



### FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH NON-UTILIZATION OF SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH SERVICES BY FEMALE SEX WORKERS

#### INTRODUCTION

The use of Reproductive Health Services (SRH) during pregnancy, childbirth and the post-partum period represents an important opportunity for the prevention of mother-to-child transmission of HIV.

However, it has been observed that the use of these services by sex workers (SWs) is low, despite the fact that key populations and their sexual partners (SPs) are more exposed to the risk of HIV infection' they represent a prevalence of 3% worldwide (UNAIDS 2024) and over 60% in the West and Central Africa region (Ecowas, 2020).

In the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), the HIV epidemic remains more concentrated in certain specific population groups, including key populations whose prevalence in 2019 was 7.7% among SWs.

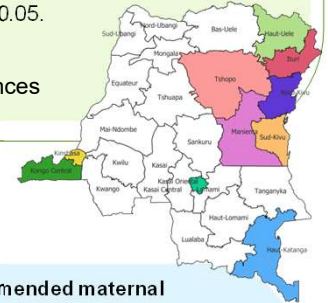
#### GENERAL OBJECTIVE

Determine factors associated with non-utilization of reproductive health services by SWs.

#### METHODS

- A mixed-methods approach: The quantitative part focused on an analytical cross-sectional study, and the qualitative part on in-depth interviews with key informants who were SWs in charge of the associations.
- Study population: SWs who had given birth in the 2 years preceding the survey, selected by snowball sampling.
- Dependent variable: Use of the recommended package of sexual and reproductive health services: Making at least 4 ANC visits, giving birth in a health facility and receiving a check-up at 6 weeks post-delivery.
- Independent variables: Taken from the Gelberg-Andersen behavioral model for vulnerable populations.
- Chi-square and Student's t tests: used to compare proportions and means respectively.
- Logistic regression: used to identify factors independently associated with low use of SRH services by SWs.
- Statistical significance level set at 0.05.

STUDY AREA: 10 provinces



#### RESULTS

Utilization of the recommended SRH package

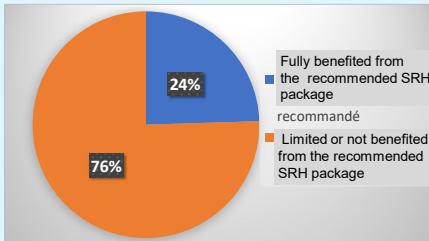


Figure 1: Utilization of the recommended SRH package

Factors associated with non-utilization by SWs of the recommended maternal health care package :

Co-variables	ORB (IC95%)	P	ORA (IC95%)	p
<b>Drug consumption</b>				
Oui	1,80 (1,29-2,51)	0,001*	1,64 (1,13-2,36)	0,008*
Non	1		1	
<b>Knowledge of the transmission of syphilis from mother to child</b>				
Non	2,23 (0,88-5,88)	0,084	2,9 (1,1-7,7)	0,038*
Oui	1		1	
<b>Having suffered sexual violence in the last 12 months</b>				
Oui	0,71 (0,54-0,93)	0,001*	0,71 (0,53-0,95)	0,023*
Non	1		1	
<b>Carrying a desired pregnancy</b>				
Non	1,55 (1,18-2,02)	0,001*	1,55 (1,16-2,06)	0,003*
Oui	1		1	
<b>Recruiting clients on the street</b>				
Oui	1,67 (1,26-2,17)	<0,001*	1,49 (1,11-2,00)	0,007*
Non	1		1	
<b>The fact of not recruiting clients by telephone</b>				
Non	1,97 (1,51-2,57)	<0,001*	1,92 (1,44-2,56)	<0,001*
Oui	1		1	
<b>The fact of having been tested for HIV at the CPN</b>				
Non	2,06 (1,57-2,71)	<0,001*	1,94 (1,45-2,60)	<0,001*
Oui	1		1	

#### CONCLUSION

The study showed that SWs are very vulnerable people, and this vulnerability is associated with non-utilization of maternal health services. Also in terms of use of reproductive health services, there is a late start of ANC by SWs, which translates into a lower proportion of ANC4.

It is therefore important to consider interventions that address these associated factors: Drug use, lack of knowledge of mother-to-child transmission of syphilis, having been a victim of sexual violence in the last 12 months, the fact that the last pregnancy was not wanted, recruiting clients on the street, not recruiting clients by telephone, not having been tested for HIV at ANC during the last pregnancy.

**MPUEKELA M-A<sup>1</sup>**  
Auteur

Co-Auteur: TWITE B<sup>1</sup>, MBOYO A<sup>1</sup>, ILUNGA B<sup>1</sup>, LULEBOA<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> MD, MPH, Ministère de la santé publique, hygiène et prévention ; Programme national de lutte contre le VIH/SIDA et les IST ; Direction Nationale, RDC

<sup>2</sup> MD, PHD, Congo Kinshasa School of Public Health, DR Congo

