

Preliminary findings from research exploring the experiences of people with disability who paid for sex worker services, in Australia

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Introduction & objectives:

This paper provides a preliminary analysis from a current PhD study: *Exploring the experiences of people with disability who access sex workers services, in Australia* (PASA – Research). Since the early 2000's first-person accounts from people with disability, and from sex workers who provide services to people with disability, have been emerging. However, research of this nature is most often embedded within broader sex and sexuality research in the disability sector, rather than as a stand-alone inquiry. Studies exploring non- heteronormative experiences between people with disability and sex workers is still sparse within academia.

Method(s) and sample:

Participants were recruited via a purposive snowball sampling approach, utilising advertisements distributed via preferred communication channels of disability support organisations, sex worker networks, online disability communities, social media and in-person disability expos. All relevant information was also available on a purpose-built website: www.pasa-research.com.au. Data was derived from both an anonymous on-line survey and semi-structured, in-depth interviews.

Findings & discussion:

108 viable anonymous online surveys and 27 semi-structured interviews were collected. People with disability of all genders and sexual identities were encouraged to participate, which was positively reflected in the results. The motivational factors for people to seek out sex worker services were explored along with barriers to access, contributions to a person's sense of self and wellbeing, and funding/ financial difficulties. This includes participants' engagement, support and issues with disability services, rehabilitation services, the NDIS, insurance companies, Aged Care providers and the Dept of Veteran affairs.

Recommendations:

It is anticipated that these findings may contribute to future policy development, legislative reform, educational programs and training within the disability, aged care, rehabilitation, and sex worker sectors.