

## **EPIDEMIOLOGICAL AND CLINICAL STUDY OF VARIOUS SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED DISEASES AMONG FEMALE COMMERCIAL SEX WORKERS**

**REVATHI T. N & CHETAN M**

Department of Dermatology, Bangalore Medical College and Research Institute, Fort Road, Bangalore, India

### **ABSTRACT**

A commercial sex workers is defined as a person who provides sexual service for money or other material gains and includes those who work in brothels or are casual free lance sex workers. Most CSWs from the core/high risk groups. They are often infected by their clients and subsequently transmit the infection to other partners. A history of multiple sex partners and co-infection with other STIs constitute potential risk factors associated for HIV infection among FSWs. This study was conducted on 100 symptomatic FSWs to recognize various sociodemographic factors associated with their work and different STIs in them. The mean age group of FSWs in this study is 31.29 that is the adolescent FSWs are vulnerable to develop STIs. 42% of FSWs were married but not living with their husband, 22% were divorced, 17% unmarried and 16% widowed in this study. This study shows about 81% of FSWs had more than 1 partner per day. More number of sexual partners is responsible for the long exposure to various STIs and acquiring STIs. About 72% of FSWs were aware of STIs occurring as result of their sex work, their transmission, treatment and prophylaxis. Still the remaining 28% were partially aware and not aware of STIs. The education and awareness to recognize the symptoms of STIs and health seeking behaviour of all the FSWs needs to be improved. Personal habits are the important risk factors in acquiring STIs, which includes alcohol consumption, drug addiction, pan chewing, smoking. In this study 10% FSWs were abused with alcohol. Majority (78%) of FSWs did not accepted any personal habits. None of them revealed about drug addiction. Under socioeconomic classification of the CSW's in this study around 78% belonged to lower middle category, 11% were of upper lower category, 6% belonged to poor category and 5% of them were of upper middle category. This indicates that predominantly the lower middle category i.e. the lower socioeconomic population were more leaning towards this commercial sex activity. The main clinical feature in this study is chronic vaginal discharge (46%) and generalized symptoms (28%). The genital lesions were observed in 20%. In India in the 1970s and early 1980s, syphilis and chancroid were the main causes of genital ulcer disease, while viral genital ulcer diseases such as genital herpes were extremely rare. With the recognition of HIV infection in the 1980s and subsequent behavioural, social and physiological changes, the pattern has shifted from predominantly bacterial to viral STIs. In the present study viral STIs are more compared to bacterial STIs. HIV infection was 23%, HBV was 8%, genital wart was 8%, molluscum contagiosum 6% and HSV infection was 2%. Among bacterial STIs was 8%. Vaginal candidiasis was seen in 5%. The present study CSW's who always used condoms were found to be 31%, who never used were 13% and 56% revealed that they used it occasionally and not always. One more parameter studied indicated that around 23% of CSW's were indulged in unnatural sexual acts while 77% denied of any such acts.

**KEYWORDS:** CSW, STI's, FSW's, Condoms, Behavioural Parameter