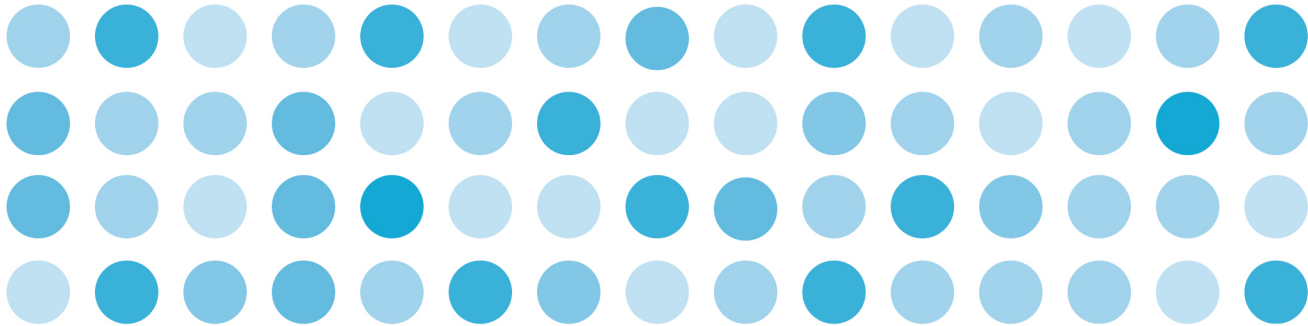


25-26 October 2010
Melbourne Cricket Ground



Anex 2010
**AUSTRALIAN
DRUGS
CONFERENCE**
Public Health and Harm Reduction

Dr James Rowe



DRUGS, SEX, POWER & RISK

Risky sexual practices in the Unregulated Sex Industry

THE SEX WORKER ... DISEASED WHORE

You get your blood tests done, you're all clean ok. You come back to work, and every day you come back to work there's a chance of you catching something. Number one, that scares me. Number two, I could get charged, and the more of them you get, the more you could be in jail. And number three, you just get looked at as a pure piece of shit by the whole society. And, of course, there is a quote that we are all scumbags and we all carry diseases, which is not true. The government and everyone around needs to know that not all working girls carry diseases or STI's. I've actually read this in statistics, sex workers on the streets and parlours are less likely to have STI's than if you go out and meet a girl at a bar or club.



AN INCREASINGLY VOLATILE AND CHAOTIC WORKING ENVIRONMENT

The only thing that's changed are the girls. Basically, every oral job that a client stops for, it's expected, no condom. And a lot of the girls are saying they're not doing it with condoms whereas before they be saying, 'Nah, no way!' They probably *would* have been doing it, but would have *said* 'no, no.' Clients are expecting both [oral and sex] for \$60, \$50 ... which makes it harder for me to get work.

Are girls undercutting prices?

Definitely, which means it's harder for me to get work. It's really fucking annoying. I feel like I'm the only one saying come on girls, just use a fucking condom for one, and we'll all get paid and we'll all get work, just stand your ground – basic economics but they don't know that. It's dog eat dog, all for themselves, as soon as they get their money, it's go and score. You'll probably hear that from girls whom have been down here a long time. I'm seeing it a lot down here with the newer girls before I went to jail. It's rife, it is crazy.

CLIENT DEMAND FOR UNPROTECTED SEXUAL SERVICES

DO CLIENTS EVER ASK THAT YOU NOT USE A CONDOM WHEN PROVIDING SEXUAL SERVICES?

	Number	%
Yes	96	96
No	4	4
Total	100	100

SEXUAL HEALTH KNOWLEDGE OF CLIENTS (I.E. GRATIFICATION BEFORE HEALTH)

It just amazes me ... I'll say, 'You'd want to fuck a prostitute, a girl who spends all day fucking other men and you want to fuck her without a condom? Are you fucking stupid?' ... Some of them try to barter with you – offer you more [money for unprotected sex]. Some of them will even try to rip a condom off while they're doing it or say, 'let's do it from behind' – and pull [the condom] off (*Paige*)

The guys ask me 'don't use a condom, because I'm clean', I'm like 'how do you know I'm clean? How do you know I'm not riddled with diseases?' and they go 'oh, but look at you [and you look clean].' It's got nothing to do with the way I look. It just shits me (*Bridget*)

SAFE SEX 'FATIGUE'?

Condoms weren't a big issue in the sex scene until about 1985. If you used 'em [condoms] you didn't get the job back then [prior to 1985]. [After the onset of HIV] it wasn't hard to get clients to use condoms until about '88, or '90 ... then they started getting lazy about condoms and stuff like that. Us girls started having to push for them to wear the condoms and insisting that it's not a choice.

Back in the old days, maybe one out of 10 [clients] would ask [for unprotected services] and now, these days, it's nine out of 10.

DEMAND (CLIENT) VS. RESOLVE WORKER)

[The clients] just have that expectation that [that's the way] it is. They're kind of shocked when you do insist, 'you've got to use a condom' ... I'm too sacred to get an STD but there are some days when you do think, 'fuck, I'm so desperate to get money', you're hanging out and think, fuck, if someone came along and offered me \$100 for a head job unprotected, it does cross your mind ... there are some days I think could I, should I?

DO YOU EVER MAKE THE '*CHOICE*' NOT TO USE
CONDOMS WHILE PROVIDING SEXUAL SERVICES?

	Number	%
Yes	39	39
No	61	61
Total	100	100.1

THE THIRD PARTY IN NEGOTIATIONS: THE MONKEY ON ONE'S BACK

I had one instance in particular where a client didn't want to wear a condom, I was really sick; I was hanging like an absolute dog. You know, you have all these morals to start off with, but slowly they sort of decrease as your needs change.

... AND THE END RESULT

Any worker that's a heroin addict that tells they haven't done a head job or even sex without a condom is a liar. Because ... you look sick [from withdrawal] and they [the mugs] know you're sick and they'll exploit anything they can get ... a lot of guys will pay you the money and because they've paid you the money they think they own you, yeah ... I have [provided unprotected services before] before.

What were the circumstances – desperate for money and a quiet night?

Definitely. [It has] just been absolutely mega desperate. It's been 10 hours since I've scored [bought some heroin]. I'm sweating, my nose is running. I can't even stand up and I'm sitting on the gutter and some guy will pull over, see I'm sitting on the gutter ... and I'll just go 'fuck it! [I'll do what he asks].' I haven't done it for a while – as I've got older, I've been able to plan ahead a few days _____

STREET SEX WORK AND PUBLIC HEALTH

It's just become an expectation from mugs. People say 'oh I don't do that' – Bullshit! If you're going to make money out there... it's very difficult to make the sort of money [needed] for a habit. If you want to pull in quite a few hundred dollars, you're not [going to be] making that without doing [unprotected oral]. Not sex, I'm talking about oral... and we're not talking about a handful of people, the majority.
