Respondent	1	2	3	4	5
12	26-year-old jeweler	Construction worksite	Park at Channel 11 Stage	Dancing Place (Spark)	Brothel	
13	26-year-old private company staff	Chaktomuk Bar (eat, drink, find girls)	GH			
14	22-year-old camera man	First Night (Beer Garden)	Chak Angre/ Mlob Khob (Beer Garden)	XO karaoke		
15	24-year-old student	Pheaktra Twin Restaurant	Golden City (dancing)	Sit in front of bars and pick up women	GH	
16	25-year-old student	Friend's house → Reatrey Singapore (B.G.)	French Club (dancing)	Bun Pao to get girl	GH	Rice noodle shop
17	22-year-old government employee	Reatrey Soben (Food Shop)	Psar Tapang (karaoke)	Mlob Mien GH	Eat something	
18	25-year-old student	Atak Roast Beef Restaurant	Karaoke U2	Find girls behind Sorya Market	Boeung Kak GH	
19	22-year-old student	Friend's house	Roast Beef at 91	Pick up girls at Vimean Tip or Chhay Hour	GH	
20	25-year-old student	Royal University of PP	Roast Beef Restaurant Tuol Kork	Karaoke (near Moin Ang market)	Pick up girls	GH
21	23-year-old student	Barbecue Restaurant	Karaoke	Guesthouse		
22	25-year-old student	Restaurant near NAGA	Sool karaoke	GH		
23	23-year-old mobile phone song entry technician	Soup Restaurant	Karaoke	Bar/Disco	Hotel w/girl	
24	25-year-old hotel employee	Friend's house	Cham Ka Mon Beer Garden	Karaoke 168	Riverside w/karaoke girl	GH 655 at Dem Kor Market
25	28-year-old private company staff	Riverside (make calls to plan gathering)	Kbal Thnal (Roast Beef Restaurant)	Tonle Sap (Disco/Bar)	Boeung Kok Guesthouse with Tonle Sap Bar Girl or brothel at Sorya	



	Respondent	1	2	3	4	5
26	26-year-old chicken merchant	Own house	Dei Krohorm restaurant	Bun Pao G.H.	Spark for dancing	
27	34-year-old chicken merchant	Tror Chak Chit karaoke [note: said no sex at screening]	or 168 karaoke	or Happy Happy Restauant (also karaoke with massage and GH)	or Happy Night BG and bring Beer Girls to Happy Happy Restaurant	
28	28-year-old grocer	Sek Meas BG at Boeng Ta Bek	Bok Kour karaoke 9:30-12:30	took girls from karaoke or Silep or Sorya Markets to various GHs	or Bun Pao or Pon Le Chan brothel	
29	35-year-old vegetable merchant	grilled beef at Twin at Lo Tek Sam Ouy	BG at round-about Phsa Dem Thkov	Pon Le Chan at Soriya	Eat desert	go home
30	27-year-old shoe seller	His house to play chess and wait for others	Malob Svay BG	Arun Reah Park BG/evening rest.	karaoke at Mean Huor	Heng Heng GH in front of Sorya
31	27-year-old marketing staff	U2 for dancing	07 karaoke near Kampuchea Krom	Kim Hak GH along Kampuchea Krom St.	directly home	
32	29-year-old shoe seller	Bor Kor BG	Bun Pao GH (only “two” times)	always goes home		
33	28-year-old rice seller	Roast Beef Restaurant where they drink herbal wine	karaoke near Phsa Tapaing (no girls there)	Gold Star for dancing (when they don’t want sex)	Take girls from Building Zone or Sorya Market to guesthouses (Bun Pao)	or go to Tuol Kok brothels
34	27-year-old private sector administration	Soun Reatry BG	Spark (or U2) for dancing	karaoke at Phsa Tapaing (to find girls and drink)	Vietnamese places in Bun Pao	
35	27-year-old quality control in a factory	Phnom Meas BG	Spark for dancing	get girls at Chuk Tep	take girls to Prom Bayon GH near Lux cinema	[sometimes wander the park in front of the Royal Palace if don’t go for sex]
36	35-year-old soldier	dine and meet friends at home	karaoke at Preak Leap	TK for sex		
37	29-year-old soldier	meet at his guard post	Bopha Leak Khoun Rest. (across the bridge)	Navy Rest. for soup	Tomnorb in TK for desert	massage or sex at GH near Tuol Sang Ke

	Respondent	1	2	3	4	5
38	35-year-old soldier	friend's house or evening rest.	karaoke at Preak Leap or Chay Hong	take karaoke girls to GH for sex		
39	35-year-old soldier	Bopha Lek Klourn evening rest. on Twin St.	Doung Pi Kam Bet rest. in Indra	find girl at Chhouk Tep	Aspara GH for whole night	
40	35-year-old soldier	pub in TK	karaoke in Svay Pak	got girl in Svay Pak	GH in TK	
41	32-year-old soldier	meets friend at his ship	Kbar Knal Steakhouse	karaoke at Chai Hong	Coining near Cherry Changva Bridge	Moha Leap, Tuol Kok GH, asks GH guard to bring him a woman
42	27-year-old private company employee	Sra Tapae BG	Leang Thuor karaoke (also has GH where some in group go for sex; he says he never does; well, almost never)	Chhouk Tep Hotel		
43	27-year-old private company employee	make appointment to meet in front of Royal Palace	Miss Kea's evening rest. near Boeung Leap	X-Gold karaoke	Ly Meng GH (has own supply of girls)	
44	26-year-old government employee	Delicious Barbecue rest.	karaoke	take karaoke girls to Bun Pao GH		
45	23-year-old accountant	Moeng Heap BBQ	X-Gold Karaoke	porridge at riverside w/ktv girl	GH (home at 3am)	
46	26-year-old pharmaceutical company employee	Ariance BBQ/ BG	Highway karaoke	ride around in front of Royal Palace; eat porridge, noodle, fruit juice w/ktv girls	GH near Boeng Trabeak (w/karaoke girl)	
47	21-year-old university student	Prek Leap evening rest. at riverside	friends take partners to GH; he goes home			
48	24-year-old IT student	Friend meets at his home	Beer Garden near Vimean Tep	Spark	Cobra Karaoke	Heng Long GH near Orussey Market

## Appendix B: Expressions Relating to Sex

### Relating to seeking women to have sex with; sex acts:

- To go for a walk
- Let's go to the regular/usual place (said by one man to another indicating desire to seek sex)
- Let's go to our old place (same as previous)
- Finish the last glass and go to another place
- I want to have one
- Paddle a boat (*tov aom tuk*)
- Stab a knife
- Insert one
- Boxing
- Attack one
- Fighting/fight one
- Go and hit one (*veay muy*)
- Put in the pillar
- Go dig a well (written as “go dig a pump” in the transcript)
- Going to eat (or find) chicken
- To eat oyster
- Let's have a bowl of special meat (or dog meat = *tov si sacc chao*)
- Let's go eat steamed bread
- To get red (red refers to female genitalia)
- “When I went to buy bread there were a lot of styles...”
- “I heard that that place has KANTROB Fish. They are grilling a lot of KANTROB Fishes. I want to eat them. So, let's go to eat.” [Kantrob fish are flat]
- Eating a small plate of sweets (sex one time and go home)
- Eating a large plate of sweets (stay all night)
- “Do not eat sour soup many days in a row; one should change food” (proverb that gets re-interpreted in sexual terms)

- The food at home seems to be monotonous. Sour soup still remains sour soup. We need to look for non-sour soup outside
- *sitestes* (literally = to eat little by little; to take a girl for sex even if she's not highly desired)
- Put a bottle of wine or two bottles of wine (have sex once or twice)
- Flying the plane
- Riding on top of the car
- Hitting stomachs
- Let's go have it "washed away"
- Have one/two/three dishes (sex one/two/three times in a night)
- Restore your gun head (*sda ka nong*)
- Change the oil (referring to eliminating old semen)
- To drain the well
- To refresh the cannon
- Clean the machine
- Save the animal (ejaculate/release sperm to alleviate the pressure/back-up; "since we're already here (with a girl/at the guesthouse), why not save the animal's life?")
- *bandos kouy* (to throw cards in suits; to release sexual desire by having sex)
- Go to the broken coconut shell
- Get red (referring to a woman's vagina)
- "Want to go to my uncle's house?" (said to prospective partners)
- To visit the relatives/uncle/aunt
- Going to pump water at the pond
- Giving water to the turtle
- Shoot it out (withdrawal method)
- Betray the country (have sex all night)
- Throw water outside the sink (have sex with woman who is not one's wife)
- Carry the plough on the shoulder (sexual position or style)
- Climb the mountain (sexual position or style)
- Crocodile opens its mouth (sexual position or style)

- Monkey raises its leg (sexual position or style)
- To shoot Bluetooth (or shooting for Bluetooth)
- “I don’t feel well. I’ve got a temperature.”  
(Said to friends to let them know speaker would like to seek sex.)
- Let’s go play snooker
- Blow the whistle
- Penalty kick
- Go to have *ma poch* (have sex one time)
- Go to *puch puch* (slang-only term for sex)
- Fight the old chief (have sex with an EW)
- To have a party for my little child/son
- To have a celebration for my little brother
- *dak muy poy* (small wad of pith used in traditional medicine; burnt on the skin to effect a cure; used as euphemism for having sex)
- Go sleep with the cat

### Non-intercourse sex activities:

- Some girls eat ice cream (perform oral sex)
- Rub/chop the bamboo shoot (masturbate/hand job)
- “I don’t want it like that. Since her breasts are big like that, I want to hang them up and make my penis caress the middle part of her breasts. I may have a strange feeling.”
- While at the karaoke and when we got drunk, we put our hands on their shoulders, usually we start to move our hands like a squid or like the CMAG team, which is searching for mines in the field.
- Regret the village (m→f manual stimulation; village=vagina; “to the regret of the village” could mean that because no children are produced, society frowned on this as a substitute for reproductive sex)
- Pull the grass (m→f manual stimulation—in this case as a substitute for intercourse when the man doesn’t have the desire)
- Kid of a colonel (masturbation)
- Five sons of the general (masturbation)



# Appendix C: Sample Narrative Discussion Guide

## Small Group Discussion Moderator Guide—CLIENTS

### Interview One (Narrative)

#### 1. Introduction (5 minutes)

Hello. First, I'd like to thank you for coming to this discussion today. This will be the first of two interviews with this group. Each discussion will last about 90 minutes. The next one will be \_\_\_\_\_. Can you all make it then?

My name is \_\_\_\_\_. I'd like each of you to say your name—or the name you'd like to be called for today's discussion—and where you work. I'll start: My name is \_\_\_\_\_, and I work for PSI.

[Ask the participants to introduce themselves]

\_\_\_\_\_ will be our note-taker today. He will be taking notes so that we make sure we learn as much as we can from your stories.

We are eager to learn from you about what you and your friends do in the evenings in your leisure time, what you do for fun, who you hang out with, and how decisions are made by individuals and in groups. We will also be talking about sexual behavior, including having sex with entertainment workers and other sexual encounters that result from an evening of socializing with friends.

We would like to tape record the conversation because your thoughts and opinions will help us develop campaigns to improve men's health.

No one except the researchers will hear your words. Your name will not be used in the study and your words will never be connected with your name. The voice recordings will be destroyed after the study is completed. Do you agree to have the conversation tape recorded?

In this discussion, there are no right or wrong answers. We want to hear your thoughts, descriptions, and stories based on your personal experiences. We encourage you to speak just like you are talking to your friends. Please feel free to use sensitive language to describe your experiences.

Please don't judge the opinions of others if you disagree with them. If you don't agree with something that someone has said, please feel free to share your view in a respectful manner. Let us respect the experiences and opinions of others and I invite you to express your own.

If you have a mobile phone, please switch it off for the duration of the discussion.

It is very important for us to hear from each of you, so please speak up and speak clearly. For this kind of research, details matter. Please be as specific and descriptive as you can be.

When one person is speaking, the others should listen carefully and not interrupt. This shows respect for the speaker. The things discussed should remain within the group. This particularly applies to sensitive topics and stories.

I will not be expressing my opinion. My job is to manage the discussion so that each of you can speak and can be heard. If I interrupt you and change the topic, please don't be disappointed. We have a lot on the agenda and so I may sometimes have to move the discussion along. Are there any questions?

## **2. Warm-up (5 minutes)**

Okay, let's get started:

"What is your favorite place to go for an evening of socializing? And what do you like about it?"

## **3. Narrating a typical night out (2-10 minutes per participant)**

We want to understand what happens when you and your friends go out for an evening of socializing that ends with at least one person in the group having sex. We'd like you to tell us a story about what happens – where people you know hang out, what your group does, how decisions are made, and when and with whom people you know have sex. Each of you will have a chance to tell a story.

Before we start, please take a few minutes to think about one particular evening. Please discuss with the other participants what people you know like to do on a night out. We have given you a timeline with a beginning and an end. You can use it to indicate the order of events. Do you have any questions about what we are asking?

[Moderators give the participants 5 minutes to think about and discuss their stories.]

Please use the timeline to describe what happens when you or people you know go out socializing in the evening. Who would like to begin?

[If the first man is having trouble telling his story—it's too short or lacking in detail, guide him using the following stages:]

You can use the following stages to give us some more details about men that you know:

**First step:** Please begin at the time and place where you gather with your friends. Describe your activities and discussions at the first gathering place. And how do you decide to go to the next place?

**Second step:** Describe your activities and discussions at the second gathering place. How do you decide to go to the next place?

**Third step:** Continue for each location until you get to the end of the evening.

[Don't interrupt the men as they tell their story. If they get stuck, or skip to the end quickly, you can prompt them:]

- 1) "What happened next?"
- 2) "Can you go back to the part where you were talking about \_\_\_\_\_ and tell us what happened next?"

#### **4. Probing for details and decisions (15-20 minutes per participant)**

[At the end of each man's story, you will guide him through a series of questions to make sure the story is clear and to get more details. If one of these points has been made clear already, you do not need to ask a question about that item. **Remember, you are trying to get a vivid and detailed description, like a movie.**]

[The establishment:]

- 1) "How does your group gather together?"
- 2) "What is the first subject of conversation?"
- 3) "In the bar/establishment, what would the people be drinking?"
- 4) "Would they be sitting at tables or standing up?"
- 5) "Is it a large establishment? How many customers are there on a typical night?"
- 6) "What are the other customers like? What jobs do they do?"
- 7) "Is there music playing? If so, what?"
- 8) "Are many people at other tables talking?"
- 9) "Please describe where men and women are in the establishment."
- 10) "What topics do you and your friends talk about?"

- 11) “Does your group interact with people you didn’t arrive with, or who are at other tables? If so, what do you talk to them about?”
- 12) “Does your group interact with beer girls or waitresses? What do you talk to them about?”
- 13 “What causes you to first think about sex?”
- 14) “What (or who) causes the group to act on this?”

### [Deciding to move:]

- 15) “Do you move to another establishment if your group is interested in meeting women to have sex with? If so, where do you go?”
- 16) “How does the group decide when to move?”
- 17) “What does the group talk about to make the decision?”
- 18) “What happens if all men don’t agree?”
- 19) “What is said to the person who doesn’t agree?”

### [Deciding to have sex:]

- 20) “When contact is made with a woman that one of the men wants to have sex with, where does this happen?”
- 21) “Do the men discuss it in the group before this contact is made? If so, please tell us what is said.”
- 22) “Do other men give their opinions about that woman? If so what do they say?”
- 23) “Does the group decide **as a group** that they will have sex that night? How does this conversation go?”
- 24) “If one man doesn’t want to have sex but others do, what does he say?”
- 25) “How do the others react?”

### [The sexual encounter:]

- 26) “Please describe what happens when one of your friends decides to have sex with a brothel-based sex worker/beer promoter/massage girl/karaoke girl.”
- 27) “Where does it happen?”
- 28) “Do people you know go as a group to the same place to have sex with SWs?”
- 29) “How do they decide where to go?”

## 5. Transition to another story

Do either of you [the men who aren't telling the story] have any questions or things you want to know about the story that \_\_\_\_\_ has been telling?

- 1) "Do you have a clear picture of what happens when \_\_\_\_\_'s group goes out?"
- 2) "Do either of you have anything you'd like to ask \_\_\_\_\_?"

Thank you \_\_\_\_\_. Now let's move on to the next story. Who would like to go next?

[REPEAT THE EXERCISE WITH THE OTHER TWO PARTICIPANTS]

[If the second or third man says his story is the same as another man's, tell him:]

"Every story is unique, even if some are similar. We are interested in your life and the stories that you have experienced. So, please start at the beginning of the timeline, and tell us about what happens with the men that you know."

## 6. Wrap-up (5-10 minutes)

- 1) "Thinking about the stories you have told, is there anything you feel like you left out?"
- 2) "When a night of socializing is finished, what are the most memorable parts for you?"
- 3) "What did you find interesting about the other men's stories?"

Thank you for telling us your stories today.

We will all meet again next week \_\_\_\_\_ [date and time] here in the same place. We will contact you during the week to confirm that there is no problem with the schedule of the next interview.

Thank you again.

[Give incentives]



# Appendix D: Sample Second Discussion Guide

## Small Group Discussion Moderator Guide—CLIENTS Interview Two

### 1. Introduction (5 minutes)

Hello. Welcome back. Thank you for coming to talk to us again. Let's refresh our memories. My name is \_\_\_\_\_. Please re-introduce yourselves and we'll be almost ready to get started.

[The participants introduce themselves]

\_\_\_\_\_ will be our note-taker today. He will be taking notes so that we make sure we learn as much as we can about your experiences.

We had a good discussion last time, when we heard stories about a typical night out with friends that results in sex. I think we learned a lot and we're eager to learn more from you today about the social lives of people you know.

This is the second and final interview with this group. Like last time, this discussion will last about 90 minutes. We would like to record the conversation because your thoughts and opinions will help us develop campaigns to improve men's health.

No one except the researchers will hear your words. Your name will not be used in the study and your words will never be connected with your name. The recordings will be destroyed when the study is complete. Do you agree to have the conversation recorded?

Like last time, in this discussion there are no right or wrong answers. We want to hear your thoughts, descriptions, and stories based on your personal experiences. We encourage you to speak just like you are talking to your friends. Please feel free to use sensitive language to describe your experiences.

Please don't judge the opinions of others if you disagree with them. If you don't agree with something that someone has said, please feel free to share your view in a respectful manner. Let us respect the experiences and opinions of others and I invite you to express your own.

If you have a mobile phone, please switch it off for the duration of the discussion.

It is very important for us to hear from each of you, so please speak up and speak clearly. For this kind of research, details matter. Please be as specific and descriptive as you can be.

When one person is speaking, the others should listen carefully and not interrupt. The things discussed should remain within the group. This particularly applies to sensitive topics and stories.

## 2. Warm-up (5 minutes)

Okay, let's get started. First, I'll summarize the stories that you told last time to refresh our memories.

\_\_\_\_\_ (Client A), you told us about.... Is that right?

\_\_\_\_\_ (Client B), you told us about.... Is that right?

\_\_\_\_\_ (Client C), you told us about.... Is that right?

[These summaries should be very short, about three or four sentences.]

- 1) "How was your week? Did you have the chance to go out socializing with your friends since we last met?"
- 2) "What did you do? Did you have fun?"

## 3. Influencers (20-25 minutes)

Let's start out by making a list of all the things that men like about going out with their friends in the evenings:

For the men that you know, what are the things they like the most about going out in the evenings? Let's see if we can think of all the reasons men like to go out socializing in the evenings.

[Using a marker on small note cards, list all of the factors the men suggest. If they get stuck, prompt them with suggestions. Examples: camaraderie; pretty girls; drinking; music; singing; relaxing; time away from family; taking their mind off work pressures; excitement; sex, etc.]

- Can you rank this list from most important to least important for you and your group?
  - 1)
  - 2)
  - 3)
  - 4)
  - 5)...

- Please describe what you like about each factor in the ranking.
  - Which of these factors makes you think about sex?
  - What about \_\_\_\_\_ [whichever they list as being connected to sex] do you think makes you think about sex?
  - Does \_\_\_\_\_ [whichever they list as being connected to sex] provoke you and your friends to start talking about having sex?
  - What do you and your friends say?
- When the subject of sex comes up while you are out socializing with your friends, how do you feel? [examples: excited; nervous; thirsty; worried about what your wife/girlfriend will think; worried about letting your friends down if you leave]
    - Do men ever discuss these feelings?
    - What do they say?
    - What is the reaction of his friends if a man talks like this?
- What are the things that men say or do to each other to convince their friends to go for a “second round?”
    - Can you think of any very funny things men say in this situation?
    - Any very dirty or rude things?
    - Any mean things?
- Is it frustrating when a man wants to make a decision about sex that is different from the rest of the group?
    - If yes, can you describe a situation when a man expressed frustration in this kind of situation?
    - What did he say?
    - How did the group react?
- Have you ever talked to anyone about the pressure to go along with the group?
    - If yes, with whom?
    - If no, have you heard of others talking about the group pressure?

- What did you hear?
- Why do you think it's important to the group to encourage all the friends to stick together when they go for a "second round"?

#### 4. Condom acquisition (10-15 minutes)

- When socializing, when do you first start thinking about condoms?
  - While socializing, do your friends ever discuss whether they already have condoms?
  - Do they talk about whether they should buy some for the evening? What do they say?
  - If so, where and when does this conversation happen?
  - If some men in the group have a condom already but some don't, what happens?
- Do men ever encourage each other to obtain and use condoms?
  - If so, what do they say?
  - Can you remember a specific conversation between two men about this? What was said?
- Do some men rely on entertainment workers to supply condoms?
  - What happens in these cases if the entertainment worker doesn't have any?
  - Do some men decide not to have sex if they don't have a condom?
  - Can you remember a specific time when this happened? Please describe this if you can.

#### 5. Positive deviants (15-20 minutes)

- When your group has decided to go for a "second round," do you ever decide NOT to join them?
  - Can you describe a time when this happened?
  - What did you say to your friends?
  - How did they respond?
  - What is the hardest thing about implementing a decision to not join your friends?

- Do you know any men who don't feel the need to go for a "second round" with the group?
  - Can you describe a man like this?
  - What do the other people in his social circle think of him?
  - When men speak about him when he isn't around, what do they say?
  - How do men feel about his ability to say "no"?
  - Are there any consequences for men who often refuse to join their friends for the "second round"? What are they?
- Can you think of words [adjectives or expressions] that are used to describe men who have many sex partners?
  - Please list as many as you can think of:

[write on small slips of paper]

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

- Can you think of words [adjectives or expressions] that are used to describe men who have only one sex partner or who refuse to ever go for a "second round"?
  - Please list as many as you can think of:

[write on small slips of paper]

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

[MAKE SURE YOU GET THE MEN TO CLARIFY ANY WORDS OR TERMS YOU ARE UNFAMILIAR WITH OR UNSURE ABOUT.]



## 6. Definitions of masculinity/manliness (10-15 minutes)

Now I'd like to talk for a few minutes about what you think makes a "real" [a man who is a man]. If you think about the men you know, which ones fit this description and which ones are not "real" men at all. Please think about how you can tell one is a "real" man and the other is not.

- What do you think makes a man a "real" man ["man who is a man"]?
  - What do men do to show that they are "real" men?
  - Please describe the characteristics of "men who are men."
  - Please describe the characteristics of "men who NOT men."
- How does going to entertainment workers help to define men as "real" men?
  - Do men ever talk about other men who rarely or never visit entertainment workers?
  - What do they say about them?
  - Are there labels that men use to talk about men who rarely or never visit entertainment workers?
- What are the characteristics of men that you admire?

[Get participants to list terms.]

  - Can you explain why you think these are good characteristics for a man to have?
- What are the characteristics of men that you don't respect?

[Get participants to list terms.]

  - Can you explain why you think these are bad characteristics for a man?

## Wrap-up (5 minutes)

Thank you for your participation in this study. It's has been a pleasure talking to you. Is there anything you would like to add to our conversation?

Thank you again.

[give incentives]