



Reproductive autonomy under constraint: contraceptive gaps and unplanned pregnancies among female sex workers in Burkina Faso

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Background: Female sex workers (FSWs) face sexual and reproductive health (SRH) challenges that extend beyond HIV prevention. However, efforts to improve SRH among FSW have focused primarily on HIV, overlooking contraceptive needs. Limited access to acceptable, confidential and stigma-free contraceptive services may increase the risk of unintended pregnancies and compromise reproductive autonomy. This study aimed at identifying factors associated with contraceptive gap among FSWs in Burkina Faso.

Methods: we used Respondent-Driven Sampling to conduct a cross-sectional survey among FSWs aged ≥ 18 in Ouagadougou and Bobo-Dioulasso. Data were collected through interviewer-administered electronic questionnaires. Weighted analyses accounting for the RDS design were performed. Multivariable logistic regression identified factors associated with contraceptive gaps.

Results: Overall, 522 FSWs aged were enrolled; 51.5% (n=241) were aged 18-24. Overall, 61.1% (n=344) of FSW had experienced at least one pregnancy and 60.1% reported any unintended pregnancies. Regarding the contraception gap, 28.3% (95% CI: 21.1-35.6) of all FSWs are not using any contraception; 17.2% relied solely on condoms for prevention. Women aged ≥ 35 years had significantly higher odds of contraceptive gap (aOR= 4.55; 95% CI: 1.86-11.8), whereas having at least one biological child was reduced the risk contraceptive gap (aOR= 0.27; 95% CI: 0.08-0.85) Pharmacies were the preferred source of contraception (44.7%) followed by public health facilities (38.8%) and community-based clinics (37.1%).

Conclusion: unintended pregnancies and contraceptive gaps remain common among FSWs in Burkina Faso. Expanding confidential; community-based and differentiated contraceptive service, female controlled options could strengthen reproductive autonomy and reduce unmet contraceptive needs.

