

# Behind the Pleasure

An analysis of sexual decision making among  
urban men who frequent high risk venues in  
Hanoi, Haiphong and HCMC

FHI/ Vietnam

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# Objectives

To understand about the process of sexual decision making of men in urban Vietnam, who frequent high risk venues, in order to:

- Provide an evidence-based framework for a mass media campaign targeting at-risk men, including those who have multiple partners and purchase commercial sex \*
- Help develop other interventions for at-risk men

\* *In this presentation, “men” refers to those who have multiple sexual partners, including clients of female sex workers.*

# Research method

- **Recruitment**
  - Direct recruited at “bia hoi” (randomly)
  - Indirect from Entertainment Establishment (EE- guest houses, karaoke, massage parlors)
  - Through Peer Educators
  - Advertised on Internet
  - Participants: men (married and unmarried, married women, EE owners)
    - 222 men (103 married/ 119 unmarried)
    - 61 married women
    - 41 EE owners
- **Data collection:** large FGD using semi-structure discussion guides
- **Sites:** Hanoi, Hai Phong, HCMC

# Areas for Data collection

- Awareness and participation in community-based activities, including HIV/AIDS
- Male behavior patterns
- Sexual decision making process (including influence of alcohol, peers and “boss/ business partners” phenomenon)
- Values of men
- Domestic issues
- Understanding about HIV/AIDS
- Media preference

# Main Findings



# Male Behavior Patterns

- Having multiple partners is reported as very popular among men. Visiting SWs is more common than having a girlfriend
- Men never go to SW alone or with someone they do not know well
- Most of the time, men visit SW with “like-minded” friends, followed by boss and business partners and less with colleagues.

# Influences of alcohol, money and education

- Alcohol involves in almost all (90%) commercial sex acts
- Alcohol increases the risk of men going to SW by increasing sexual desire and reducing the ability to self control. However, men admitted to use alcohol as an excuse in many cases.
- Money ultimately plays no role in whether or not a man purchases sex. It does, however, in deciding type of girl, type of sex and frequency of visits to FSWs
- Education is not important in purchasing sex

# Group Dynamics

- “Peer encouragement” rather than “peer pressure” plays a role. Group leader makes decision in what to do, where to go for the group
- The perceived duty to “support” one’s friends when out is very strong
- The notion of breaking away from the group is very bizzare and viewed negatively
- While participation in the group is voluntary, the fear of peer rejection if not joining is very real. Refusing to going to SWs, therefore, is very difficult

# Reasons for frequenting FSW

- The most common cited reasons are:
  - Men want something “new and different”
  - Going for sex is a way to bond with friends and business partners/ bosses
  - Dissatisfied with their home life or sex life at home
- Perception from both men and women that “men can live out and express their sexual needs but women cannot”, and “men need to have sex when there is a sexual desire”
- There are benefits (money, contract, job promotion) associated with going for sex with business partners/ bosses, which outweigh any consequence. Married women tend to support their husbands for this

# Values of Men

- Success in careers, social position, financial status and family happiness are viewed as most important in a man's life
- Extramarital sex/commercial sex is viewed as entertainment, NOT as irresponsibility towards one's family
- The idea of having only one sexual partner is viewed strange and funny
- Men are unable or unwilling to take any responsibility for their sexual actions
- A “real” man is the one who can balance his family and social life ( this includes “supporting” friends and going to SWs)

# Communication Preferences

- Medium:
  - TV (ensure timing is shown during men’s programming)
  - Newspaper (sport, football, security, police)
  - Radio
  - Internet
  - SMS (text messaging)
- Support activities:
  - Interpersonal communication (IPC), outreach at community level
  - Counseling centers, group discussions for men
- Contents:
  - No more preaching advertisements
  - Repetition is important
  - Something feels “real” to the audience and to their lives
  - Serious, not funny

# Conclusion

- There is opportunity to bring men into the dialogue of HIV prevention if programming is designed for them.
- The most important thing to men is family - wife and children. However, they are willing to risk that for the sake of their friends.
- Most men want to feel that they are “in control” of their sexual decision making. In fact, it is the leader of their social group in control most of the time
- Men do exert enormous influence over their peers but it is not currently influencing healthy behaviours

# Conclusion

- There is great need to increase the knowledge of men and women on sexual issues so that they can build a more fulfilling home life.
- There appears to be little social support from the target audience for monogamy, although a few are willing to try it
- However, the few positive deviants present, said it was not difficult to maintain monogamous relationships once the decision to do so was made
- Although skills and information are lacking, but there is much interest from the audience to change this situation

# Mass media

TV, Radio

## Small media

Newspaper (print ad, write-in contest),  
Internet, hotlines

### IPC

Print materials,  
edutainment CD, drama,  
group discussion,  
referrals

Integrated and consistent  
communication messages

Men's interventions

Men's campaign

## Communication interventions for at-risk men