

Protecting the health of sexual health outreach workers: Provision of information on Smoke Free Environment regulations to parlours in the South Eastern Sydney Local Health District

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Aim: To increase owner, manager and worker awareness about Smoke Free Environment regulations in parlours

Background

The SSHC Health Education Officers (HEO) frequently encounter cigarette smoke filled premises while conducting outreach to Chinese and Thai sex workers in parlours within SESLHD. The NSW Work Cover Health and Safety Guidelines for Brothels 2001 includes parlours, BDSM houses and other places where the public visits in its information and guidance about environmental tobacco smoke and the Smoke Free Environment Act 2000.¹

In order to prevent second hand smoke exposure to outreach HEOs, a risk assessment was conducted and the avoidance of smoke-filled parlour rooms was added to the SSHC Parlour Outreach Safe Work Procedure.

Additionally, the outreach team conducted an environmental audit of 29 frequently visited parlours in the area to assess smoking observed, smoke-free signage displayed and the availability of designated smoking areas.

Environmental audit

- Smoking was observed or was confirmed by staff to occur in all 29 parlours visited
- Specifically within:
 - the working rooms (11 parlours)
 - staff room (7)
 - reception area (5)
 - outside/garage area (4)
 - the toilet (1)
 - the kitchen (1)
- 22 parlours were without smoking information or non-smoking signage
- Non-smoking signage was on display in the common areas of 7 parlours

Literature review

- Chinese women smoke less than Chinese men,² but the prevalence of smoking among young, high-income Chinese women has tripled over the last 4 years.³
- SSHC Chinese sex worker clients are increasingly well educated compared to 20 years ago, with 70% now completing >12 years of education,⁴ therefore smoking is likely to be higher among these clients.
- 18% of SSHC CALD sex worker clients smoke compared to 10% of other NSW females.⁵
- International studies report sex workers smoking at rates 2 to 3 times higher than the general population.^{6,7,8}



EVALUATION PLAN	Project Plan What are we trying to achieve?	Evaluation Measures What will indicate success?	How will we measure it? What tool?	When will we measure?
Objectives	<p>To increase sex worker knowledge of smoking related harms.</p> <p>To reduce exposure to and harms associated with second hand smoke among sex workers and outreach workers in parlours.</p>	<p>An increase in knowledge of smoking related harms.</p> <p>Reduction in number of workers observed smoking in common areas in parlours.</p>	<p>SFE knowledge survey for sex workers, parlour owners and managers.</p>	<p>Before intervention.</p> <p>At 6 months.</p> <p>At 12 months.</p>
Activities	Smoke Free Environment information package distributed.	<p>Information, 'No Smoking' signs distributed to parlours.</p> <p>Information, 'No Smoking' signs displayed in parlours.</p> <p>Smoking area set up outside.</p>	<p>Number of information/signage packages distributed.</p> <p>Number of parlours displaying information and signage.</p> <p>Number and type of areas where smoking is observed.</p>	<p>Before intervention.</p> <p>6 months.</p> <p>12 months.</p>

Information pack distribution

- An information pack was distributed to 29 Chinese and Thai run parlours in SESLHD
- Pack contents:
 - Cover letter in English, Chinese and Thai
 - Non-smoking and SFE pictorial regulation signs x2
 - Extract from NSW Work Cover Health and Safety Guidelines for Brothels 2001 in English, Chinese and Thai
 - Invitation for individuals to participate in the free smoking cessation support program

Future plans

We will soon commence a smoking cessation support program for SSHC Chinese and Thai sex workers, for which a grant has been received from the SESLHD Multicultural Service and SESLHD HREC approval granted. SSHC Health Promotion and Counselling Units will lead the Smoking Cessation Support Program in partnership with the NSW Sex Worker Outreach Project (SWOP), the SESLHD Multicultural Health Service, SESLHD Health Promotion Unit and SESLHD Public Health Unit.

Business cards are being developed for distribution and the first clients will commence in the program before the end of 2016. The program will include free quit smoking counselling, with nicotine replacement therapy (NRT) if indicated. Baseline, 6 month and 12 month knowledge and behaviour surveys will inform the effectiveness of the program in relation to knowledge, quit attempts and smoking cessation.

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