

Special Issue

Physical and Mental Health of Sex Workers during and Post-COVID-19 Pandemic

Message from the Guest Editors

The venues where sex and entertainment workers work and live can play a critical factor in impacting their HIV and sexual and reproductive health outcomes. These entertainment venues often provide a mix of risk and protective factors. Due to the range of informality of the workplace, the stigmatizing nature of the job, and the potentially illegal status of the work, the occupational health of women sex and entertainment workers has not been well studied. Women sex and entertainment workers are considered a vulnerable population because they are at higher risk of sexual and mental ill health as well as experiencing gender-based violence (GBV). Exemplar efforts to improve the health and safety of sex and entertainment workers typically address the structural conditions that lead to power imbalances and undermine the agency. Venues that promote these types of interventions can be held up as examples of 'enabling environments' for preventing HIV, other sexually transmitted infections (STIs), and GBV and promoting access to health services.

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Addressing the environmental and public health challenges requires engagement and collaboration among clinicians and public health researchers. Scientific discoveries and advances in this research field play a critical role in providing a rational basis for informed decision-making toward control and prevention of human diseases, especially the illnesses that are induced from environmental exposure to health hazards.

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