

TOWARDS WHOLE PERSON HEALTHCARE FOR FEMALE SEX WORKERS IN BOMET COUNTY, KENYA: IDENTIFY THE UNMET HEALTH NEEDS

Female Sex Workers (FSWs) have complex health needs that predispose them to a higher morbidity and mortality risk than the general population. The healthcare system in Kenya has responded to their physical health needs however there is marginal understanding on how their psychological, social and spiritual needs are met. To meet FSWs needs, a paradigm shift from the disease model to a whole person care (WPC) model is paramount. This study gives us an understanding of female sex workers' health needs and if they are met by the healthcare system.

This is a qualitative research design that included female sex workers living in Bomet County, Kenya. It also comprised of healthcare workers who provide health services to this population. Non-probability, purposive, respondent-driven snowball sampling procedure was used until thematic saturation. In-depth individual interviews, key-informant interviews and one focus group discussion were conducted. The interviews were recorded and analyzed factoring in specific ethical considerations that relates to FSWs were observed.

FSWs in Bomet experience financial constraints, community and health worker stigma, a lack of drugs for them and their children and a lack of awareness of health services available to them which all affected their access to healthcare services. The health workers provide sexual and reproductive health services, create health awareness and sensitize the community against stigma with an aim of improving utilization of healthcare services. Apart from the psychological and social support they offered to the women and their children. They were uncertain in integrating spirituality during health provision.

Female sex workers living in Bomet, still have unmet health needs that goes beyond the physical. This research is a call to healthcare providers to focus on the person rather than the disease through whole person care during service delivery.

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