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# Social Vulnerability Predicts Consistent Condom Use Among Female Sex

## Workers in Tanzania: Findings from HIV/STI Biological and Behavioral Surveys, 2013



**Kavita Misra<sup>1</sup>, Lung Vu<sup>2</sup>, Daniel Michaels<sup>1</sup>, Bongo Mgeni<sup>1</sup>, Neema Makyao<sup>3</sup>, Veryeh Sambu<sup>3</sup>, Joseph Nondi<sup>3</sup>, Anya Fedorova<sup>1</sup>, Melissa Higbie<sup>1</sup>**  
<sup>1</sup> Population Services International (PSI) Tanzania, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania; <sup>2</sup> Population Services International (PSI), Washington, USA; <sup>3</sup> National AIDS Control Programme (NACP), Ministry of Health and Social Welfare, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania

### BACKGROUND

- ❖ Female sex workers (FSWs) in Tanzania have an estimated HIV prevalence 5 times higher than the general population.
- ❖ Sexual risk behaviors such as condom use are poorly understood in this key population.
- ❖ Social vulnerability is experienced through shared social and cultural position; populations most vulnerable to HIV/ STIs tend to have lowest condom rates.
- ❖ Inconsistent condom use is linked to aspects of social vulnerability, such as marginality, stigmatization, economic and educational deprivation, exposure to multiple forms of violence, and lack of social support and legal protection. These affect condom-use decision making, access and ability to negotiate safer sex.

### METHODS

- ❖ Respondent driven sampling (RDS) used to recruit **1914 FSWs** aged  $\geq 15$  years from 7 high prevalence regions: Dar es Salaam, Iringa, Mbeya, Mwanza, Shinyanga, Tabora and Mara (March-September 2013).
- ❖ FSWs provided behavioral data through interview, and blood for HIV, syphilis and HSV-2 testing.
- ❖ Consistent condom use defined as “always used condom with client in the past month”.
- ❖ Multivariate logistic regression conducted using pooled and weighted data; self reported knowledge of HIV status entered in the model in order to maintain the correct temporal order in the model.

### RESULTS

#### Characteristics of Study Population

- ❖ Median age of FSWs: 26 years
- ❖ Majority were never married (63%), whereas a third were divorced, widowed or separated and only 1% were currently married or cohabiting; almost half lived alone
- ❖ Most FSWs had completed primary education (62%)
- ❖ Median income, past 3 months: 200K TZS (125 USD)
- ❖ HIV prevalence: 26%; Syphilis: 7%; HSV-2: 56%

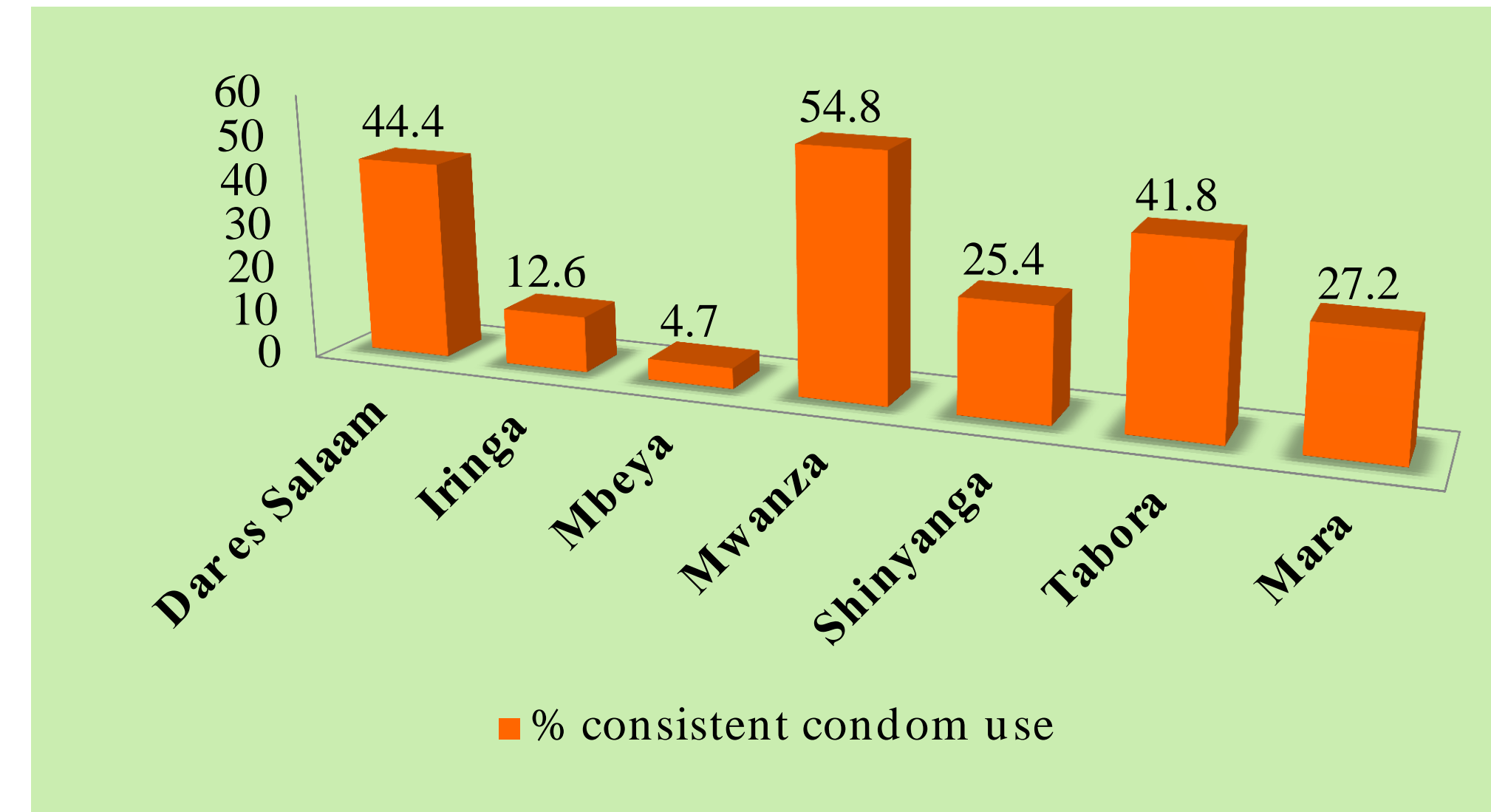
#### Predictors of consistent condom use among FSWs, Tanzania 2013 (n=1023)

Covariate	Adjusted OR (95% CI)
<b>Age first sold sex</b>	
19 years or under	1.00 (ref)
20 years or older	1.70 (1.16-2.50)*
<b>Education</b>	
None/ some primary	1.00 (ref)
Completed primary/ secondary	1.10 (0.62-1.98)
<b>Earnings from sex work (TZS)</b>	
200,000 TZS or under	1.26 (0.81-1.97)
Above 200,000 TZS	1.00 (ref)
<b>Clients per day, average past month</b>	
One to Two	1.63 (1.11-2.39)*
Three or more	1.00 (ref)
<b>Alcohol during sex work, past week</b>	
Yes	1.00 (ref)
No	2.41 (1.51-3.84)*
<b>Physical violence, past six months</b>	
Yes	1.00 (ref)
No	1.52 (1.02-2.27)*
<b>Forced sex, past six months</b>	
Yes	1.00 (ref)
No	2.24 (1.50-3.35)*
<b>Knowledge of HIV status</b>	
Yes	2.07 (1.36-3.16)*
No	1.00 (ref)

\*statistically significant, p-value <0.05

### RESULTS (CONTD.)

#### Consistent condom use in FSWs by region, Tanzania 2013



### CONCLUSIONS

- ❖ Overall, only 1 in 3 FSWs used condoms consistently.
- ❖ Social vulnerability indicated by younger age at initiation of sex work, greater number of clients daily, alcohol consumption during sex work, experiencing physical and sexual abuse, and lack of knowledge of HIV status, was associated with unsafe sex.
- ❖ Along with high HIV/ STI prevalence, findings call for measures to curb under-age sex work; incorporating substance-use counseling, screening and resources to address violence and sexual abuse within sexual health services; enhanced follow up and referrals within HIV counseling and testing facilities.

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