

Tracking HIV risk behaviours and seroprevalence among female sex workers in Hong Kong (HARiS 2013)

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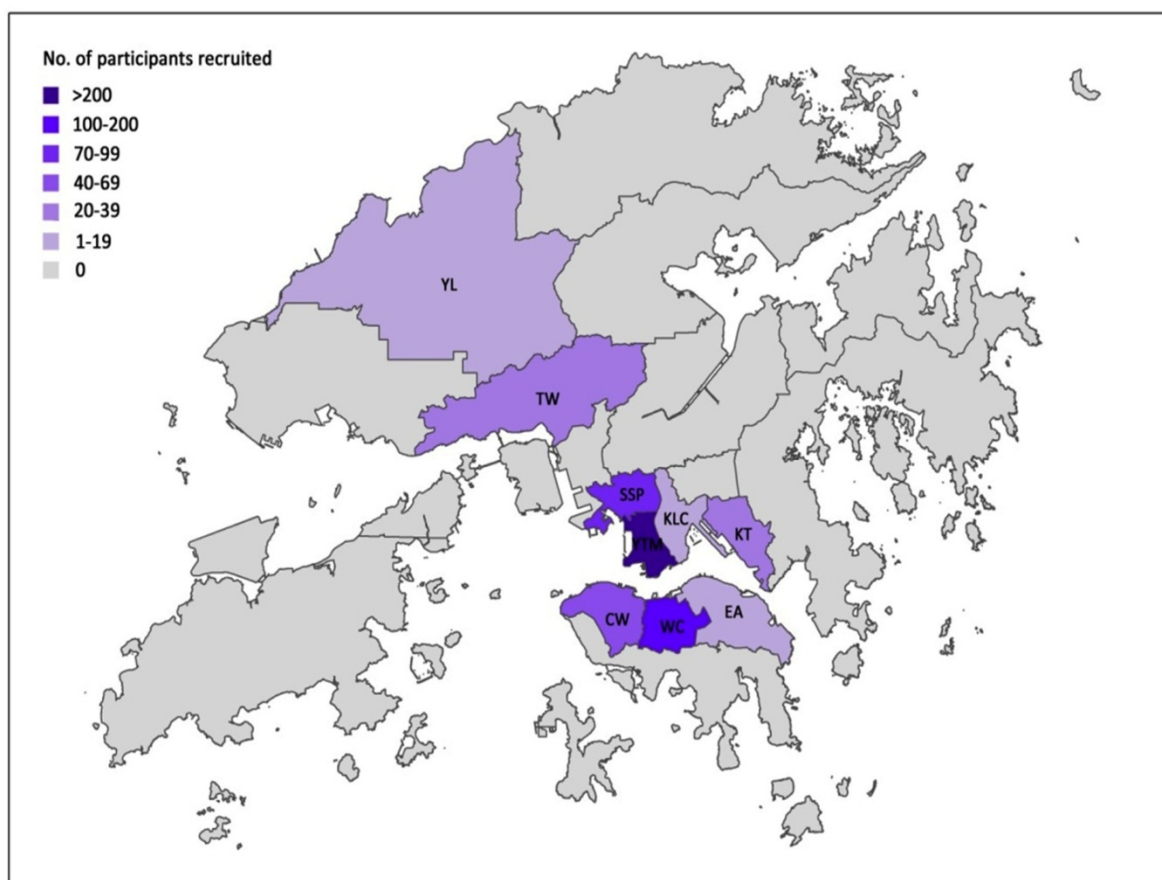
Introduction

The HIV prevalence among female sex worker (FSW) in Hong Kong was found to be maintained at a low level in the first two rounds of CRiSP (Community Based Risk Behavioral and Seroprevalence Survey for Female Sex Worker in Hong Kong) in 2006 and 2009 respectively. To track the latest HIV situation in the FSW community, a similar survey, HARiS (HIV/AIDS Response Indicator System) 2013 programme, was conducted from June to August 2013.

Methods

FSWs were approached by non-governmental organisations (NGO) workers in one woman brothels, Karaoke/night clubs, streets, bars/pubs, massage parlors, NGO centers and internet for the completion of a behaviour questionnaire and urine collection for HIV/Chlamydia/Gonorrhoea testing.

Figure 1. Number of FSW recruited from each district in Hong Kong



Results

637 respondents were successfully recruited. Majority was Chinese (88.5%), had a Hong Kong Identity Card (87.0%) and in the age group 30-39 years old (45.8%).

A total of 605 urine specimens were received and sent for HIV testing. No sample was found positive and the adjusted HIV prevalence was 0.0% (95% CI: 0.0-0.6%). 19 and 0 out of 231 urine samples were tested positive for Chlamydia and gonorrhoea respectively. The adjusted prevalence was 8.2% (95% CI: 5.3-12.5%) for Chlamydia and 0.0% (95% CI: 0.0-1.6%) for gonorrhoea.

Consistent condom use rate (every time) was 97.2% with casual clients and 92.1% with regular clients while condom use rate in the last intercourse was 99.0% for casual client and 97.2% for regular client. 77% had ever had HIV testing and 49.1% had their last test in NGOs, followed by government social hygiene clinics (26.1%) and private clinics/hospital (9.8%). 61.5% had their recent HIV tests performed in the past one year.

Comparison between 2006 CRiSP, 2009 CRiSP and 2013 HARiS FSW results

The HIV prevalence was 0.0% in the 2013 HARiS (FSW), which was comparable to the previous 2 rounds of CRiSP in 2006 (0.19%) and 2009 (0.05%). Serial surveillance monitoring thus reflected a consistently low level of HIV infection in the FSW community.

The rates of consistent condom use with regular clients and casual clients were found to be 92.1% and 97.2% respectively, which remained at a similar high level as previous two CRiSP surveys (92% in 2006 and 95% in 2009 for all sex partners). The condom use rate in last sex with regular clients and casual clients appeared to be higher in this round (97.2% and 99% respectively), as compared to previous two CRiSP rounds (93% in 2006 and 96% in 2009). Taken together, the findings might reflect an increasing awareness of safer sex behaviours among the community.

77.1% of the respondents had ever been tested for HIV antibody, which was higher than those of the previous rounds (54% in 2006 and 64.2% in 2009). Testing rate in the past one year also increased from 45% in 2006 and 48.8% in 2009 to 61.5% in this round. These findings suggested that undergo HIV testing and having regular testing are becoming more popular in the FSW community. NGOs remained the most popular place to have free HIV tests with or without other STI screenings, which was followed by Social Hygiene Clinics as the second most used place. The contribution of different methodology including the sampling frame to the surveys' findings cannot be excluded.

Table 1. Comparison between 2006 CRISP, 2009 CRISP and 2013 HARiS (FSW)

	2006 CRISP	2009 CRISP	2013 HARiS (FSW)
Total Respondents	996	986	637
Type of FSW	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One Woman Brothel (33%) • Karaoke nightclubs (33%) • Bars (19%) • Street (15%) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One Woman Brothel (59%) • Karaoke nightclubs (15%) • Bars (15%) • Street (6%) • Massage parlour (6%) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One Woman Brothel (62.0%) • Karaoke nightclubs (13.5%) • Bars (10.2%) • Street (5.8%) • Massage parlour/sauna (4.4%) • Internet (3.3%) • NGO Centre (0.8%)
Chinese	78%	93.6%	88.5%
Hong Kong Identity Card Holder	78.4%	96%	87.0%
Median age	31 (16-57)	34 (17-60)	33 (16-64)
HIV prevalence	0.19%	0.05%	0.00%
Consistent condom use	92%	95%	97.2% (causal clients) 92.1% (regular clients)
Condom use in last vaginal sex with customer	93%	96%	99.0% (causal clients) 97.2% (regular clients)
Ever HIV test	54%	64.2%	77.1%
HIV test within one year	45%	48.8%	61.5%

Conclusions

The HIV prevalence among local FSW community remained at a consistently low level. The consistent condom use rates and last sex condom use rate with regular clients and casual clients remained at a high level. Moreover, both the ever HIV testing rate and HIV testing rate in past one year increased. The survey should be sustained and conducted regularly for tracking the local community's response to HIV.

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