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What about boys? An initial exploration of sexually exploited boys in Cambodia

Glenn Miles

Director of Prevention, Love146, glenn@love146.org

Heather Blanch

Hard Places Community, Cambodia, hardplacesheather@gmail.com

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What about boys?

An initial exploration of sexually exploited boys in
Cambodia

September 2011

Glenn Miles, PhD
Heather Blanch, BS



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Research Authors:

Glenn Miles, PhD
Heather Blanch, BS

Field Researchers:

Michael Munson
Phuong Sophorn
Phy Sopheak
Yin Veasna

Chab Dai—

Helen Sworn, International Director
helen.sworn@chabdai.org
www.chabdai.org

First Step—

Alastair Hilton
office@first-step-cambodia.org
www.first-step-cambodia.org

The Hard Places Community—

Alli Mellon, Executive Director
hardplacesalli@gmail.com

Love146—

Glenn Miles, PhD, Asia Director of
Prevention
glenn@love146.org
www.love146.org

Contributing consultants—

Jasmir Thakur, Samabhavana Society—
Mumbai, India
Steve Gourley, free-lance consultant—
Phnom Penh, Cambodia

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Executive Summary

Sexual exploitation of children has tended to focus on girls. The majority of organizations and service providers for sexually exploited children cater to the needs of girls. However, boys are also vulnerable to sexual exploitation. Limited research has been done to determine the prevalence of sexual exploitation of boys, but what has been done suggests that the issue is worthy of more attention. This study hopes to provide a baseline of information about young men who are being sexually exploited in Phnom Penh, Cambodia. In gathering and analyzing data about these young men, the researchers hope to promote awareness about the sexual exploitation of boys as well as to develop effective programs to assist them.

In December 2010 and January 2011, surveys were conducted in Phnom Penh at 6 massage parlors employing males and advertising to a male clientele. There were a total of 45 surveys completed by young men employed as masseurs at one of the 6 locations. The survey used was adapted from a similar tool used with male masseurs in India. This survey was determined to be the most efficient and effective way to gain preliminary data in a field that had not previously been researched in Cambodia. Ethical guidelines were followed throughout the research process.

Key Results

The results of this study indicate that boys and young men are vulnerable to sexual exploitation. There are a variety of factors that may attribute to a boy's vulnerability for sexual exploitation. A lack of skills and job training may be a contributing factor to boys' vulnerability. This study suggests that many of the respondents entered the massage

industry because they lacked skills or training to get a different job. The educational levels of the respondents were above average with nearly half of the respondents completing the 11th standard or above. However, this education did not appear to provide them with the skills necessary to gain employment. When asked if they would be interested in alternative employment, even if it paid a lower wage than what they were currently earning, the majority of the respondents said they would consider taking or definitely take an alternative job.

This willingness to pursue other employment could be linked to the majority of respondents acknowledging their shame over working as a masseur. The majority of respondents had not disclosed their employment as a masseur to their villages or communities because they believed their jobs to be shameful and were embarrassed to tell others.

Additionally, the sexual health of respondents was of some concern. Traditionally, attention that has been given to sexual exploitation of boys and young men has focused on providing sexual health education and HIV/AIDS prevention. One-third of the respondents identified some symptoms of illness, which suggests that not enough is being done to educate and support the health of these young men. However, there are other supports that need to be offered to these young men in order for them to be supported holistically.

The respondents were given an opportunity to share about their future goals and plans. The majority expressed a desire to pursue alternative employment. They had goals such as owning a business or working as a hairdresser. Most of the respondents planned to save money in order to achieve their future goals, but they may need additional support in order to gain job skills.

Recommendations

Future research needs to be conducted to better understand the issue of sexual exploitation of boys. Understanding the ways in which masseurs are recruited to work in the industry as well as the backgrounds of those working in this industry may provide a basis for developing more effective prevention and support programs for these young men. Assistance programs, such as those provided by First Step, are being developed to assist boys who suffer sexual abuse. Additional research is necessary to determine the types of alternative employment that appeal to these young men and what kind of support is needed for them to pursue these alternatives. Anthropological research into the cultural practices that may make boys vulnerable would be helpful in discovering how boys can be protected from sexual exploitation.

From an organizational perspective, there are several recommendations for promoting the overall health and well-being of sexually exploited boys. The sexual health of these boys is of concern. The research team made contact with a well-known organization, which was partnering with other organizations to provide sexual health education and services to these young men. However, one-third of the respondents acknowledged symptoms of illness, suggesting that more support is needed in this area.

Alternative employment and job skills training programs are needed for these young men. It is essential for organizations to work collaboratively in order to provide training to these young men. It is also important to consider the preferences of these young men. They should be consulted as to their preferences for jobs and should be treated individually with dignity and respect.

Further, it is recommended that greater attention be placed upon the prosecution of perpetrators of sexual exploitation of boys. This is especially true for local Cambodian perpetrators. The majority of perpetrators of sexual exploitation of boys are local Cambodians, yet more attention has been given to the prosecution of foreign perpetrators. In order to protect all children, perpetrators of sexual exploitation, regardless of nationality, must be prosecuted.

Introduction

This study is a first attempt in trying to understand the vulnerability of boys in the sex industry in Cambodia. The study was conducted by a Christian organization called Hard Places Community. Many Christian organizations have been actively working with sexually exploited girls but have not been so active in working with sexually exploited boys. However, in the past two years there has been a move toward challenging this through the work of Chab Dai (www.chabdai.org) and First Step (www.first-step-cambodia).

This research seeks to act as an initial understanding of males working in the massage industry in Cambodia and its correlation with the sex industry and sexual exploitation of males in Cambodia. While information is still limited, there have been a few significant studies examining the issue of male sexual abuse in recent years, both in Cambodia and elsewhere. In reviewing the current literature, it is hoped that a more complete picture can be gained of males working in the sex industry and those suffering from sexual abuse and exploitation.

Literature Review

Sexual abuse of boys

Insufficient research

While the sexual abuse of girls has been the subject of much research, there is limited research available on the sexual abuse of boys. This lack of research can be attributed to a variety of factors, including social stigmas regarding homosexual behavior, fears of punishment, and threats to masculinity. However, this lack of research is not an indicator

that the sexual abuse of boys is not a problem. Holmes and Slap claim, "The sexual abuse of boys is common, underreported, under-recognized, and undertreated" (1998, p. 1860). Research suggests boys in North America have been less likely to report sexual abuse than their female counterparts because they fear punishment, being labeled as homosexual, or losing independence and freedom (Holmes & Slap, 1998, p. 1855). Additionally, reports of sexual abuse of boys have often been reported to different agencies than reports of sexual abuse of girls, making it difficult to compare data (Holmes & Slap, 1998, p. 1855).

Vulnerability factors and rates of abuse

In South Asian societies the existence of sexual abuse of and vulnerability of boys is often denied (Frederick, 2010, p. 6). Boys are seen as being able to care for and protect themselves, which often results in a greater amount of freedom. This freedom can actually be an attributing factor to the increased vulnerability of boys as they are more often outside the home and less supervised in their activities than their female counterparts (Frederick, 2010, p. 6). Depending on the population studied, the rate for sexual abuse of boys in North America ranged from 4 percent to 16 percent (Holmes & Slap, 1998, p. 1856). A 2005 study found that 16 percent of adult male Health Management Organization (HMO) members in San Diego, California, reported that they had experienced sexual abuse before the age of 18 years (Dube et al., p. 434). Sexual abuse of a child includes inappropriate fondling, anal or oral sex, removal of clothing, and penetrating body orifices with objects, and typically involves manipulation, coercion, or violence and often results in physical and psychological trauma (Valente, 2005, p.10).

Perpetrators of abuse

Perpetrators of sexual abuse of boys are most often heterosexual men (Holmes & Slap, 1998, p. 1857). Boys tend to cite that abuse began as innocent play but progressed to a level that left the boys feeling uncomfortable. The boys often cite confusion, not understanding why a trusted adult would treat them inappropriately. Many times the boys are manipulated in order to keep the abuse secret, and in many cases this secrecy is either rewarded or the boys are threatened with punishment if secrecy is not maintained. Boys who have suffered physical abuse will sometimes succumb to sexual abuse in hopes that it will prevent future physical beatings (Valente, 2005, p.12).

Effects of abuse

Boyhood sexual abuse has been shown to have a negative impact upon the development of a boy's gender identity, self-esteem, and self-concept. It can also be confusing for the psychological development of boys because while they feel violated by the abuse, they may have also experienced sexual pleasure by having their genitalia stimulated. Boys often cite feelings of anxiety, fear, depression, anger, self-blame, negative views of self, and difficulty in having intimate relationships (Valente, 2005, p. 12). Often boys do not disclose their abuse in order to avoid social stigma and rejection (Holmes & Slap, 1998, p. 1855). Boys who suffer from sexual abuse often have long-term effects on interpersonal relationships, which may be attributed to a variety of factors. These factors include (a) distrust, anxiety, and rage; (b) a difficulty distinguishing abuse from other aspects of relationship dynamics; (c) uncertainty of their own sexual identities; (d) difficulty managing emotional and sexual dynamics of relationships; (e) difficulty relating to others through their sexuality; (f)

uncertainty regarding feelings toward abusers; and (g) tendencies toward extremes in relationships, resulting in abuse or victimization (Gartner, 1999, p. 350-351).

In studies done on the long-term effects of boyhood sexual abuse, victims identified many psychological problems, which had negative implications for their personal development. Psychological problems cited were (a) anger; (b) betrayal; (c) fear; (d) homosexuality issues; (e) helplessness; (f) isolation and alienation; (g) legitimacy; (h) loss; (i) masculinity issues; (j) negative childhood peer relations; (k) negative schemas about people; (l) negative schemas about the self; (m) problems with sexuality; (n) self-blame and guilt; and (o) shame and humiliation (Lisak, 1994, p. 526).

Male sex work industry

Recent studies have discovered that there is indeed reason to further investigate male sexual abuse and exploitation and its links to males in the sex industry. A study released in Canada in 2005 (McIntyre) performed interviews with 37 young men who were involved in the sexual exploitation trade (p. 22). The findings of this study suggest that young men have had similar experiences with regard to physical and sexual abuse as young women have had. Three-fourths of the young men in this study identified being physically abused or witnessing aggression as a child, while nearly 70 percent had a history of being sexually abused prior to entering the sexual exploitation trade (McIntyre, 2005, p. 28-31). Young men in McIntyre's study identified themselves with differing sexual identities—heterosexual, bi-sexual, and homosexual. However, the researcher also discovered that many young men would adopt a different sexuality for working than what they would identify in their private lives (McIntyre, 2005, p. 64-69). The young men felt that those providing services for sex workers did not have options that suited their needs (McIntyre,

2005, p. 58). The young men had poor family relationships. In McIntyre's study 95 percent of participants had a history of running away from home, and the majority of these experienced situations in which they were offered food and shelter in exchange for sexual services (2005, p. 26-27).

Sexual health

Although public education on the importance of condom usage in the prevention of sexually-transmitted infections, including HIV/AIDS, were found to be very successful, and HIV testing was also well utilized by these young men (McIntyre, 2005, p. 91) researchers noted extensive drug use, which for many of the young men began when they began doing sex work (McIntyre, 2005, p. 61). Although HIV/AIDS and sexually-transmitted infections are of concern, the researchers of this study in Cambodia feel that there has been too much focus on HIV and sexual health to the neglect of other aspects of these young men's lives, such as hopes, aspirations, and connections with other forms of violence and abuse. Also educating about condoms in the short-term may be important but if it is the only thing being done then in the long-term it overlooks that sexual exploitation is exploitative.

Characteristics of sex workers

Traditional research of male sex workers has represented these individuals as relatively young and hyper-masculine with low levels of education. They are typically unskilled and come from a poor socioeconomic background, which may include family dysfunction. They often have difficulty in building and maintaining stable relationships, and in many cases have been introduced to sexual activity at a young age (Scott et al., 2005, p. 322-323). However, recent literature suggests that male sex workers are much more diversified than

previous stereotypes have suggested. There are also significant differences between street-based and non-street-based sex workers. Typically, street-based workers tend to have lower levels of education, higher frequencies of drug use, more financial problems and more violent interactions with clients. They tend to be less likely to be tested for HIV and other sexually-transmitted infections. They also hold more negative attitudes toward being a sex worker (Scott et al., 2005, p. 323-324). However, non-street-based workers typically have higher educational levels and less financial problems. They are usually more inclined to practice safe-sex practices and understand the importance of protecting against HIV and other sexually-transmitted infections. These workers tend to view sex work as more long-term work and as a result often have a more positive view of sex work (Scott et al., 2005, p. 324).

Perspectives on violence

Scott et al. (2005, p. 324-327) examines violence in the male sex industry. The frequency with which a male sex worker experiences violence may be largely determined by whether they work in a public or private space. Those who work in public arenas are more-inclined to experience violence than those who work in private settings (Minichiello et al., 1999, p. 517).

South Asia

Although research about sexual abuse and exploitation of males is limited, there have been significant studies conducted on sexual exploitation and prostitution of boys in South Asia. ECPAT International has conducted situational analysis studies in Bangladesh, India, and Pakistan. The prostitution of boys is an unmentionable subject in much of South Asia, and

thus, there is little information about the boys who are involved in prostitution. However, prostitution of boys in South Asia is significant. In Sri Lanka it is estimated that 90% of child prostitutes are boys (Todres, 1999, p. 22). Previous research has shown that a large percentage of these boys are street dwellers and many of them scavenge through garbage dumps or are pick-pockets. In parts of Pakistan, there is a traditional practice called *bachabazi* in which boys are kept and used for sex by older men (Akula, 2006, p. v-vi; Ali & Sarkar, 2006, p. 1; Muhammad & Zafar, 2006, p. 10). In India, the *hijra* (eunuch) community is a stigmatized group that is often sexually exploited. Effeminate boys who do not undergo operations to become eunuchs will often become folk entertainers, such as Luanda dancers. As members of either of these communities, boys are at high risk of physical violence, hate crimes, sexual harassment and sexual abuse. Without outside support or a sense of real self-worth, these boys often feel helpless to do anything to stop the abuse that they face (Lahiri & Kar, 2007, p. 4-5). These boys are at high risk for contracting HIV/AIDS and other sexually-transmitted infections. They are also often labeled as homosexual, whether or not they identify themselves as such. In Bangladesh, homosexuality is an unacceptable practice and violates “public nuisance” laws (Ali & Sarkar, 2006, p. 1-2).

Assistance programs

There are a few programs in South Asia that assist boys in prostitution, but the majority of them are focused on HIV/AIDS awareness. Boys are often perceived to not have the same psychological or physical damage from sexually exploitive situations that girls do, and thus, the need for services is often unrealized (Akula, 2006, p. 6). However, other studies have shown that male victims of sexual abuse have similar psychological problems as their female counterparts (Banyard, Williams, & Siegel, 2004, p. 226).

Cambodian context

In recent years sexual abuse and exploitation of boys in Cambodia has been recognized as an issue worthy of greater attention. In 2008 Hilton et al. published the study “I Thought It Could Never Happen to Boys,” a qualitative study of 40 boys and young men in 3 different locations in Cambodia. These boys shared their experiences of sexual abuse. Additionally, over 100 staff members from service providers were interviewed about their experiences in working with male victims of sexual abuse (Hilton et al., 2008, p. 8).

General risk factors and effects

The risk factors for abuse identified in Cambodia were similar to those identified in other studies of male sexual abuse. These factors included poverty, family difficulties (i.e. single-parent household, domestic violence), street-dwelling, little education, and drug or alcohol abuse. Many of the boys had experienced violence and admitted to having little knowledge about sexual issues prior to being abused (Hilton et al., 2008, p. 9; Keane, 2006, p. 2). The aftereffects of abuse cited by boys in Cambodia were also similar to those in other research, including feelings of shame, fear of consequences of disclosing abuse, uncertainties related to sexuality and gender, self-blame, psychological trauma, and substance misuse. Young men who had experienced sexual abuse as boys cited long-term physical, emotional, and psychological problems (Hilton et al., 2008, p. 9).

Cultural risk factors

Within Cambodia there is a common practice of showing affection to male children up to the age of 3 years by touching or kissing their genitals, likely as a way to soothe them when they are upset (Hilton et al., 2008, p. 48; Miles & Sun, 2006, p. 36). As boys age, it is not

unusual for adults to grab boys' genitalia or expose boys' genitalia as a joke (Hilton et al., 2008, p. 48). In a study conducted by Tearfund in 2005, it was discovered that 15.7 percent of boys in Cambodia say they have been sexually touched on the genitals before the age of 9 years with 18.9 percent of boys saying they had experienced this after the age of 9 years. In comparison, the same Tearfund study found that only 13.5 percent of girls in Cambodia have been sexually touched on the genitals before or after the age of 9 years. At the time of the study the boys and girls interviewed were between the ages of 12 and 15 years (Miles & Sun, 2005, p. 29). Additionally, in 2006 researchers observed that if there is uncertainty of the gender of a child, such as a girl with short hair or a boy with feminine features, it is common for adults to grab the genital area of the child in order to check for a penis (Miles & Sun, 2006, p. 36). Those who had the opportunity to respond about their feelings and experiences of having their genitals touched were in agreement that it was an unwanted form of attention causing them to feel angry and embarrassed (Hilton et al., 2008, p. 118).

On observation in Phnom Penh, there are considerable numbers of massage places where young women cater to men and provide sexual services and an increasing number of massage establishments where young men are providing services for other men. These locations cater to both foreign and local clientele.

Perpetrators of sexual exploitation of boys

Action Pour Les Enfants (APLE) conducted a study on the child victims of sexual exploitation in Cambodia. APLE noted that their experiences have been that 80 percent of child victims of street-based sexual exploitation in Cambodia are boys (Keane, 2006, p. 2). The majority of boys who have participated in Cambodian studies have identified foreign perpetrators (Keane, 2006, p. 4; Hilton et al., 2008, p. 8). However, there were still a number of boys who

disclosed abuse by Cambodians, including relatives, neighbors, other adults, and other children or adolescents (Hilton et al., 2008, p. 8-9). Moreover, APLE confirms that child sexual exploitation is more often perpetrated by Cambodian nationals than by foreigners. However, APLE's research focuses more on foreign perpetrators of sexual exploitation (Renault, 2006, p. 12). They have been successful in prosecuting a number of these foreign sex offenders, but the prosecution of Cambodian nationals is still limited. In 2011 there have been a number of cases of sexual abuse and/or exploitation of boys in Cambodia highlighted in news publications. In the February 18, 2011, issue of *The Cambodia Daily*, an article appeared about an American doctor who had been arrested on suspicion of sexually abusing 3 boys between the ages of 6 and 15 years old. The boys had been living with the American man under the false front that he had adopted them (Saing & Vrieze). This case was similar to one presented in a 1996 research study on child prostitution in Cambodia where one boy cited being introduced to prostitution by a foreign pedophile who had "adopted" him (Gray, Gourley, & Paul, 1996, p. 14). Additionally, there was a boy who had been "adopted" by a local Khmer man who both sexually abused him and sold him to foreigners for sex (Gray, et al., 1996, p. 14-15). In April 2011 a Japanese man was sentenced to two years in prison for paying for sex with children, namely a 15-year-old boy and a 16-year-old boy (Phak).

In reviewing the existing literature about the sexual abuse of males and the male sex work industry, it is evident that there are gaps in understanding sexual abuse and exploitation of males in the Cambodian context. It is clear that sexual abuse and exploitation of males is occurring in Cambodia. The following research seeks to fill in some of these gaps by better

understanding the young men who work as sex workers in the male-to-male massage industry in Phnom Penh.

Methodology

In December 2010 and January 2011, surveys were conducted in Phnom Penh at 6 massage parlors employing males and advertising to a male clientele. At the time the survey was conducted, these 6 locations were the only ones known to the research team. The locations were identified by Jasmir Thakur of the Samabhavana Society in Mumbai, India, during a visit to Phnom Penh. Contact was made with managers and owners of the establishments, and permission was granted for the surveys to be conducted with employees during off-peak hours. All of the respondents were employed as masseurs at one of the 6 locations. Surveys were conducted at the massage parlors at which the respondents were employed. The managers and owners were responsible for determining which of their employees would participate in the survey. There were a total of 45 surveys completed. Interviewers were local Cambodians and one expatriate. All surveys were conducted in the local language (Khmer) without the aid of a translator. Researchers were grateful to have access at this time. A raid was conducted shortly after this research took place, and the government closed one establishment. If this had occurred prior to the interviews, it may have caused managers to limit access of their establishments to the research team.

The survey used was adapted from a similar tool used with male masseurs in India developed by Jasmir Thakur of Samabhavana Society (Miles & Thakur, 2011). Adaptations were made to make the survey more contextually relevant for the cultural and economic conditions of Cambodia. This survey was determined to be the most efficient and effective

way to gain preliminary data in a field that had not previously been researched in Cambodia. The breadth and depth of the survey provided a necessary basis to provide support for the hypotheses while also providing direction for additional research in the field. The respondents were given information regarding the purpose of the survey before consenting to participate. Respondents were also informed that they could choose not to answer any question or end the survey at any time.

Ethical guidelines were followed throughout the research process (Ennow, et al., 2009, p. 2.13-2.18). The respondents were informed about the purpose and intensity of the survey before consenting to participation. Permission was first gained by the employers of the respondents to ensure that the respondents would not face any adverse implications should they choose to participate in the research. Interviewers would visit the locations in pairs to ensure safety and accountability. The respondents were informed prior to engaging in the survey that they could choose not to answer any question and could choose to stop the survey at any time. Interviewers were carefully trained to give appropriate respect to respondents and use culturally appropriate language. Interviewers sought to establish equality with respondents through developing rapport with the respondents and appropriately explaining the research and its purpose. Surveys were conducted in the Khmer language, without the aid of a translator. No promises were made to the respondents about the services or programs that could result from the survey results beyond what was possible. The respondents were not compensated for their participation, but the research team was careful to conduct interviews during off-peak hours of work for the respondents. They were also informed that if they needed to stop the survey at any time in order to serve a client, they were free to stop the survey and work as needed.

Interviewers were careful to ensure that interviews were conducted in a private space. Care was taken to ensure that others did not overhear the interviews. All surveys were to be kept confidential. Respondents were informed that their individual responses would not be given to their employers. No visitors were allowed during the interview process. No images were taken during the process.

Limitations. While all surveys conducted with participants require informed consent, there were additional difficulties in doing this. The first of which was that consent had to first be given by the owners and/or managers of the locations in which these men were employed. This means that the owners and/or managers had a great amount of control over how the survey was conducted and who participated in the survey. Because the surveys were conducted at the respondents' places of employment, they may have been reluctant or unsure about how much they could share, especially when answering questions that may have negatively represented their places of employment. The nature of the survey was quite intense, asking very personal questions of the respondents and we were grateful for their willingness to participate. The interviewers had no previously established relationships with the respondents, which may have made the respondents less inclined to share intimate details of their lives. However, they did openly share many intimate details of their lives during the survey process.

The majority of the respondents admitted that they believed their jobs to be shameful, and thus, it is likely that they may not want to bring further shame upon themselves by discussing their experiences of sexual abuse and violence. In addition, it is possible that some of the respondents felt unable to provide their actual age knowing that in order to work in this industry they must be at least 18 years of age. It is understood that it is a

common practice for employers to make adjustments to the ages on birth records of individuals in order to allow young people to begin working earlier than labor laws allow.

It may have been helpful to provide more explicit definitions of “coercion” and “force.” Upon analyzing the data, it was unclear as to whether all the respondents had the same idea of what it meant to be coerced or forced to have sex. Providing definitions to all the respondents may have produced better results.

The overall design and execution of the survey presented limitations as well. In conducting the survey, it was discovered that some of the questions were confusing or unclear to the respondents due to cultural or language differences even though they were tested beforehand in a pilot study. Thus, some of these questions were omitted from the analysis and others have required careful analysis to avoid misunderstanding. The survey was conducted by several interviewers, and thus, even though they were carefully trained to avoid this, it is possible that not all respondents were presented the information exactly same way. When clarifying questions for respondents, each interviewer may have responded in a slightly different manner, eliciting different feelings or answers from respondents. Additionally, there was one respondent whose first language was Vietnamese. This respondent chose to participate in the survey but had a co-worker who was fluent in both Vietnamese and Khmer act as a translator. In this situation, it would have been best for a neutral third party to act as a translator in conducting the survey. Though this was an unforeseen event, in the future accommodations should be made for such a need.

In retrospect, there are some adjustments that could have been made in order to further authenticate the survey results. It might have been better to have conducted the survey in a neutral location, rather than at the respondents’ workplaces, which may have allowed the

respondents to feel more at ease and more inclined to provide more thorough answers, but this was not possible as it is unlikely that the managers would have agreed to such terms.

It may have also been useful to divide the survey into a few separate surveys, which could then be conducted over a series of visits. This would help to establish a trusting relationship between the interviewers and the respondents, which may have fostered more thorough answers from the respondents. However, it was not known whether there would access beyond the first visit so it was decided that there was less risk in performing a one-time survey in order to get all the necessary data.

In order to truly establish the vulnerability of boys compared to girls, it would have been helpful to do a comparative study of boys and girls of the same age working in the massage industry. However, this will have to be left for a different study.

Results and Analysis

Data analysis was completed using SPSS 16.0.

Demographic Data

The respondents described their ages to be from 18 to 35 years. The median age was apparently 23. The age at which the respondents apparently began as a masseur ranged from 17 to 30 years with the median age being 22 years. However, interviewers noted that some of the respondents appeared to be younger than 18 years and this may be because the respondents were aware that in order to work in this industry they were required to be at least 18 years of age. In other research boys began as masseurs much younger, suggesting that these young men may have been reluctant to disclose accurate information.

In Mumbai, India, a survey of 77 masseur boys revealed that 9 percent were age 10 to 12 and 55 percent age 13 to 15 (Miles & Thakur, 2011).

Of those respondents who answered, 22.7 percent had worked as a masseur for more than 2 years, up to 6 years. Additionally, 40.9 percent had worked as a masseur for between 1 and 2 years, and 36.4 percent had worked for less than one year. Observations made by interviewers noted that there may be a high turnover rate among masseurs. Interviewers also noted that working in this industry may be seasonal work for some of the respondents. In the study "Regaining Honour" it was suggested that boys who are involved in commercial sex typically have more choice in their involvement than their female counterparts (Gray, et al., 1996, p. 12), and so it is possible that the boys may work for a few months to earn money quickly, leave the job, and then return if they find themselves in need of money without any other job opportunities.

The birthplaces of the respondents varied. Ten respondents identified their birthplace as Phnom Penh, the capital city. For the other respondents, 11 different Cambodian provinces were identified as birthplaces. The most popular responses were those of the most populated provinces in Cambodia and those within close proximity to Phnom Penh. One respondent answered that his birthplace was Vietnam, and 2 respondents did not provide an answer. This is different from the Mumbai study (Miles & Thakur, 2011) where a number of boys were found to have come from a specific village which was then followed up.

Many of the respondents migrated to Phnom Penh. Of those who migrated to Phnom Penh, 65.7 percent identified finding employment and making money as their primary purpose for migration. An additional 20.0 percent identified that finding employment was partially the reason for migrating to the city.

One-fourth of respondents responded that studying was either their sole or partial reason for migrating to Phnom Penh. The educational levels of the respondents were higher than the percentages found in the General Population Census of Cambodia 2008. The 2008 Census found that 42.4 percent of males aged 25 years and over had no schooling or had not completed primary school with primary school defined as the first 6 years of education. Lower secondary is years 7 to 9, and upper secondary is grade 10 to 12. The census also denoted 29.4 percent of males had completed primary school but had not continued on to secondary school. Conversely, 42.2 percent of the respondents had completed at least grade 7, with another 48.9 percent having completed grade 11 and above. As there are limited numbers of secondary and post-secondary schools in provincial areas, many individuals are required to migrate to the larger cities in order to further their educations. Because the respondents identified high educational levels, it is likely they would migrate to the cities in order to continue their educations. It would be helpful to conduct more research on whether youth are recruited from educational establishments to work at massage places in order to earn money to cover educational fees and living expenses.

Entering the massage industry

Respondents were questioned about how they entered the massage industry. In response 71.5 percent answered that a friend was responsible for introducing them to the industry. Many of the respondents identified having a friend who was already working in the industry and was able to get them a job. Another 13.6 percent of the respondents answered that they had a previous relationship with the manager of the establishment at which they are now employed. Four respondents answered that a family member, either a brother or an

uncle, helped them get a job as a masseur. It is unknown if there is some sort of recruiting process or advertisement used to find masseurs.

Respondents were also asked about why they became a masseur instead of another job. The responses to this question were varied. Many of the respondents listed multiple reasons for entering the massage industry. One-third of respondents admitted that it was difficult to find another job. Following that response 25 percent of respondents cited that they were in need of “quick and easy” money, and being a masseur offered an opportunity to earn money quickly. Regardless of how long they had been working as masseurs, this was a common response. Additionally, likely connected to the previous responses, 18.2 percent of respondents stated that they had little to no education or skills training. Those that responded they had no education or skills training had generally been working as a masseur for less than 2 years. Even though the majority of respondents had above average educational levels for Cambodia, they did not have the skills required for employment that would provide a livable wage. A notable number of respondents (15.9 percent) said that being a masseur was an “easy job,” requiring little skill and providing free time to pursue other interests but still paying a reasonable salary. This response was not dependent upon how long the respondents had been working as a masseur as some of the respondents had been working for less than a year while others had been working for up to 4 years.

Relationship effects

The respondents were asked if those in their village, or neighborhood, were aware that the respondent was a masseur. The vast majority (84.1 percent) of respondents answered that those in their villages were not aware that they were masseurs. One respondent did not provide an answer to this question. When probed for reasons as to why the respondents

had not informed their villages of their employment as masseurs, there were varied answers. One respondent answered that his family knew of his employment but did not feel it necessary to inform the larger community. Another respondent commented that people who live in provincial areas often do not know what people who dwell in the city do for employment. However, the majority of respondents expressed that the primary reason for not informing their villages of their employment was because they were ashamed. Multiple respondents admitted to purposefully telling people in their villages and neighbors that they have different jobs. Another respondent admitted that he hides it from people in his village because he feels it is not an appropriate job and is embarrassed. Others noted that they would not even tell their family members about their employment as a masseur.

Respondents were asked a series of questions regarding their personal relationships. The first of which was whether they had a best friend. The majority, 86.7 percent, affirmed that they had a best friend. Of those, 48.7 percent identified their best friend as another masseur. The remaining responses were evenly divided at 25.6 percent each for the respondent's best friend being a boy from his village or simply identified as someone else. When respondents were asked how much being a masseur affects their intimate personal relationships, 75 percent responded that being a masseur did not affect their intimate personal relationships. The remaining 25 percent was distributed as follows: 9.1 percent very much affected, 9.1 percent moderately affected, 6.8 percent minimally affected. One respondent did not provide an answer to this question.

Figure 1: Relational Effects

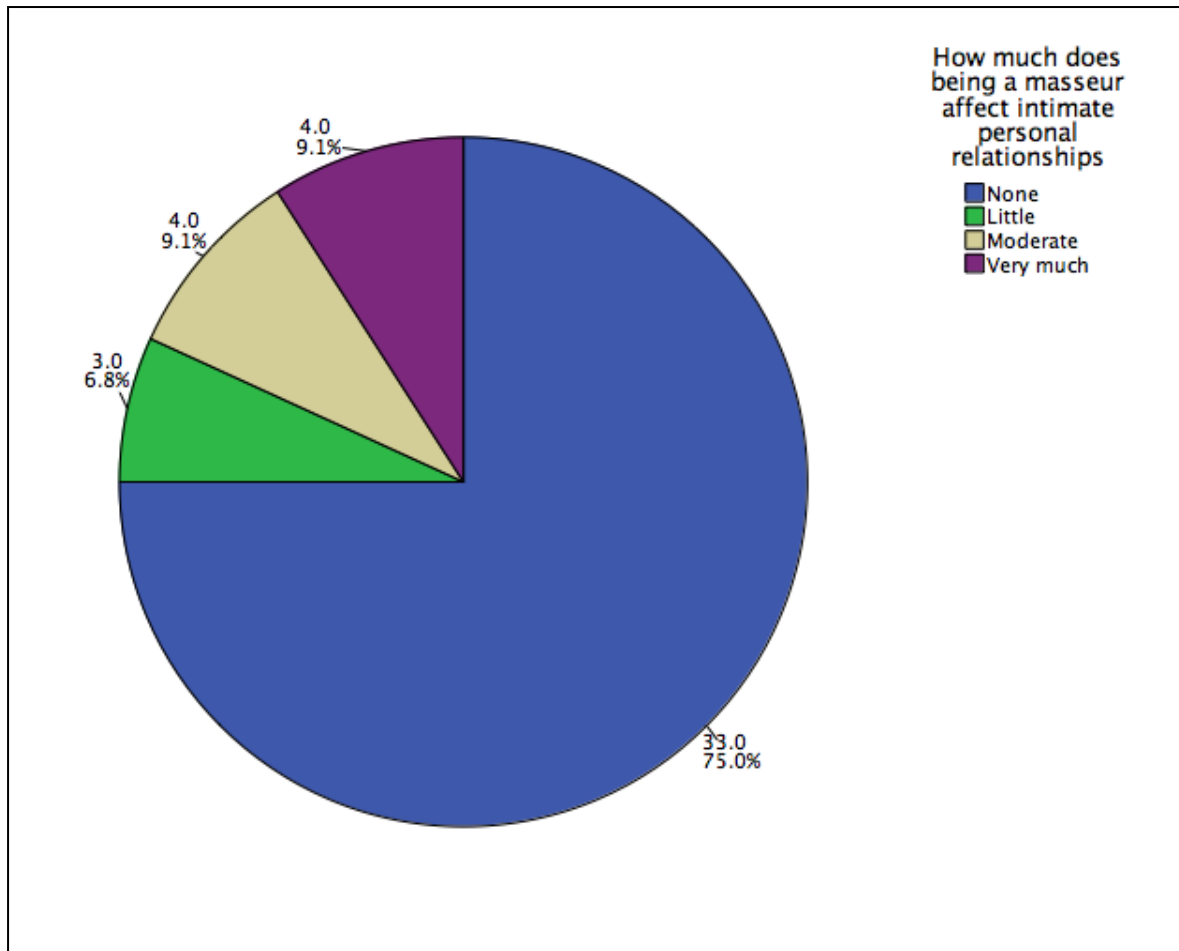


Figure 1 represents the respondents' perceptions on how much being a masseur affects their intimate personal relationships.

However, if this information is considered in light of the responses that the vast majority of respondents have not told anyone in their villages, and in some cases their families, of their employment as masseurs, the results may not give the full picture. For example, while it cannot be determined based on the information provided, it is possible that if the respondents' villages and families were aware of their employment and if indeed it is believed to be shameful work, there may be more of an effect on the respondents' relationships. In Mumbai, India, 65 percent of masseurs felt that being a masseur affected their personal relationships very much, and as these were street-based workers, other people were more often aware of their work as a masseur (Miles & Thakur, 2011).

Financial implications

Income and debt are often considered significant factors for those working in the sex industry. The respondents were asked about both their income and their families' debt. The incomes of the respondents varied widely. The respondents' income in the past 3 months ranged from 0USD, if they had started work but not yet gotten paid, to 3000USD. The median income over 3 months was 425USD. The respondents' income in the past week ranged from 0USD, if they had started work but not yet gotten paid, to 500USD. The median income in the past week was 40USD. Boys working in prostitution generally make more money than girls, and they like the lifestyle that this extra money offers them, including being able to spend money on holidays, recreational activities, fashionable clothes, and other products associated with a high-status lifestyle (Gray, et al., 1996, p. 16). In response to questions regarding the financial debt of the respondent's family, 35.6 percent answered that their family was currently in some kind of debt. The range of money yet to be repaid was 200USD to 20,000USD. The median amount of money still owed was 625USD while mean amount owed was 2,829USD.

Additionally, the respondents were asked about their savings habits. More than three-fourths of respondents answered that they had some form of savings. This is impressive. Those respondents who had savings were asked to identify where they keep their savings. The most popular response was that savings was kept in a bank with 42.9 percent of respondents citing this. This is an impressive figure and it would be helpful to know whether this is something encouraged by employers. This response was followed with 34.3 percent keeping their savings on their person or amongst their belongings. Another 20 percent of respondents keep their savings with a family member, either in the city or in their provincial

hometown. One respondent claimed to have savings but did not disclose the location of where his savings was kept.

The respondents were asked if they would be interested in taking a job different from a masseur that paid 80USD per month. This salary was determined as a potential average salary for an unskilled laborer in Phnom Penh. The respondents were given three options with which to respond. Over three-fourths of the respondents answered that they would either definitely or maybe take another job that paid 80USD per month, with 37.8 percent responding with “definitely” and 40 percent responding with “maybe.” While there were 22.2 percent that said they were not interested in such a job, there were multiple respondents who made additional comments regarding this question. Multiple respondents noted that they required a job with a minimum income of 100USD per month in order to support themselves and their families.

Figure 2: Interest in a Different Job

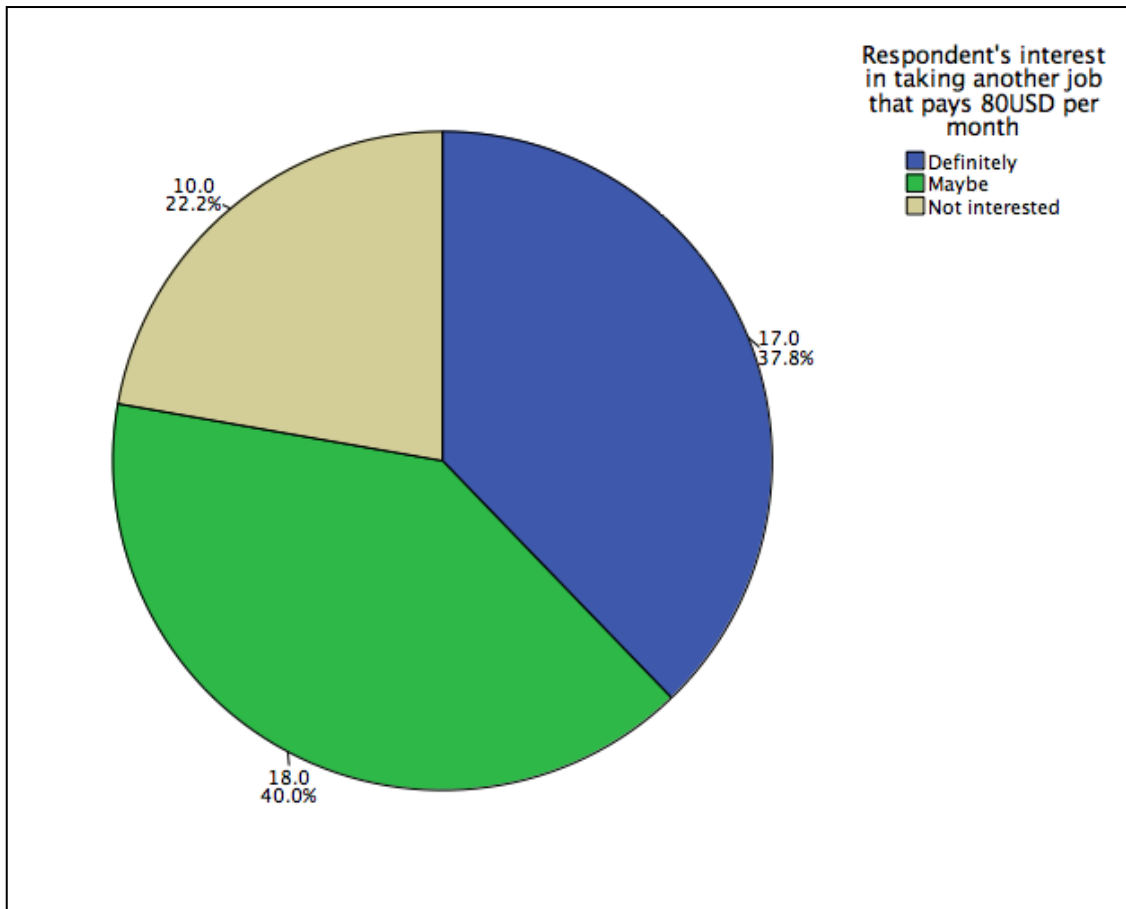


Figure 2 represents the respondents' overall interest in taking a job other than as a masseur that would pay 80USD per month.

For the respondents who are currently making equal to or less than 80USD per month, the responses were more favorable that the respondent would at least consider another job (Figure 3). Over half of these respondents agreed they would definitely take another job that paid 80USD per month. This number was significantly smaller for those who are currently making more than 80USD per month with only 29 percent saying they would definitely take another job (Figure 4). Although the number of definite responses decreased as the respondents' income increased, there was significant rise in the responses of "maybe" by those whose income was above 80USD per month. Taking all into account, 84.6 percent of those who currently make equal to or less than 80USD per month would at least

consider a job different from a masseur that paid 80USD per month, and 74.2 percent of those currently making more than 80USD per month would at least consider taking a different job that paid 80USD per month.

Figure 3: Interest in a Different Job for those with Income at or below 80USD

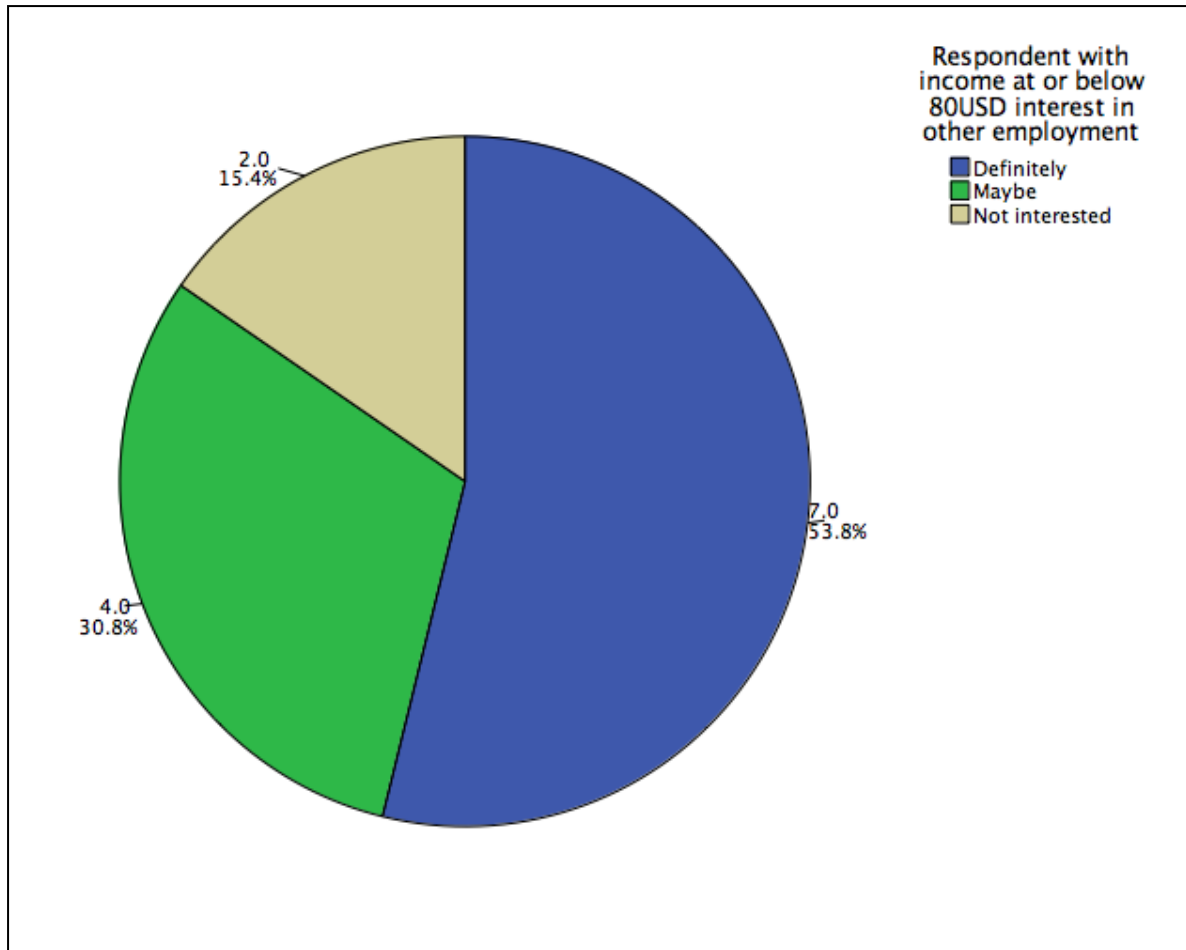


Figure 3 represents the interest in taking a different job that would pay 80USD per month for respondents who were currently making at or below 80USD per month as a masseur.

Figure 4: Interest in a Different Job for those with Income above 80USD

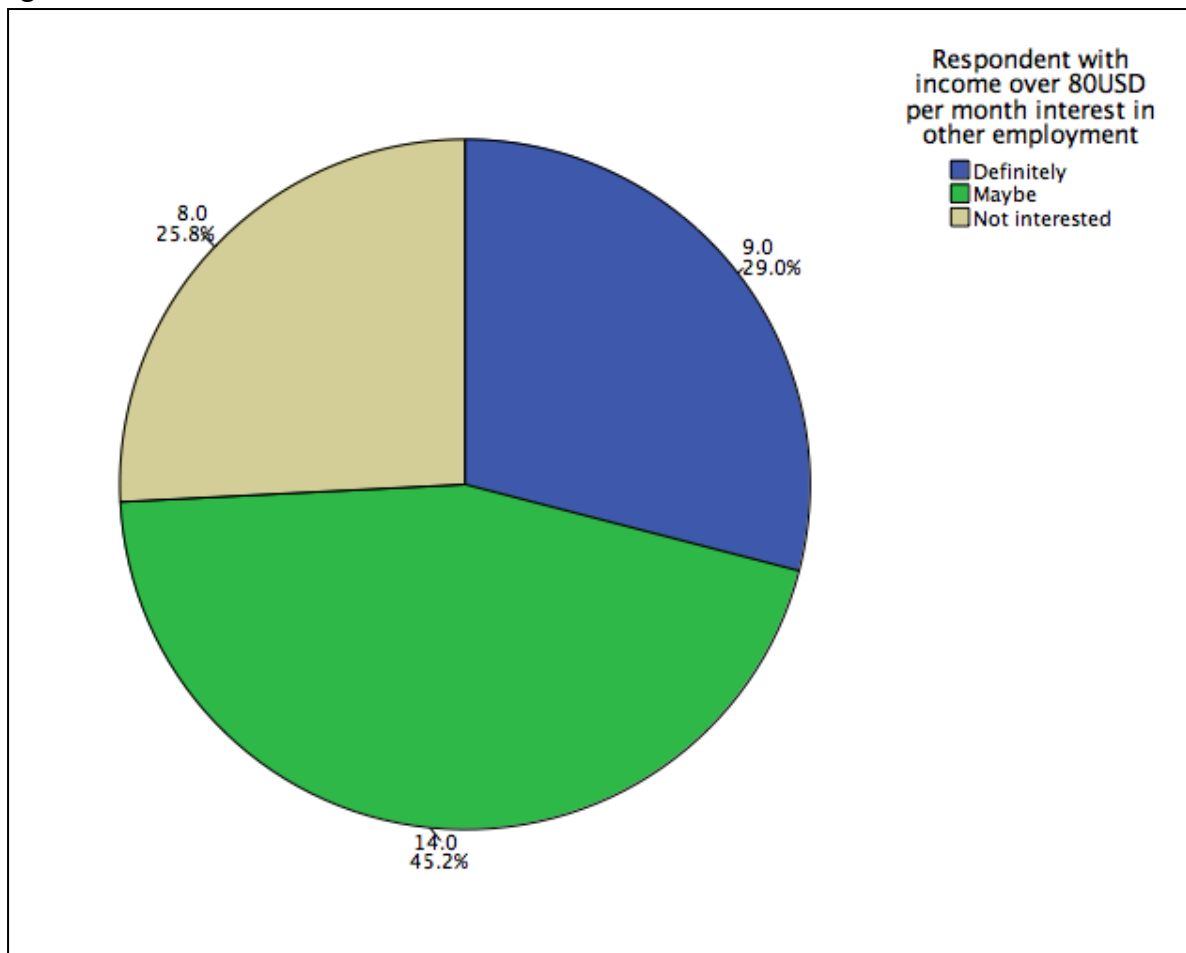


Figure 4 represents the interest in taking a different job that would pay 80USD per month for those who were currently making more than 80USD per month as a masseur.

Sexual experiences

The survey asked the respondents to identify which type(s) of people with whom they like to have sex. More than half of respondents identified themselves as men who like to have sex with women (58.1 percent). However, there were notable numbers who identified themselves as men who like to have sex with other men (MSM) (16.3 percent) or as men who like to have sex with other men and with women (20.9 percent). One respondent acknowledged an interest in having sex with 'kteuy' (lady-boys) in addition to other men and women. Two respondents declined to answer this question.

A series of questions were posed regarding the respondents' first sexual experiences. The age of the respondents' first sexual experiences ranged from 16 to 30 years. The median age was 19 years, and the mean age was 19.5 years. The respondents identified the gender of the partner for their first sexual experience with 77.8 percent female and 22.2 percent male. The respondents' relationships with their first sexual partner was distributed as follows: 75.6 percent friend, 13.3 percent client, 4.4 percent neighbor, 4.4 percent other, and 2.2 percent sex worker (Figure 5). Sixty percent of respondents stated that their first sexual experience occurred outside of the city while 40 percent stated that it had occurred in Phnom Penh. The respondents were asked to identify whether their first sexual experience was consensual or coerced. The experiences were deemed consensual by 68.9 percent of respondents while 31.1 percent stated that their first sexual experience was coerced. Those who identified their first sexual partner as female identified that the sex was coerced 17.1 percent of the time. Conversely, those who identified their first sexual partner as male identified that the sex was coerced 80 percent of the time.

Figure 5: Relationship with First Sexual Partner

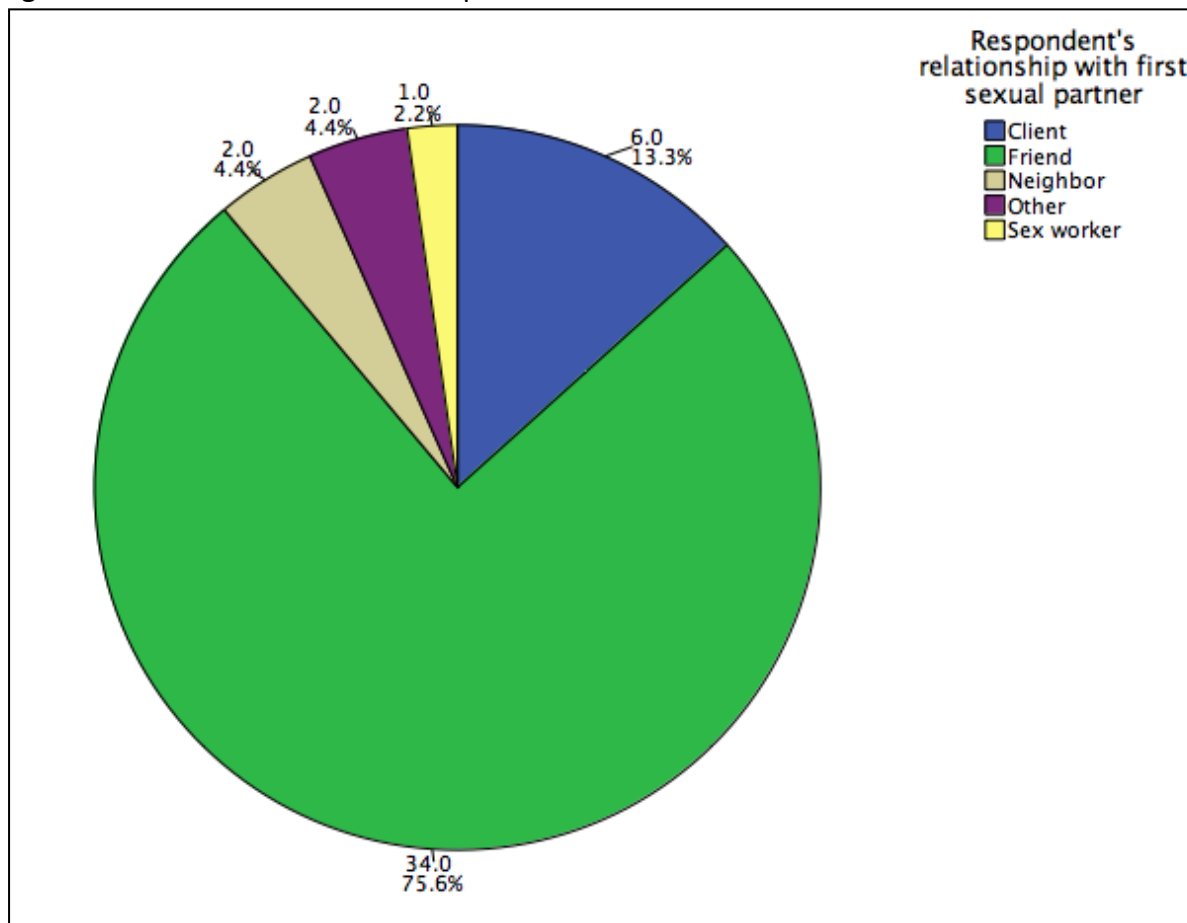


Figure 5 represents the respondents' relationships with their first sexual partner.

Respondents were asked if they had visited a female sex worker in the past three months. Thirty-one percent of respondents admitted to visiting a female sex worker at least one time in the past three months. When this information was cross-tabulated with the sexual identity of the respondents, there were significant findings. Of those who identified themselves as heterosexual, or as liking to have sex with women, 48 percent stated they had been to visit a female sex worker. Additionally, 28.5 percent of those who identified themselves as MSM, or as liking to have sex with other men, responded that they had been to see a female sex worker. If indeed these men prefer to have sex with other men, it poses the question whether there are other reasons than pleasure that they would choose to visit

a female sex worker. None of the respondents who identified themselves as liking to have sex with both other men and women admitted to visiting a female sex worker in the past three months.

Respondents were asked about their sexual experiences with clients. Respondents were asked both how many clients they had met for sex last week and how many clients they had met for sex yesterday. The range for the last week was 0 to 60 clients. The median response was 2 clients. One respondent answered that he had sex with 60 clients in the past week, which was significantly more than any other respondent. The interviewer checked to confirm that the figure had been heard correctly, but it was still unclear whether this large number of clients comprised individual clients or multiple clients together (e.g. sex party). The second highest response was 15 clients, but 42.4 percent of respondents answered they had not had sex with any clients in the past week. Another 42.4 percent identified having sex with 1 to 5 clients in the past week. Additionally, all those who had been working as masseurs for at least 3 years acknowledged having sex with a minimum of 3 clients in the past week. Of those who responded that they had not had sex with any clients in the past week, 83.3 percent of them had been masseurs for less than 2 years. In reference to the number of clients the respondent had sex with yesterday, 62.2 percent (28 respondents) answered that they had not had sex with any clients yesterday, 20 percent (9 respondents) said 1 client, 13.3 percent (6 respondents) said 2 clients, 2.2 percent (1 respondent) said 3 clients, and an additional 2.2 percent (1 respondent) said 4 clients (Figure 6). While this information could be accurate, it is likely that the respondents may have felt, for whatever reason, that they were not free to share that they have or have had sex with clients.

Figure 6: Clients Met for Sex Yesterday

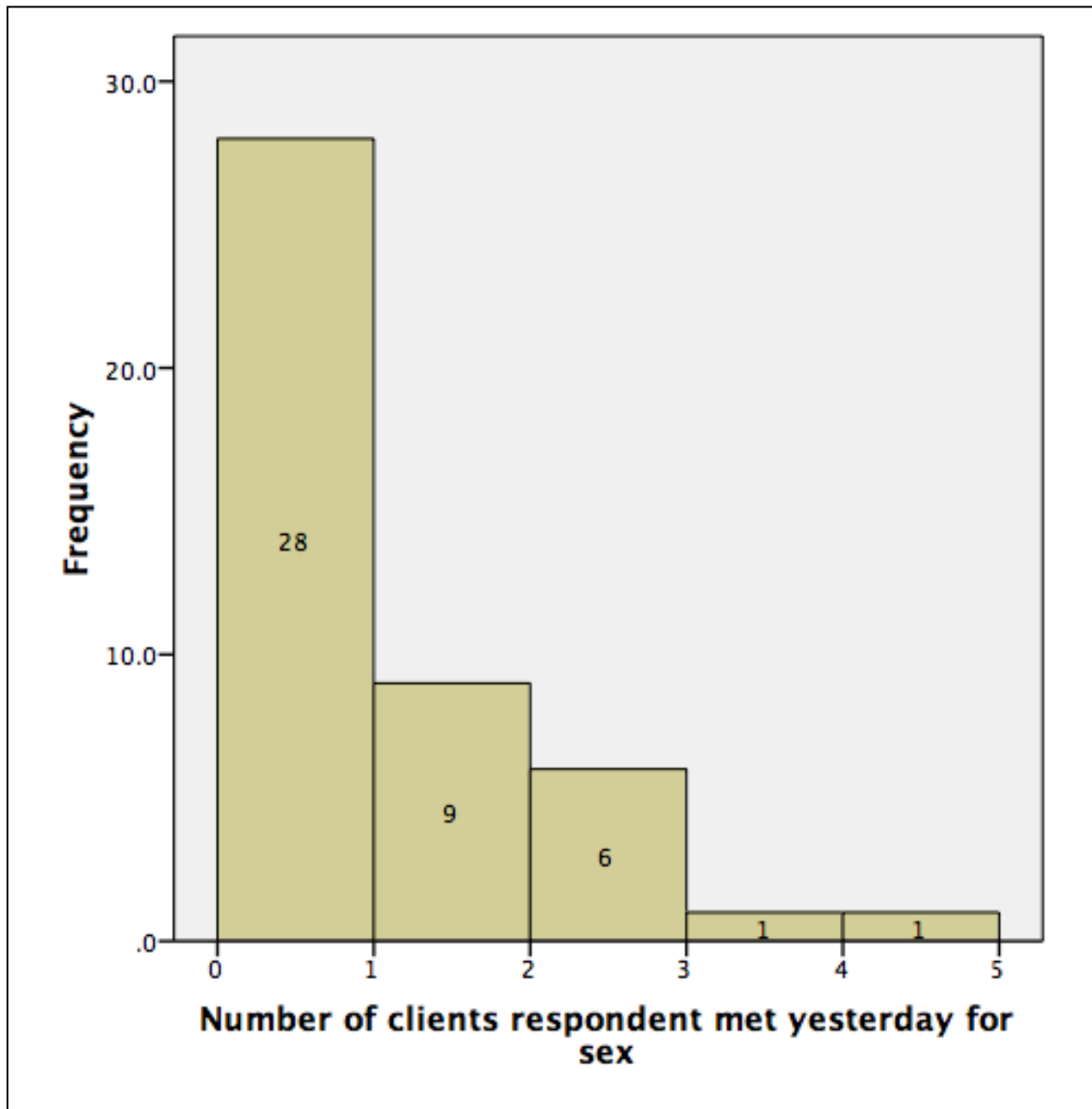


Figure 6 represents the number of clients respondents had met for sex yesterday.

Respondents were asked about the frequency with which they have had sex with multiple clients at the same time in the past 3 months. The majority, 57.8 percent, of respondents stated that they had never had sex with multiple clients at the same time while 35.6 percent of respondents said they have had sex with multiple clients a few times but not often, or 1 to 5 times. The remaining respondents identified that they have had sex with multiple clients often, or 6 to 10 times, (2.2 percent) or more than 10 times (4.4 percent). Of those

who responded that they had never had sex with multiple clients at the same time, 80.0 percent of them had worked as masseurs for less than 2 years.

Respondents were questioned as to the frequency with which they and another boy have had sex with the same client in the past 3 months. The percentage of respondents who answered that they and another boy have had sex with the same client in the past 3 months was 66.7 percent. Another 24.4 percent identified that they had done this a few times but not often (1 to 5 times). Subsequently, 2.2 percent stated they had done this often, or 6 to 10 times, and 6.7 percent stated they had done this more than 10 times in the past 3 months. Of those who responded “never,” 89.7 percent of them had been working as masseurs for less than 2 years.

When separating these responses based on location, it was determined that at some locations respondents were far more likely to have sex with clients than at other locations. At one location none of the respondents acknowledged that they had sex with a client in the past week while at one of the other locations 100 percent of the respondents acknowledged having sex with at least one client in the past week. The remaining locations varied between 25 and 75 percent of respondents having sex with a client in the past week.

The respondents were asked if they were aware of boys in the massage trade being forced to have sex against their wishes. The overwhelming majority of respondents answered they were unaware of boys experiencing this. Only 6.8 percent of the respondents stated that they were aware of boys in the massage trade being forced to have sex with one respondent choosing not to answer the question. However, when the question was posed as to whether the respondents themselves had ever been forced to have sex, the answers were slightly different. While a majority still stated they had never been forced to have sex

against their wishes, 11.1 percent of respondents said they were sometimes forced to have sex and an additional 2.2 percent stated they were occasionally forced to have sex. All of those who said they were aware of other boys in the massage trade being forced to have sex identified that they themselves were sometimes forced to have sex against their wishes. The Khmer translation for “force” is “bongkohm,” which can be translated as either physical violence or verbal persuasion or coercion. Thus, it is necessary to do further research in order to determine whether the experiences of the boys were physical violence or other forms of coercion.

Additionally, 7.1 percent of those who responded that they were unaware of other boys in the massage trade being forced to have sex identified that they themselves were sometimes or occasionally forced to have sex against their wishes. This may indicate that these respondents may believe their situation of being forced to have sex to be atypical of boys working in the massage trade and merely an issue affecting them as an individual. This poses the question about whether boys talk to each other after being coerced if it happens with a client on their own, thus being unaware of the others’ experiences. Specifically, one respondent noted that he was unaware of other boys in the massage trade being forced to have sex but noted that he, personally, is forced to have sex every few weeks. He noted that he does not want to have sex with clients, but sometimes he gets extra money. He stated that he only agrees when the “customer is nice.” All those who responded that they had been forced to have sex were given an opportunity to share their experiences if they wished to do so. One respondent noted that he is sometimes forced by clients to have anal sex. Another respondent answered that on a regular basis clients force him to have sex. Yet

another respondent stated, “Many clients coerce me, and sometimes my friend [masseur] to have sex.” This respondent also noted feeling both physical and mental pain over this.

Sexual education and health

The respondents were questioned as to the modes of transmission for HIV/AIDS. The primary purpose of this question was to determine whether the respondents recognized that HIV/AIDS can be transmitted via sexual relations. Although 91.1 percent of respondents listed sex as a way in which HIV/AIDS is transmitted, 8.9 percent did not recognize this, which indicates implications for health education on HIV for this population. One respondent did not recognize or understand HIV/AIDS. More than one-third of the respondents admitted to knowing someone with HIV/AIDS. According to the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), there were an estimated 63,000 people living with HIV in Cambodia in 2009, which equates to about 0.5 percent of the overall population. Additionally, UNICEF reports that in 2009 45 percent of Cambodian males ages 15 to 24 have a comprehensive knowledge of HIV. Those having a comprehensive knowledge are those “who correctly identify the two major ways of preventing the sexual transmission of HIV (using condoms and limiting sex to one faithful, uninfected partner), who reject the two most common local misconceptions about HIV transmission, and who know that a healthy-looking person can have HIV” (UNICEF, 2010).

Respondents were asked about the purpose of a condom. This information was elicited to evaluate whether the respondents understood that condom usage can help prevent transmission of HIV/AIDS and/or other sexually-transmitted infections (STI). More than 95 percent of respondents acknowledged that condoms are used to prevent HIV/AIDS or other STIs. According to UNICEF in 2009, 84 percent of young men who admitted to having high-

risk sex in the last 12 months used a condom during their last high-risk sexual experience. High-risk sex is defined as “sex with a non-marital, non-cohabiting partner” (UNICEF, 2010).

The respondents were asked if they currently had a condom. Nearly three-fourths (73.3 percent) answered that they currently had a condom. Some of the respondents noted that there were condoms accessible to them at their workplaces, which suggests that their employers promote condom usage and sexual health education for their employees. However, 26.7 percent of respondents did not currently have access to a condom, which puts them at an increased risk for HIV/AIDS and/or other STIs. It is possible that condoms were not available to some respondents because if condoms were available and the location was raided, it could be labeled as a sex establishment and be threatened with closure. However, not being allowed access to condoms is clearly a negative risk factor for the young men working in these establishments.

Respondents were asked about their condom usage. One respondent cited that he had never used a condom, but this same respondent reported that he had sex with 2 clients in the past week. Fourteen respondents (31.1 percent) had not used a condom in the last week. Twelve of those 14 stated that they had not had sex with any clients in the past week. One of the remaining 2 was the respondent who had never used a condom while the other respondent answered that he had sex with 3 clients in the past week. Additionally, 7 of the respondents who cited that they had not had sex with clients in the past week did respond that they had used a condom in the past week.

Respondents were asked about their health over the past six months. In response to whether the respondent had any rashes, ulcerations, or lumps in their genital areas, anus, or mouth, 6.7 percent of respondents answered affirmatively. Two-thirds of those who cited

these symptoms had been working as masseurs for less than two years. A greater percentage (15.6 percent) responded that they had experienced urethral discharge, difficulty passing urine or pain in their testicles in the past 6 months. Of the 7 respondents who identified these symptoms, 6 of them had been working as masseurs for less than 2 years. One-third of respondents acknowledged that they were sick in other ways in the past 3 months. Of those who acknowledged sickness, 66.7 percent of them had been working as masseurs for less than 2 years. Symptoms included fevers, headaches, and body aches. This is of concern and suggests that those who are newer to the industry may not be receiving proper medical care or sexual health education.

Substance abuse

The respondents were asked about illegal drug use and alcohol consumption. Illegal drug use was acknowledged by 6.7 percent of respondents. The only illegal drug identified by the respondents was “ice,” or methamphetamines. Eight respondents did not provide answers to the questions regarding alcohol consumption, but of the respondents who did answer, 96.3 percent affirmed they had used alcohol in the past 3 months. These respondents were then asked about their alcohol usage in the past week, which breaks down as follows: 13.9 percent were heavy drinkers, 33.3 percent were moderate drinkers, 36.1 percent had a few drinks in the last week, and 16.7 percent answered that they had not had any alcohol in the past week. When asked how often the respondent uses alcohol or another intoxicating substance during sex, 50 percent of respondents responded with “never.” Less than 7 percent of respondents acknowledged that they use intoxicating substances during sex either “very often” or “always.” One respondent did not provide an answer to this question.

Violence

Respondents were asked about any violence they had experienced in the past 3 months with regard to police, bullies or community, and clients. In all three categories, the majority of responses were that they had never faced violence in the past 3 months. Only 4.4 percent affirmed that they had faced violence from the police sometimes in the past 3 months while the rest denied ever facing violence by police. This question may have provided different responses if the boys were on the streets but all of the boys in this survey were working in a closed environment (i.e. massage place). This contrasts greatly with research in Mumbai, India, of street-based masseurs (Miles & Thakur, 2011). With respect to violence by bullies or community, there was more variation in responses with 84.1 percent stating they had never faced violence, 9.1 percent occasionally faced violence, 2.3 percent sometimes faced violence, and 4.5 percent very often faced violence. Again, this needs to be read in conjunction with the responses that most boys did not inform their villages about their work. Violence faced from clients was distributed as follows: 93.3 percent never faced violence, 2.2 percent occasionally faced violence, and 4.4 percent sometimes faced violence. The differences between respondents experiencing violence from clients and respondents being forced to have sex by clients may be attributed to semantic differences between English and Khmer. One respondent identified that violence was only an issue when customers refused to give tips, but it was unclear whether the respondent was talking about violence from the client or toward the client. In India, nearly 100 percent of masseurs faced violence by police, 47 percent by gangs, 42 percent by clients, and nearly 100 percent by members of the community (Miles & Thakur, 2011).

Faith practice

Respondents were asked whether or not they had a faith or belief system and subsequent questions regarding practices that accompany their beliefs. In response to whether or not the respondent had a faith, 97.8 percent affirmed that they had some sort of faith (Figure 7). Of those who responded about their specific faith, 80.5 percent were Buddhist, 7.3 percent had faith in themselves, 2.4 percent were Christian, and the remaining responses were various traditional or personal beliefs. Two-thirds of respondents stated that they pray and/or worship daily. However, the frequency with which respondents visited a house of worship (wat/temple/church) was significantly different. Only 4.5 percent of respondents identified that they visit a house of worship daily or multiple times per week. The most popular response to how frequently the respondent visits a house of worship was 31.8 percent visiting only on major holidays or for festivals. This was followed by 20.5 percent visiting weekly and 20.5 percent visiting sporadically. Though the majority of respondents do not visit a house of worship on a regular basis, 92.9 percent of respondents expressed that they have positive feelings after visiting. The other 7.1 percent expressed a neutral feeling.

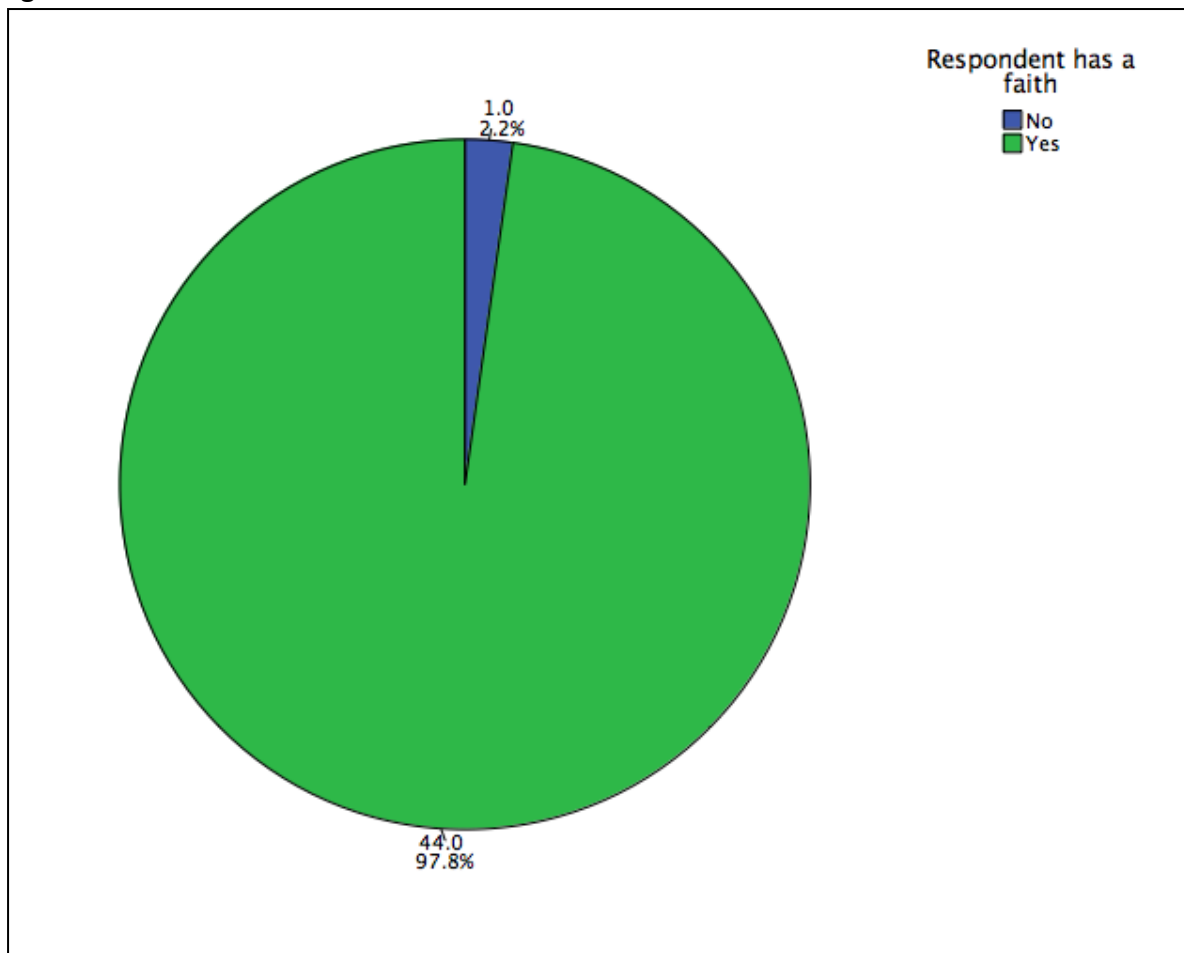


Figure 7 represents the respondents' acknowledgement of a personal faith or belief system.

Future plans

The respondents were given an opportunity to share where they hope to be in two years. The most popular responses were 31.1 percent wanting to be a business owner and an additional 31.1 percent wanting a different type of employment. Notably, 13.3 percent of respondents specifically expressed an interest in wanting to work in the hairdressing industry, either to own their own shop or work for another person. Other responses included studying, having a family, and returning to the village. Additionally, 11.1 percent of respondents stated that they were unsure of where they would like to be or what they would like to be doing in two years.

The respondents were asked about their plans to achieve their aforementioned goals. The majority (59.5 percent) answered they planned to save money in order to achieve their goals. For some of them this meant saving enough money to open a business, to be able to study, or to search for other employment. Other responses included 9.5 percent planning to pursue training or study in a specific field while an additional 4.8 percent said they planned to both save money and pursue further training. Another 11.9 percent were unsure of a plan to achieve their goals. The remaining 14.3 percent of respondents listed other ways they planned to achieve their goals, but there was no consistency among these responses.

Figure 8: Plan for Future

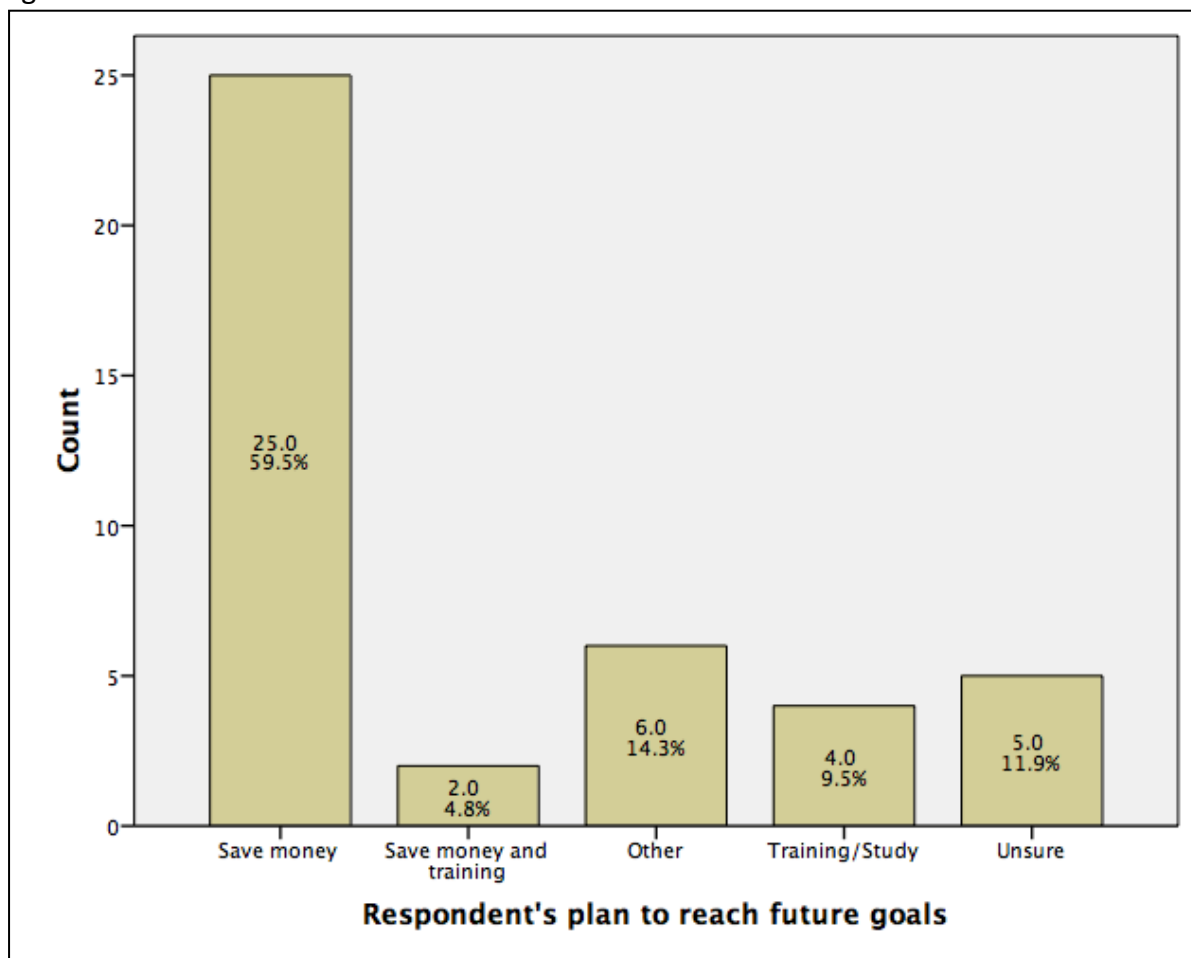


Figure 8 represents the respondents' plans to reach their future goals.

Conclusion

Upon analyzing the data collected in the surveys, several notable trends can be identified. Initially, it may have been speculated that a low educational level for the respondent would likely be linked to the respondent's entrance into the male massage industry in Phnom Penh. However, the survey results do not indicate that this is the case. Many of the respondents had a higher-than-average educational level, but they still responded that they entered the industry because they were in need of money quickly or lacked specific skills needed for other employment. This reveals the need for a wider range of alternative skills training post-secondary school. It also reveals that there is discrepancy between the number of people needing jobs and the number of jobs currently existing.

It seems to be an assumption by many in the villages that there are considerably more job opportunities in Phnom Penh than in provincial areas. The majority of respondents migrated to Phnom Penh, and the vast majority of those migrants came to the city in search of work. The internal migration rate within Cambodia has increased in recent years as there are few job opportunities in the provincial areas for young people. Also, as young people desire to further their education, the vast majority of them feel forced to migrate to Phnom Penh because it contains most of the nation's universities and vocational training opportunities. There is no evidence from this population that there were students who sought educational funding through doing massage, but the group of boys being interviewed were during off-peak times so may not represent this group as that population may be studying during the time the interviews were conducted.

While many of the respondents admitted that they entered the massage industry because they needed to make money quickly, the majority also noted that those in their villages their relatives and friends were not aware that they were masseurs. The most common reason for this was that the respondents were ashamed of their employment. They admitted that being a masseur was not a good job, that it was shameful, and that they feared they would be looked down upon if people in their villages knew they were masseurs. These responses are cause for further research into the cultural beliefs about male masseurs and the reasons that shame would be associated so greatly with this industry. In another study on the sexual abuse of males in Cambodia, it was noted that males fear disclosing sexual abuse to others because they perceive it may cause them to be seen as “gay” or feminine, which may cause cultural stigma (Hilton et al., 2008).

Despite being ashamed of their position as a masseur, some of the respondents were hesitant (40 percent) to take a different job that paid 80USD per month while 22.2 percent said 80USD was not enough incentive to take a different job. Those who were currently making at or below this level were more willing to take a different job than those who were making more than 80USD a month. However, based on the comments of respondents, they said they would pursue another job if it paid 100USD per month or more. This was identified by some of the respondents as the minimum salary needed to support oneself and a family. For most of the respondents, it seemed to be most important to have a job that allowed them to support themselves and their families but for many it was also important to have a job that did not cause them to feel ashamed.

In conducting the survey there was an underlying assumption that the majority of male masseurs in Cambodia were performing sexual acts with clients. The survey results revealed

that 57.8 percent of respondents had sex with at least one client in the last week. However, when asked about whether the respondents were ever forced to have sex against their wishes or whether they knew of other boys in the massage industry being forced to have sex, the results were much different. The large majority of respondents denied ever being forced to have sex against their wishes or knowing other boys who were forced to have sex against their wishes. There is room for further study here to identify the respondents' understanding of force and coercion. It is possible that the respondents would not admit to being forced to have sex with a client but would agree that they were coerced or strongly encouraged to do so because of threats or fear of losing their jobs.

One striking observation found in the research was the comparison of the respondents' sexual identity with whether or not the respondents had visited a female sex worker in the past 3 months. Nearly half of the respondents who identified themselves as preferring to have sex with women answered affirmatively that they had visited a female sex worker in the past 3 months. However, it is striking that 28.6 percent of those who identified themselves as MSM answered that they had been to a female sex worker in the past 3 months. This may indicate that there are alternative reasons for visiting a female sex worker other than pleasure. More research is needed to determine what these alternative reasons may be. For example, could it be because they feel a need to affirm their masculinity to themselves or their male friends?

While there were a few respondents who were unsure about where they hoped to be in 2 years time, the vast majority of respondents agreed that they hoped that they would no longer be working as a masseur. For most of them, this did not appear to be a long-term career choice but instead a means to an end. Although many of them did not have a set plan

to achieve their future goals, it was agreed that their goals involved other employment and moving on from the massage industry. It is important to note the importance of having concrete goals and a means to achieve these goals because without this they are more likely to remain in their current employment as it is normalized and change becomes more difficult. It appears that the respondents would likely be more willing to accept other employment if they felt it was a wage that would allow them to support themselves and their families. More than three-fourths of the respondents identified that they had some savings, and the majority of those who had a goal for the future identified saving money as their primary plan to reach that goal. More work is needed in considering how these young men can be supported in reaching their goals through training and career advice.

Suggestions for Further Research

Research shows boys and young men are vulnerable to sexual exploitation. However, the questions remain as to why sexual exploitation of children has tended to focus on girls and why organizations tend to focus more on offering support to girls. Do organizations prefer to rescue and help girls who appear to be more vulnerable than boys who are seen to be more independent and can look after themselves? Though there may not yet be a definitive answer to this question, awareness is being brought to the needs of sexually exploited boys and young men. Research is a step in the right direction to be able to raise awareness and to provide effective support to boys and young men.

As the first attempt at looking at this population in Cambodia, there is much room for further research.

Access: The cooperation of the location managers was essential in conducting this initial research though it may have had an effect on the results. In the future we cannot guarantee this collaboration and may need to consider more creative ways of gaining access to this population. It may be more difficult to access boys who are street-based workers than those who are working in massage establishments. In October 2006 Action Pour Les Enfants (APLE) released a report on street-based child sexual exploitation in Phnom Penh and Sihanoukville identifying that their experience reflected that 80 percent of child victims are boys (Keane, p. 1). In Nepal, research has been conducted with street-dwelling boys who have been sexually exploited suggesting that, while a significant number have been exploited by adults, peers are the greatest perpetrators of violence and sexual abuse for street-dwelling boys. Additionally, these boys often alternate between victim and perpetrator (Hutt, Pant, & Tuladhar, 2011, p. 18-19). It would be useful to further examine the victimization of street-dwelling boys in Cambodia in order to understand the experiences and vulnerability of this demographic.

Methodology: Focus group discussions could be useful in future research but were not used in this study because it was understood from the research in Mumbai, India, that sexually exploited boys may feel too ashamed of their experiences to discuss them openly in a group (Miles & Thakur, 2011). However, Hilton et al. in their research provided choice for participants in allowing the participants to choose the location of their interviews and whether their interviews were conducted individually or with others (2008, p. 38). If this is possible in the future, it may provide a better option.

Recruitment and alternative employment: At this time little is known about the recruitment process for masseurs. The research identified that many of the boys entered

the industry through a friend, but it may be helpful to have a greater understanding of the networks used to recruit masseurs or any other means of finding young men to work in this industry. Are there recruiters? Is there a local mafia/recruitment network involved or is there a move in this direction or is it all free-lance?

Girls are often perceived to do sex work in order to provide support for their families. Boys are perceived to not have the same familial responsibilities as girls. However, many of the respondents in this study shared that they had some responsibility to support their families. Thus, it is possible that the reasons girls enter the sex industry and the reasons boys enter the sex industry may be similar. It is necessary to explore further these possible similarities and differences between girls and boys. More research is required about alternative employment to understand what jobs appeal to them and how they can be supported to pursue these other alternatives.

Vulnerabilities: One suggestion for further research would include examining the backgrounds of boys in the massage industry. Little is known about the childhood or adolescence of these boys. This information could provide more insight into their entrance into the massage industry, and therefore, possible ways to reduce entrance into the industry. Other research has discovered that many young men who have become sex workers suffered sexual abuse prior to entering the industry (McIntyre, 2005, p. 28-31). Other research has noted that 18.9 percent of Cambodian boys aged 12 to 15 said they had been sexually touched on the genitals after age 9 (Miles & Sun, 2005, p. 29). More research must be conducted in order to understand the prevalence, implications, and long-term effects of male childhood abuse, including sexual abuse, in Cambodia. Hilton, et al. published “I Thought It Could Never Happen to Boys” in 2008, which was the first study of its kind in

Cambodia, focused on sexual abuse of boys. The study revealed that sexual abuse of boys is occurring in significant numbers, but that additional research must be conducted to identify the prevalence of sexual exploitation in Cambodia (p. 188). Assistance programs are being developed to assist boys who suffer sexual abuse, such as First Step (<http://first-step-cambodia.org/>). First Step can be contacted via email at office@first-step-cambodia.org or call at (+855) 92 900 369, for Khmer speakers ask for Yaim Chamreun (Project Coordinator) or Kong Sokhem (Social Work and Training Manager) or for English speakers ask for Alastair Hilton (Technical Adviser).

The vulnerability of boys has often been dismissed due to beliefs that boys are more independent and have more freedom. However, research in South Asia suggests that this independence and freedom are attributing factors to the vulnerability of boys (Frederick, 2010, p. 6). Boys that are often allowed to work and to play outside with less supervision than their female counterparts. This lack of supervision could lead to an increased risk of sexual exploitation as adolescents are at greater risk to be influenced and/or coerced both by peers and by adults. In addition, in societies where the culture places high emphasis on the virginity of females, sex with boys may be more acceptable because they are unable to become pregnant and have no physical sign of virginity (Frederick, 2010, p. 7). There may be a need for more anthropological research on these cultural practices to understand how boys can be protected.

This research seeks to provide a basis for the vulnerability of boys and young men as victims of sexual exploitation. While girls have long been viewed as victims, boys are victimized as well. In the current donor climate, it is more difficult to get funding for boys' projects. Are Christian organizations afraid of being seen as pro-Gay while Secular organizations are

afraid of being seen as anti-Gay so the sexual exploitation of boys falls through the gap? The minimal research that has been conducted with sexually exploited boys confirms that this is an issue worthy of greater attention and further research. However, in reality not enough research has been done to determine the extent of sexual exploitation of boys, which may be much greater than we currently assume. The trafficking agenda has been primarily driven by feminists who prefer to see young men as perpetrators rather than victims. This research provides a starting point for further research and discussion.

Recommendations

The research has provided a basis for the development of programs to assist boys who have been sexually exploited. As these programs continue to develop, the researchers have several recommendations to consider in promoting the overall health and well-being of these boys.

The research team made contact with a well-known organization, which provides sexual health education and services. The organization said that its partners were working with young men in the massage industry to promote sexual health education, condom usage, HIV testing, and other services. However, one-third of the respondents in this study acknowledged symptoms of illness in the past 3 months, which suggests that further work needs to be done to address this issue. It would be useful to understand how many of these young men sought testing for HIV and other STIs and where this testing was done. If testing was not sought, it is important to understand why the young men did not seek testing. The answers to these questions could provide a basis for more effective sexual health education

and services. Additionally, it is important for these young men to understand proper condom usage as anal sex may be rough and may be more likely to break condoms.

Additionally, as programs develop, alternative employment options are also important. In determining these alternatives, it is essential to consult the young men about the kinds of jobs they would prefer. The data from the research suggests that a significant number of young men are interested in owning a business and in the hairdressing industry. This could act as a starting block for future job training and placement, but it is also important to treat each boy with dignity and respect, allowing them a level of choice in their own future work. Collaboration among organizations offering support and those offering job skills training is needed for the young men to be successful.

Preventative strategies need to be initiated as well. Formal and/or non-formal education may be the primary preventative strategy for the prevention of sexual exploitation of boys and young men. It is necessary to consider what personal safety practices could be taught to boys at risk. Offering specific training to those boys living in vulnerable communities or in other at-risk situations could be helpful in preventing sexual exploitation of boys and young men. It is also important to do early intervention and outreach with migrants in Phnom Penh. As the majority of the respondents in this study migrated to Phnom Penh for employment, it is important to have specific outreach to these young men to assist them in finding gainful employment and/or skills training.

In response to the sexual exploitation of boys and young men, social work and counseling support services are needed. These young men have experience physical and psychological trauma. It is important that services are available to them to address these issues. The high levels of shame that many of the boys have cited also requires counseling support in order

to break the cycle of their actions resulting in shame followed by more actions in response to the feelings of shame.

Greater awareness of violence and the prosecution of violence, both physical assault and sexual assault, is another area which requires greater attention. More work is needed in order to prosecute the perpetrators of sexual exploitation of boys and young men. This is especially true for local Cambodian perpetrators. Organizations, such as APLE, focus their work on foreign sex offenders, but there are a greater number of local perpetrators who are not being prosecuted for similar offenses (Renault, 2006, p. 12). If child protection is to be upheld for all children, perpetrators of sexual exploitation of boys must be prosecuted in the same ways that perpetrators of sexual exploitation of girls are prosecuted.

It is important that we also consider the faith of these young men. It is notable that many of them said that they found it a comfort to practice their faith. In a context where relationships are unpredictable and unreliable having a faith may provide some stability.

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