



Brief Report: HIV Biological and Behavioral Surveillance among Female Sex Workers (FSW) in Dili and Baucau, Timor-Leste, 2016-2017

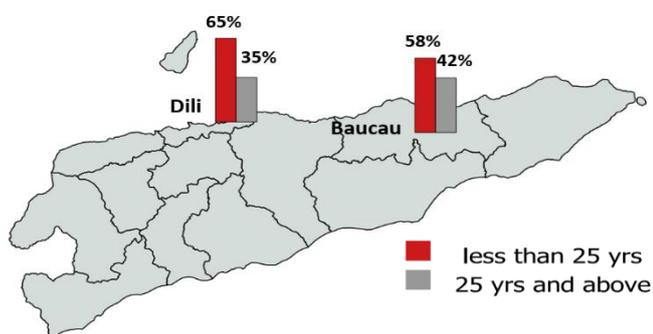
Background

HIV Integrated Biological and Behavioural Surveillance (IBBS) surveys were conducted in 2016-2017 among female sex workers (FSW) in Dili and Baucau, Timor-Leste to track the HIV epidemic, monitor sexual risk behaviours, and to measure access to intervention programs in responding to HIV. FSW were defined as biological females, aged 17 to 49 years, having exchanged sex (anal and/or vaginal) for money or other items of value, to at least two clients, over the past 12 months. This survey resulted in a sample of 202 FSW in Dili and 110 FSW in Baucau.

Sociodemographic characteristics

The majority FSW were under the age of 25 years (Figure 1) with a median age of 22 years in Dili and 24 years in Baucau.

Figure 1. Age groups of FSW

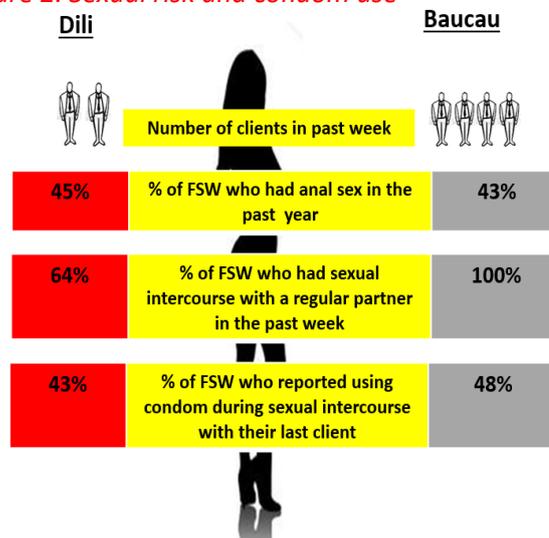


The median age of entering sex work was 19 years in Dili and 20 years in Baucau. Most FSW depend on sex work as their sole source of income (85% in Dili and 65% in Baucau), however monthly income varied significantly with two third of FSW in Dili reported earning more than 200 dollars per month and 64% of FSW in Baucau reported earning less than 200 dollars per month.

Sexual risk and condom use

The number of clients reported in the past week was two in Dili and four in Baucau (Figure 2). Similar percentages of FSW in Dili and Baucau reported having had anal sex in the past year. A lower percentage of FSW in Dili (64%), compared to Baucau (100%) reported having had sexual intercourse with one or more regular partners in the past week. Under half of FSW in both areas reported using a condom during sexual intercourse with their last client.

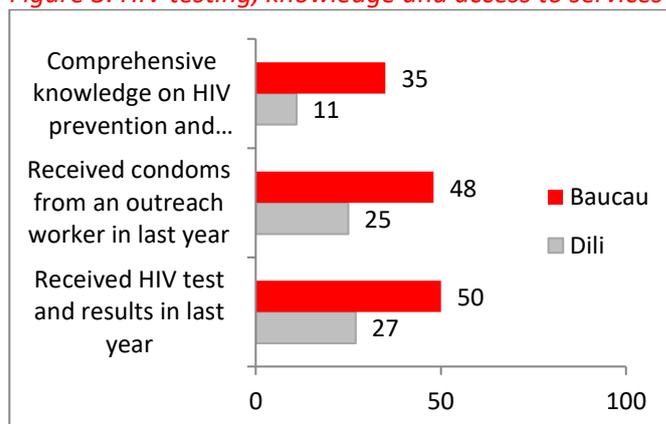
Figure 2. Sexual risk and condom use



HIV testing, knowledge and access to services

Only 11% of FSW in Dili and 35% in Baucau had comprehensive knowledge on HIV prevention and transmission and less than 50% of FSW in Dili and 25% in Baucau reported receiving condoms in the last 12 months whereas about 25% of in Dili were provided with this service (Figure 3). Only Half of FSW in Dili and 27% in Baucau reported having an HIV test and receiving their results in the past 12 months.

Figure 3. HIV testing, knowledge and access to services



HIV and syphilis prevalence

Four percent of FSW in Dili and none in Baucau tested positive for syphilis. No FSW were found to be HIV seropositive.