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CHANG CHUN: HIV/AIDS PREVENTIVE BEHAVIOR (CONDOM USE) AND ITS DETERMINANTS AMONG FEMALE COMMERCIAL SEX WORKERS IN BEIJING, CHINA. THESIS ADVISORS: ORATIA RAUYAJIN, M.A. Dr.P.H., VEENA SIRISOOK, M.A. Dr.P.H., VANAWIPHA PASANDHANATORN, M.A., YUDE CHEN, M.D., 178 P. ISBN 974-662-445-8

In the context of the increasing numbers of female commercial sex workers (FCSWs) and the growing health problem of HIV/AIDS in China, a cross-sectional study aimed at identifying HIV/AIDS preventive behavior (condom use) and its determinants among FCSWs in Beijing was conducted in 1998-1999. A modified model based on the Health Belief Model and the Theory of Reasoned Action was applied as a conceptual framework of this study. The results of this study were drawn from the structured questionnaire survey among a sample of 236 former FCSWs who were institutionalized at the Women Reeducation Center, Beijing, supplemented by in-depth interviews with 8 subjects.

The findings of this study show that 15.2% of the respondents regularly used condoms with their clients; slightly less than half of the women used condoms with clients most of the time; nearly one-third of them seldom used condoms, and 6.8% of them never used condoms with clients. In addition, most of the women intended to use condoms with clients in case they returned to commercial sex. Among the 236 respondents, 45.3% of them had strong intention of condom use while 40.3% of them had slight condom use intention. The FCSWs used condoms more frequently with clients rather than with husbands or boyfriends, and they were also more likely to intend to use condoms with clients rather than with husbands or boyfriends.

The results of path analysis revealed that four factors, namely, perceived severity of HIV infection, perceived susceptibility to HIV infection, subjective norms about condom use, and previous condom use were direct predictors of condom use intention. In addition, it was also found that knowledge about HIV/AIDS, discussion about HIV/AIDS and condom use with some specific persons, age, education, and living place were the factors which indirectly affected intention of condom use.

The findings of this study proved that the Health Belief Model and the Theory of Reasoned Action were useful in terms of understanding the FCSWs' HIV preventive behavior (condom use). Moreover, the research findings also indicated that there is an urgent need for effective and culturally sensitive health education, emphasizing safe sex and condom use among FCSWs as well as men and women at reproductive age and adolescents.