
COMMERCIAL SEX WORKERS

SCREENING, VACCINATION AND ISSUING OF CERTIFICATE

April 2011

Sex Work is defined as: The provision of sexual services by one person to, or for, another in return for payment or reward.

In Victoria there are three main definitions of sexual services:

- Having sexual penetration with another person. (Oral, anal and vaginal penetration whether the sex worker performs them or has it performed on them).
- Masturbation; the genitals can be clothed during masturbation
- Allowing someone to view or participate in acts of sexual penetration, masturbation or any form of physical contact which has sexual overtones.

Legal sex work includes; brothels, escort agencies and private work. Sex workers (SW) must comply with the Prostitution Control Act (1994) and are required to have a current license, which are issued by the Business Licensing Authority (BLA). Brothels are also regulated by local council and require a planning permit issued by the council in accordance with the Planning and Environment Act 1997.

The following forms of SW are illegal:

- Street sex work
- Unlicensed brothels
- Premises without a local council planning permit
- Escort agencies without a license
- Private workers not registered with the BLA

Brothels must provide SW with free condoms and lubrication, clean hot and cold showers and baths.

SW working in legal brothels in Victoria are required to have monthly testing for sexually transmitted infections

(STIs), to comply with the Health Act 1958, the Prostitution Control Act 1994 and the Prostitution Control Regulations 2006. These acts state that a worker must not work and a brothel manager must not permit a worker to work if they are "known to be infected with a sexually transmitted disease (STD)".

The act defines "STD's" as:

- HIV
- Chancroid
- Donovanosis
- Genital chlamydia (including LGV)
- Genital and anal herpes (when lesions are visible)
- Genital and anal warts (when lesions are visible)
- Gonorrhoea
- Infectious syphilis

A SW can be prosecuted if he/she works while knowing that they have an STI and/or transmits an STI and has not had monthly swab tests and three monthly blood tests. Transmission of an unknown STI is not an offence if the testing stipulated below has occurred during the time specified below.

A Brothel owner cannot be prosecuted if he/she reasonably believes that the SW has been tested as specified below. The provision of certificates of attendance from their SW constitutes 'reasonable' evidence testing has been performed.

Disclaimer

The content of these treatment guidelines is for information purposes only. The treatment guidelines are generic in character and should be applied to individuals only as deemed appropriate by the treating practitioner on a case by case basis. Alfred Health, through MSHC, does not accept liability to any person for the information or advice (or the use of such information or advice) which is provided through these treatment guidelines. The information contained within these treatment guidelines is provided on the basis that all persons accessing the treatment guidelines undertake responsibility for assessing the relevance and accuracy of the content and its suitability for a particular patient. Responsible use of these guidelines requires that the prescriber is familiar with contraindications and precautions relevant to the various pharmaceutical agents recommended herein.

COMMERCIAL SEX WORKERS

SCREENING, VACCINATION AND ISSUING OF CERTIFICATE

March 2010

Screening Tests

Asymptomatic female:

1. Three monthly bloods for HIV and syphilis.
2. Monthly swabs for chlamydia, gonorrhoea and trichomonas
3. Vulvar examination for evidence of warts or herpes
Throat swab for gonorrhoea and anal swabs for chlamydia/gonorrhoea should be discussed. Throat swabs are recommended for Asian SW

A speculum examination with endocervical gonococcal and chlamydia tests and a vaginal swab for trichomonas culture (and a Pap test every 2 years) is performed every 6 months. At other visits an external examination and blind vaginal swabs are performed.

Asymptomatic male:

1. Three monthly bloods for HIV and syphilis.
2. Monthly urine test for chlamydia, throat swabs for gonorrhoea and rectal swabs for chlamydia and gonorrhoea
3. Physical examination for evidence of warts or herpes.

Symptomatic Sex Workers

Symptomatic sex workers should be investigated according to symptoms.

VACCINATIONS

Vaccination should be advised, when appropriate, against:

- Hepatitis B
- Hepatitis A

Free Hepatitis A vaccination is offered to male-male SW and to both male and female street SW.

CERTIFICATES

The pre-printed Certificate of Attendance will be issued with the name(s) requested by clients. The certificate does not indicate that the SW is “disease free” rather that they have attended for STI screening.

The SW needs to know that the certificate does not provide legal protection if they work knowing that they have an STI. The certificate is primarily required for the legal protection of the brothel.

Details on certificate:

- Name (or working name) of client
- Date of screen
- “Attended for STI screen”, +/- “including blood tests”
- Practitioner signature.

The practitioner must document in the medical notes the names and number of certificates issued.

If an STI as defined under the Act is found, the SW should be advised not to work until they have been adequately treated and are considered to be no longer infectious. The practitioner is advised to document in the client history the fact that further discussion has taken place with the client regarding their obligations under the Prostitution Control Regulations