

INTERIM FINDINGS FROM 2023 THAI & CHINESE SEX WORKER SURVEY AT SYDNEY SEXUAL HEALTH CENTRE (SSHC)

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Background:

Sydney Sexual Health Centre (SSHC) has provided language-specific clinics for Thai and Chinese speaking sex workers since 1991. We have previously conducted surveys in 1993, 2003 & 2013 on the demographics and health practices among this group.

Methods:

An anonymous, in-language survey was offered to all Thai/Chinese female-identifying sex workers attending SSHC from September to December 2023. Stakeholder consultations were conducted throughout design, delivery and analysis phases. The survey included questions on demographics, access to sexual health care, migration, and sexual health practices. Responses were analysed and compared across all four time points. A multivariable logistic regression model was developed to identify factors associated with a higher frequency of sexual health screening (≥ 3 monthly).

Results:

Interim analysis included 151 surveys with an 89.4% completion rate. Of these, 74% were Thai, 81.5% were assigned female at birth and median age was 35 years (IQR 29-41). Regarding sexual health screening, 59.9% reported undergoing screening at least once every 3-months or more frequently, and 85.3% found it “easy/very easy” to access such services.

Compared to 1993, the provision of free workplace condoms has significantly declined (from 62.6% to 26.8%, $p < 0.001$). This figure was consistent with responses from 2003 and 2013 (20.6% and 26% respectively). Factors associated with *more* frequent sexual health screening in the multivariable model included: Chinese ethnicity (aOR 4.28, $p = 0.012$), less than 100% condom use for oral sex (aOR 2.92, $p = 0.02$) and not relying on condoms for contraception (aOR 3.00, $p = 0.032$).

Conclusion:

Our interim analysis found that most Thai/Chinese sex workers undergo regular sexual health screening. Ongoing access to free condoms via health and outreach services remain a priority as the rate of workplace provision remains low. We have identified characteristics for targeted health promotion to improve uptake of regular sexual health screening among this group.

Disclosure of interest statement:

None.