



# **Social influences on HIV testing among female sex workers in three urban settings in Indonesia**

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# High HIV prevalence in Indonesia

## HIV is concentrated among key populations

- High HIV prevalence among female sex workers (8% for direct and 2% for indirect)
- HIV testing a key element of prevention strategy
- HIV care cascade (UNAIDS 90-90-90)
- A complex issue, influenced by a range of social factors

**So... what are the social factors influencing uptake of HIV testing in female sex workers?**

# Method

- Focus group discussions and in-depth interviews with 61 female sex workers
- Purposive sampling and recruitment via local outreach organisations
- Thematic analysis informed by socioecological framework
- Denpasar, Yogyakarta, Bandung in Indonesia

# Indonesia



# Main finding

Outreach workers, the boss, and peers are key influences on HIV testing among female sex workers in Indonesia

# Support from outreach workers

- Outreach workers built rapport and trust with participants
- Female sex workers relied on them for support

*I'm actually glad to have (facilitators). She acts as my **leader, my mentor**, everything. She's very **responsible in keeping her workers, her 'students', on track** (Ratna, Yogyakarta)*

*After things got quiet, I opened the result. I found out I was positive. **I went looking for (outreach worker)**. [...] (I told her) 'this is the result'. I then went home, I left her there. (outreach worker) said I had to calm down, [...] (she said) '**OK, not just calm down, you are not alone. Don't think too far. I'll explain to you about the therapy.**' (Puji, Yogyakarta)*

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# Support from outreach workers

- Outreach workers spread information about group HIV testing sessions
- Followed up individual female sex workers to ensure attendance

*We have meetings (with the outreach workers)... I don't know how many times, I don't know in which hotel, I don't know when, **but they'll explain to me, they'll tell me what do I need to bring to the meeting, they explain and provide me with information.** (Nunung, Yogyakarta)*

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# Mobile HIV testing in the workplace

- Mobile testing was an easy, convenient and regular option for HIV testing

*Services that **come to our location are the most convenient**, unless you're suddenly sick or not feeling well, then you go on your own (Swasti, Yogyakarta)*

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# Boss support for HIV testing

- Overall, bosses in all locations were supportive of HIV testing
- They ensured that their workers knew about and would attend HIV testing

*(The pimp makes sure that) everyone would gather (for HIV testing). (Workers who live elsewhere) are informed the night before when they're working if there's a gathering at a certain date (Ratna, Yogyakarta)*

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# Problematic influence of boss on testing

- Involuntary testing
- Fear of losing employment

***VCT (voluntary counselling and testing) is obligatory at my place. There's a check-up every Friday that includes VCT, if you're tested positive, you'll be sent to (hospital) for free, and then someone will monitor you. (Nunung, Yogyakarta)***

***The boss asked me if anyone was (HIV) positive in my place? And this one person were told to go, kicked out of her place. (Elvina, Denpasar)***

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## Support from peers

- Peers encouraged each other to test
- A source of support in a stigmatised environment

*(I took the HIV test because) It felt like I was dying ... I couldn't do anything. I was so thin and wrinkled, **my friends said I might have had AIDS, or something like that.** (Ira, Denpasar)*

*At my place, we have one (HIV positive sex worker), **we cheer her up**, whenever she has to go to (the hospital) we'd give her some money. **We don't shun people** (Ratna, Yogyakarta)*

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# Implications and future direction

- Social factors beyond the clinic level are key influences on HIV testing among female sex workers in Indonesia
- Use of outreach workers to facilitate testing scaled up
- Bosses are on board with testing; need to tackle issues relating to enforced testing, and termination of HIV positive workers
- Future interventions to capitalise on the social support provided by peers

# THANKS

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**• Presented on behalf of a larger team of authors involved in this work:**

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