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***Sexual health and care in a group of male-to-female transgender sex workers in Barcelona, Spain***

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**Introduction:** In Spain there are very few studies about risk and sexual vulnerability among male-to-female transgender sex workers (MTFSWs)

**Objectives:** To analyze the meanings of the experience of being transgender, sex work, unprotected sex and sexual health in MTFSWs.

**Methodology:** A qualitative study was carried out with 45 MTFSWs (aged 19-62): 25 in individual interviews and 20 in three discussion groups.

**Results:** Sixty seven percent of the participants were from Latin America. Different forms of self-definition were observed (female, transsexual, transvestite, and person). All have experienced some form of rejection and discrimination for being transsexual. Sex work maintains and reinforces their sense of female identity (being desired by men) and represents for them the only means of livelihood while many have not sought other work options because they anticipate the denial of access to formal jobs and because some of them are in an irregular situation in Spain. Most use condoms with clients, except many who are HIV-positive who do not use them especially if the client offers more money. Among the HIV-positive MTFSWs there are some difficulties in understanding certain aspects of the disease (reading of the analysis, treatment). It is with casual sexual partners and stable partner that condom use is inconsistent among some MTFSWs. Health care and the relationship with the GP are positively valued.

**Conclusions:** MTFSWs are a highly vulnerable group, especially immigrants. Health services in Barcelona can be a major means of providing information on sexual health and HIV/STIs prevention messages to MTFSWs.