



CLINICAL SERVICES

SCREENING OF SEX WORKERS FOR SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED INFECTIONS AND BLOOD BOURNE VIRUSES: POLICY AND PROCEEDURE

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1. Policy statement

In accordance with The Health Act 1958 and The Prostitution Control Act 1994, this policy seeks to provide a sexual health service framework for practitioners in the provision of services to persons working in the sex industry.

2. Persons affected

- Administration staff
- Sexual Health Nurses
- Medical Officers
- Sex Workers.

3. Definition of terms

For the purpose of the definition of Sexually Transmitted Infections (STI's) in the Prostitution Control Act 1994 (s.3) the following diseases or conditions are prescribed (Prostitutes Control Regulations 1995:r.9):

- Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
- Chancroid
- Donovanosis
- Genital Chlamydia
- Genital herpes (when lesions are visible)
- Genital warts (when lesions are visible)
- Gonorrhoea
- Lymphogranuloma venereum
- Syphilis.

And

- HIV as defined by section 3 of the Health Act 1958

4. Responsibility

- Sexual Health Nurses
- Medical Officers
- Sex workers.

5. Criteria

To comply with the requirements of the Prostitution Control Act 1994 [s.20. (2)(a)], sex workers working in legal brothels are required to have:

- Regular blood tests, on at least a quarterly basis for HIV and each other STI for which blood tests are appropriate.

And

- Regular swab tests, on at least a monthly basis, for the purpose of determining whether he or she is infected with any other STI.

Initial Screening: Full Asymptomatic Screen

The practitioner is advised to offer the client the opportunity to have all available tests for the detection of "Sexually Transmitted Infections" as indicated under the Prostitution Control Act 1994. The practitioner must note the offer &/or refusal in the clients' history. A full screen is completed at the first check up and includes:

Blood Tests:

- Syphilis
- HIV
- Hepatitis A antibody (where appropriate)
- Hepatitis B core antibody
- Hepatitis B surface antibody
- Rubella antibodies (where appropriate)
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Swabs:

- Chlamydia
- Gonorrhoea
- Trichomoniasis

- Pap test where required.

Vaccinations: vaccinations should be advised, when appropriate, against:

- Hepatitis B
- Hepatitis A
- Rubella.

Certificates: the pre-printed Certificate of Attendance will be issued to all clients requesting it. Certificates may be written with:

- "client attended for STI screen"
- "client attended for STI screen and serology/bloods"

Positive Results: If an STI as defined under the Prostitution Control Act 1994 is detected:

- The practitioner is advised to inform the sex worker of the result and discuss, the sex workers obligations under the Prostitution Control Act 1994[s.20(1)] which states:

“A person must not work as a prostitute during any period in which he or she knows that he or she is infected with a sexually transmitted disease.”

- Document this clearly in the sex worker/clients medical record
- A certificate of attendance can still be issued unless otherwise directed.

Routine Asymptomatic Female Sex Workers Screening

Monthly Testing: A speculum examination is generally not required monthly, however, a vulval examination is performed, and blind high vaginal swabs are collected for chlamydia, gonorrhoea and trichomoniasis testing.

NB. Speculum examinations should always be performed if the client is symptomatic, and should be considered when the sex worker has experienced a condom break/slip or has retained a sponge or tampon.

Three Monthly Testing: In addition to monthly testing, Serological testing for syphilis and HIV are carried out every 3 months. Provided Hepatitis B status has been confirmed and the client has been offered Hep B vaccination, if necessary, then Hepatitis B surface antibody testing need only be undertaken at the completion of vaccination schedule to demonstrate immunity.

Six Monthly Testing: A speculum examination is performed every six months and endocervical chlamydia and gonococcal swabs and a vaginal swab for trichomonas culture are collected.

Two yearly: Pap smear test, unless otherwise indicated.

Routine Screening of Male Sex Workers

As per the policy, Screening of Well Men for Sexually Transmitted Infections by Sexual Health Nurses.

6. Reference documents

Victorian Legislation

- Health Act 1958
- Prostitution Control Act 1994
- Prostitution Control Regulations 1995

MSHC Policy and Procedure Manual: Screening of Well Men for Sexually Transmitted Infections by Sexual Health Nurses.