

Abstract

Male clients of female sex workers (FSWs) are epidemiologically important because they can form bridge groups linking high- and low-risk subpopulations. However, because male clients are hard to locate, they are not frequently studied. Recent research emphasizes searching for high-risk behavior groups in locales where new sexual partnerships form and the threat of HIV transmission is high. Sub-Saharan Africa public drinking venues satisfy these criteria.

Accordingly, this study developed and implemented a rapid assessment methodology to survey men in bars throughout the large informal settlement of Kibera, Nairobi, Kenya, with the goal of delineating cultural and economic rationales associated with male participation in commercial sex. The study sample consisted of 220 male patrons of 110 bars located throughout Kibera's 11 communities. Logistic regression analysis incorporating a modified Reasoned Action Model indicated that a social norm condoning commercial sex among male peers and the cultural belief that men should practice sex before marriage support commercial sex involvement. Conversely, lacking money to drink and/or pay for sexual services were barriers to male commercial sex involvement. Results are interpreted in light of possible harm reduction programs focusing on FSWs' male clients.