

NO IMPACT OF A SEX WORKER CLIENT-TARGETED POLICING ON REDUCING WORKPLACE VIOLENCE AMONG FEMALE SEX WORKERS WHO USE DRUGS IN VANCOUVER, CANADA, 2008-2014

What was our study about?

In order to increase the safety of sex workers, in 2013, the Vancouver Police Department (VPD) changed their sex work policy to discontinue targeting sex workers while still policing clients and third parties.

The study examined the potential impact of the VPD policy change on trends of workplace violence (having a “bad date”) among female sex workers (FSW) who use drugs in Vancouver, Canada.

What did we do?

Between 2008 and 2014, 259 drug-using FSW who resided within VPD’s jurisdiction were interviewed every 6 months.



The client-targeted policing approach did not appear to have increased the workplace safety among female sex workers who use drugs.

What we found?

21% drug-using FSW reported workplace violence at least once during the study period, most commonly involving assaulted with weapon (47%), raped (29%), & strangled (11%).

The rates of workplace violence did not change before and after the VPD policy change. FSW who used heroin at least daily were more likely to report workplace violence.

What’s next?

Instead of the client-targeted policing approaches, increasing availability and accessibility of opioid agonist therapy may reduce workplace violence among drug-using FSW.

Prangnell A, Shannon K, Nosova E, DeBeck K, Milloy MJ, Kerr T, Hayashi K. Workplace violence among female sex workers who use drugs in Vancouver, Canada: does client-targeted policing increase safety? *Journal of Public Health Policy*. 2018 Feb;39(1):86-99. <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/29109517/>

