



Symposium 2018

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Topics: (see Abstract Submission Guidelines , please list one or more topics) Key populations; social and behavioural research; health promotion	
Abstract Title: (up to 15 words) Changes in condom use among sex workers in Western Australia	
Abstract Body: (up to 250 words with or without traditional headings, see examples abstracts .) Background: Following the emergence of the HIV pandemic in the 1980's, high rates of condom use have been reported among sex workers. A 2007 study of brothel-based female sex workers in Western Australia (WA) reported very high (almost 100%) use of condoms during sex work, however recent anecdotes suggest reductions in condom use, particularly during penetrative oral sex. Methods: The Law and Sex worker Health Study was a cross-sectional mixed methods study involving a survey and in-depth interviews with WA sex workers. Results: We surveyed 354 male, female and transgender sex workers. Thirty-three percent reported using condoms for every act of oral sex with clients, 67% for every act of vaginal sex and 59% for	

every act of anal sex. Additionally, 42% reported that all or most clients requested condomless oral sex.

Interviews with 17 sex workers suggested a reduction in the demand for sexual services in WA due to the downturn in the economy and increased client demand for condomless sex as a strong driver of the reduction in consistent condom use.

Conclusion: We found a change over the last 10 years in the WA sex industry from reports of very high condom usage to a reduction in the proportion using condoms for all forms of penetrative sex. Increasing client demands for condomless sex and concerns about reductions in income if condomless sex is not offered appeared to be drivers of this trend.

So what? Interventions to increase condom use during sex work need to be informed by an understanding of the drivers of the demand for condomless sex by sex worker clients.