Protecting the Unprotected
Drug-Use, Sex-Work and Rights in Pakistan’s Fight Against HIV/AIDS

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1. Objectives
To investigate the nature and scale of HIV/HIV risk practices among vulnerable groups (injecting drug-users and sex workers) and their human rights violations may exacerbate those practices.

2. Background
There is consensus that public-health interventions are most effective if they also respect, protect and fulfil the rights of those people they are concerned with (1, 2). In Pakistan vulnerable groups (injecting drug users and sex workers) are the focus of HIV/AIDS policy but their rights have received little attention and there are no laws to protect them. They are the subject of discrimination and contempt from society in general and are subjected to harassment and intimidation by the authorities (1, 3) As in other Asian countries, discrimination and abuse of injecting drug users and sex workers (including physical and sexual violence from state authorities) lead them into high-risk behaviour (4) which means they are vulnerable to discrimination and harassment. This research has revealed high levels of abuse of human dignity of all vulnerable groups.

3. Methods
In-depth interviews with 38 high risk respondents (injecting drug users, female, male and transgender sex workers) in Rawalpindi. A biobehavioural survey combined with 813 frontline worker respondents in Rawalpindi.

4. Results
4.1 Abuse by Non-State Actors

Table 1: Percentage of sex workers reporting harassment in the last year, by type of aggression and type of sex worker

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category (aggression or type)</th>
<th>FSW (n=427)</th>
<th>Bantha (n=197)</th>
<th>Khotki (n=363)</th>
<th>Khusra (n=251)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Verbal abuse</td>
<td>9 (2.1%)</td>
<td>7 (3.6%)</td>
<td>4 (1.1%)</td>
<td>4 (1.6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical abuse</td>
<td>49 (11.4%)</td>
<td>29 (14.8%)</td>
<td>44 (12.1%)</td>
<td>14 (5.6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verbal and physical abuse</td>
<td>5 (1.2%)</td>
<td>14 (7.1%)</td>
<td>15 (4.1%)</td>
<td>3 (1.2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verbal and physical abuse</td>
<td>11 (2.6%)</td>
<td>7 (3.6%)</td>
<td>15 (4.1%)</td>
<td>6 (2.4%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.2 Abuse by State Actors

Table 2: Percentage of sex workers reporting harassment and violence by state actors: Rawalpindi

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category (abuse)</th>
<th>FSW (n=427)</th>
<th>Bantha (n=197)</th>
<th>Khotki (n=363)</th>
<th>Khusra (n=251)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Physical &amp; verbal</td>
<td>7 (1.6%)</td>
<td>12 (6.1%)</td>
<td>18 (5.0%)</td>
<td>8 (3.2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical</td>
<td>5 (1.2%)</td>
<td>9 (4.6%)</td>
<td>9 (2.5%)</td>
<td>4 (1.6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verbal</td>
<td>4 (0.9%)</td>
<td>3 (1.5%)</td>
<td>3 (0.8%)</td>
<td>2 (0.8%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All groups experienced widespread abuse from people they have contact with.

4.3 Sexual & Violence

The nature of abuse ranges from verbal abuse (threatening, sexual and rape threat) to physical abuse. Many clients used sex workers to gain a little extra profit. Some clients tortured them during sex (keeping a long time to ejaculate - especially drug-users) or bringing multiple other clients (Table 1).

Social violations of ‘rights’

All groups agreed public respect. FSWs & IDUs felt their rights as function of part of a family and be respected in society were widely violated:

"We cannot get jobs, our brothers are preferred over us in the family..." (FSW) He feels – I can not express his feelings in words; he sheds blood tears…' (Khotki 8).

The workshops and focus groups discussed that the few social and physical violations of human rights may lead to increased risk of HIV/AIDS. This research has revealed high levels of abuse of human dignity of all vulnerable groups.

5. Conclusions

This research has revealed high levels of abuse of human dignity of all vulnerable groups affected by drug-use, sex-work, neighborly, police and state actors. The abuse faced by these groups is not only a violation of their physical and mental integrity but also leads to increased risk of HIV. Sex workers experienced threat and violence to the original or at times through physical and sexual abuse, leading to increased risk of HIV/AIDS. Drug users have no wealth, little autonomy and therefore little possibility of protection against human rights violations. Drug users and sex workers are widely violated: their physical and mental integrity but also leads to increased risk of HIV/AIDS. Sex workers experienced tears and wounds to the vaginal or anal tracts (Khotki 2).

6. Recommendations

The Government of Pakistan should take immediate steps to rely the International Convention on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and the Convention Against Torture (CAT).

Local lawyers, legal and rights groups should openly acknowledge the role of police in increasing HIV-risk in these vulnerable groups; (4) help redirect the focus of HIV/AIDS policy but their right to have access to and quality of services for vulnerable groups; (5) address cultural and social stigma, essential for protecting dignity and autonomy vulnerable groups; (6) help to secure international support for police in increasing HIV-risk in these vulnerable groups.

References

4. Conclusions
5. Conclusions
6. Recommendations

Police exploitation & negotiation

Qualitative interviews showed all sex worker groups were exploited by police who used their fear of exposure or raids to regulate standards of sex among sex workers and the managers:

"[Police] stay give us a girl and then she as much business as you want…" (FSW 1)

The police exploitation were simple and in particular seemed at exploiting strategically useful relationships.

Somehow they [MDUs] would cut themselves with some blade … near their neck. This scares the policemen that they might get into trouble because of him so they let him go." (FSW 2)

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