Contribution ID: **104**   Type: **Poster Presentation Only**

Determinants of unmet contraceptive needs among female commercial sex workers in Yaoundé, Cameroon

Thursday, September 18, 2025 10:36 AM (3 minutes)

Background: Mortality due to complications of unsafe abortion accounts for 25% of maternal deaths in Yaoundé. This major contributor to maternal mortality should be addressed at its roots in a context where voluntary abortion is unlawful and termination of pregnancy for medical reasons is highly restricted. To achieve this, a lawful solution consists of preventing unwanted pregnancies with emphasis on vulnerable groups of women including female commercial sex workers (FCSWs). Increasing the low contraceptive prevalence is a major goal of the country's health sector strategy. Understanding the correlates of unmet contraceptive needs would be instrumental to the design of a targeted strategy. In Cameroon, few studies have examined the unmet contraceptives prevalence among FCSWs whose trade is illegal. Our aim was to estimate the prevalence of unmet contraceptive needs, describe the socio-economic and demographic characteristics, and the correlates of the unmet contraceptive needs among FCSWs.

Methods: we carried out a Cross sectional study in the Yaoundé city, from the 1st November 2024 to the 31th March 2025. Were iincluded all FCSWs affiliated to NOLFOWOP association. Were excluded those how were sick, pregnant , with lactational amenorrhea or who refused the consent. Tools used to appreciate our results were effective, percentages, mean with his standard deviation, OR with his confidence interval and P, with P significant for all value less than 5%.

Results : Out of 1,155 sex workers approached, 397 (or 34.37%) were recruited. Data were collected et reported on a pre-established and tested technical sheets. Among them, 50 (12.59%) were excluded from the analysis due to withdrawal of consent (17 cases) and technical sheets containing less than 50% responses (16 cases) or very erroneous data (17 cases). We analyzed data from 347 female sex workers. The mean age was 29.11 ± 6.37 years with extremes of 13 and 57. The mean parity was 1.95 ± 1.769 with extremes of 0 and 9. The average gestational age of voluntarily terminated pregnancies was 10.97 ± 9.61 weeks with extremes of 0 and 33. Compared with single, married women were more likely not to use contraception as aOR =12,249 CI = 2,045 -73,370 P=0,28 for monogamous married women and aOR =10,015 CI= 1,290 - 77,774 P=0,028 for polygamous married women. Women who had never induced an abortion aOR=26.839 CI= 3.015 - 238.915 P=0.003. and women who had induced more than 4 abortions aOR=41.361 CI= 9.861 - 173.480) P<000 were more likely not to use contraception. Women who had fewer than 10 clients per month used less contraception than others, with aOR=5.468 CI= 1.516 - 19.721 P=0.009. Women who did not know about any contraceptive method did not use it, with aOR =63.18 CI= 3.350 - 1191.84 P=0.006.

Conclusion: The rate of non-used of contraception was 31.41% of female sexual workers. Strengthening campaigns for behavior change would be an opportunity to improve compliance with family planning.

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Session Classification: Poster CC

Track Classification: Contraceptive Care