

## Factors Associated with Condom Breakage among Female Sex Workers: Evidence from Behavioral Tracking Survey in Thane District of Maharashtra, India

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**Abstract :** Background: HIV and STI transmission can be prevented if condoms are used properly, but condom tear may lead to infections even if are used consistently. Studies reveal high rates of condom breakage among Female Sex Workers (FSWs). USAID PHFI-PIPPSE is piloting a prevention model among high risk groups at Thane district of Maharashtra, India by implementing prevention and advocacy efforts for such risk behaviors. The current analysis highlights the correlates of condom breakage among FSWs from Thane. Method: A Behavioral Tracking Survey was conducted in 2014-15 among 503 FSWs through probability-based two stage random sampling from 3,660 FSWs at 100 hotspots, to understand levels of high risk behaviors, awareness and exposure to prevention programs. Bi-variate and multivariate-logistic regression methods used to assess the association of condom breakage while having sex with age, STI occurrence, anal sex with clients and alcohol consumption. Only self-reported STIs (Genital sore/ulcer, yellowish/ greenish discharge from vagina with/without foul smell, lower abdominal pain without diarrhea/dysentery or menses) were considered. Major Findings: Results depicted FSWs who reported condom breakage while having sex with any type of partner (paying clients, non-paying partners and other than main partner husband/boyfriend) had significantly high number of STIs (42.3% vs 16.9 %, P, 0.000) and had started sexual relationship in <16 years of age (31.0% vs 16.4 %, P, 0.000). Multivariate analysis after controlling the age at sex, knowledge about HIV and literacy, highlighted significantly higher odds of condom breakage among FSWs who have reported currently suffering with STI [AOR 2.91, 95% CI 1.75 - 4.83; P, 0.000]; who had anal sex with their paying client [AOR 2.59, 95% CI 1.59 - 4.19; P, 0.000]; and who consumed alcohol in the last 12 months [AOR 1.89, 95% CI 1.01 - 3.53; P, 0.047]. Conclusion: Risky behavior like anal sex with paying clients and impact of alcohol while having sex are main factors for condom breakage among young sex workers; and condom breakage leads to STIs. Hence, program interventions should address measures for prevention of condom breakage for HIV/STI prevention.

**Keywords :** female sex workers, condom breakage, anal sex, young sex workers

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