

# Summary Baseline Report of PLACE Assessment in Tashkent, Uzbekistan

The Caucasus and Central Asia



## Local Investigator

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## Summary of Indicators from Assessment

<b>Baseline Results from PLACE Assessment in Tashkent, Uzbekistan</b>	
<b>Partners: USAID/CAR , MEASURE/Evalutaion Project at UNC, FACT Social Research Agency, Tashkent</b>	
<b>Characteristics</b>	
Population	2.1 mln.
<b>Scope of Assessment</b>	
City-wide assessment	Yes
Identification of areas or “units” of city and social sites within “units” where people meet new partners and/or drug injectors socialize	Yes
Mapping of sites	No
Characterization of sexual and injecting networks at sites	Yes
Characterization of overlaps of sexual and injecting networks	Yes
Identification of gaps in prevention programs	Yes
<b>Step 1 Results from Focus Groups/In-Depth Interviews to Identify Areas of City Where People Go to Meet New Sexual Partners and Where IDUs can be Found</b>	
Number of Focus Group Discussions held	6
Number of In-Depth interviews held with police and IDU	40
Number of areas identified	157
<b>Step 2 Results from Key Informant Interviews Within Areas to Identify Specific Sites Where People Meet Sexual Partners or Where Drug Injectors Can be Found</b>	
Days of key informant interviewing	9
Number of interviewers	19
Number of Key informant interviews	1206
Number of Key informant reports	5866
Number of sites reported in areas where KI interviewed	1768
Number of sites reported in other areas	4098
Number of unique sites reported in all areas	1157
<u>Percent of Key Informants who:</u>	
Believe injecting drug use occurs in area	95%
Has seen syringes lying around in last 4 weeks in area	39%
Report sex workers solicit customers in area	91%
<u>Percent of sites reported where Key Informants believe:</u>	
People meet new sexual partners	79%
IDUs can be found	45%
Syringes can be found	37%
Where sex workers solicit customers	75%

<b>Step 3 Results from Visits to Sites Identified by Key Informants in Step 2 Characteristics of Sites and Patrons of Sites as Reported by a “Knowledgeable Person” at the Site and from Interviewer Observation</b>	
Total Number of Unique Sites Named by Key Informants	1157
<i>Note: Criteria for excluding sites for site verification varied by city. Most were stairwells/roofs infrequently reported by key informants.</i>	709
Number of Sites Visited, Verified, Characterized	<b>N=448</b>
<u>% of sites where Knowledgeable Person reports that:</u>	
People meet new sexual partners at site	50.3
Injection drug users can be found at site	39.5
People meet new sexual partners <u>and</u> IDUs are at site	29.5
People meet new sexual partners <u>or</u> IDUs are at site	59.6
<u>Type of site (By observation):</u>	
• Bar/Café/Restaurant	31.3
• Night club/Disco/Casino	6.5
• Sauna	0.2
• Hotel	2.2
• Billiards, Game Club/Computer Club	3.4
• Dormitory, Private Apartment, Flat	3.6
• Basement, roof, stairwells, unused abandoned building,	2.2
• School, college, technical	4.2
• Street/waste/yard	24.3
<u>Activities Onsite (By interview):</u>	
• Beer	67.6
• Hard Alcohol	57.8
• Computer games	11.8
• Eating	75.7
• Dancing	27.2
• Striptease	1.6
<u>Sexual Partnerships Formed Onsite (By interview):</u>	
• Men meet women	46.9
• Women meet men	43.3
• Men meet men	3.1
• Someone facilitates partnership formation	6.0
• Sex workers solicit	27.7
<u>Percent of sites with Patrons who are (By interview):</u>	
• Male students	73.2
• Female students	69.9
• Men under age 18	60.0
• Women under age 18	63.2
• Male IDU's	29.9
• Female IDU's	20.8
<u>Perception of how common IDU is in area (By interview):</u>	
• Very common	7.8
• Somewhat common	23.0
• Not very common	44.6
• Does not occur	24.6
• Percent who have seen used syringes lying inside or outside sites	25.0
<u>Condoms and AIDS Prevention (mostly by interview):</u>	
• % where condoms never available past 12 months	52.5
• % where condoms seen on site (observation)	21.9
• % where condoms available within 10 minutes	56.9
• % where sites willing to sell condoms	44.2
• % that ever had HIV/AIDS prevention programs	7.6
• % willing to have AIDS prevention program	60.0

<b>Step 4 Results from Interviews with People Socializing at Sites Where People Meet New Sexual Partners</b>				
<b>Characteristics of People at Sites</b>				
Number of sites where interviews conducted	<b>104</b>			
	<b>Rep Sample</b>	<b>Youth</b>	<b>CSWs / Clients</b>	<b>IDUs</b>
Number of men interviewed	<b>1039</b>	<b>596</b>	<b>312</b>	<b>178</b>
<b><u>Percent of Men (age 18 and older) Socializing at Sites Who:</u></b>				
• Are 18-24	54.2	94.4	55.4	37.0
• Are married or living in union	42.3	12.4	30.1	37.1
• Employed fulltime	54.5	38.9	52.2	50.0
• Are students	29.8	50.3	28.2	10.1
• Visit the site every day	24.8	27.5	25.3	30.9
• Believe people meet new sexual partners at site	58.5	62.4	81.1	94.4
• Have ever attracted a new sexual partner at the site	22.1	26.3	50.6	60.7
- Of those, used a condom with most recent partner from site	58.4	57.4	74.7	84.2
• Have a condom with them that was seen by interviewer	8.8	9.7	17.9	7.9
<b><u>Rate of Partnerships:</u></b>				
• Had a new sexual partner in the past 4 weeks	29.2	30.5	91.9	60.0
- Of those, used a condom with most recent new partner	67.1	69.7	56.5	85.0
• Had a new sexual partner in the past 12 months	61.0	82.7	99.7	98.9
• Have a current steady partner	69.6	53.7	71.5	76.4
• Have had sex with a man in the past four weeks	0.6	0.8	1.3	0.6
• Given money or gifts in exchange for sex in the past 3 months	22.8	25.3	100.0	46.1
<b><u>Percent of Men Socializing at Sites Who:</u></b>				
• Believe drug use is very common in area	5.6	5.4	8.3	20.2
• Believe that IDU's socialize at site of interview	37.7	38.8	58.3	97.2
• Have ever injected drugs	5.4	5.0	33.3	100.0
Of those who have injected drugs				
• Percent who shared a needle the last time he injected	--	--	--	13.5
Number of women interviewed	<b>1015</b>	<b>639</b>	<b>234</b>	<b>25</b>
<b><u>Percent of Women Socializing at Sites Who:</u></b>				
• Are 18-24	58.9	93.6	62.8	48.0
• Are married or living in union	36.4	18.6	9.8	24.0
• Employed fulltime	33.7	22.8	12.4	20.0
• Are students	30.3	46.2	11.5	4.0
• Visit the site every day	22.2	22.7	19.2	16.0
• Believe people meet new sexual partners at site	61.8	65.9	93.6	88.0
• Have ever attracted a new sexual partner at the site	25.3	28.5	84.2	60.0
- Of those, used a condom with most recent partner from site	64.9	65.3	75.7	93.3
• Have a condom with them that was seen by interviewer	7.7	10.3	26.9	16.0
<b><u>Rate of Partnerships:</u></b>				
• Had a new sexual partner in the past 4 weeks	27.3	30.5	91.9	60.0
- Of those, used a condom with most recent new partner	79.0	83.4	82.8	86.7
• Had a new sexual partner in the past 12 months	46.4	49.6	97.9	88.0
• Have a current steady partner	61.5	50.4	62.4	80.0
• Received money or gifts in for sex in the past 3 months	22.1	24.6	100.0	56.0
<b><u>Percent of Women Socializing at Sites Who:</u></b>				
• Believe drug use is very common in area	7.3	7.2	6.8	12.0
• Believe that IDU's socialize at site of interview	40.9	44.3	57.3	92.0
• Have ever injected drugs	1.8	2.0	10.7	100.0
Of those who have injected drugs				
• Percent who shared a needle the last time she injected	--	--	--	4.0

## Background and Objectives

### A. The HIV epidemic in Uzbekistan

By December of 2001, Uzbekistan had reported a total of 780 cases of HIV infection. The number of infected people living in Kyrgyzstan today is unknown. Epidemiologists expect that the infection may be currently concentrated in injecting drug users, but it is likely that the epidemic could quickly spread to the general population unless prevention action is taken immediately.

### B. Priorities for Local AIDS Control Efforts (PLACE)

The PLACE method identifies areas likely to have a higher incidence of HIV and specific sites within these high transmission areas (HTAs) where AIDS prevention programs could reach those most likely to transmit infection. The PLACE method is appropriate for Central Asia because the epidemic is concentrated in certain geographic areas.

The first step in the PLACE Method is to identify HTAs using available demographic, socio-economic, and qualitative information. The second step is to ask key informants in each HTA to name places where injection drug users can be found and places where people meet new lovers, boyfriends, girlfriends or one night only sexual partners. The third step is to locate and describe all the sites named by key informants. The fourth step is to conduct interviews with people socializing at a sample of sites to learn about their demographic, social, and behavioral characteristics. The final step is to provide recommendations to intervention groups.

### C. Objectives of the PLACE study in Tashkent

The objectives of the PLACE study in Tashkent were to:

- Identify sites where injection drug users socialize
- Identify sites where people, including commercial sex workers, meet new sexual partners
- Describe the social and behavioral characteristics of people at these sites
- Assess the extent that youth who visit these sites inject drugs and have new sexual partners
- Identify priority sites for HIV intervention programs
- Provide site-based indicators for monitoring of interventions

### D. Organization of the PLACE study in Almaty

This study was conducted by the FACT Social Research Agency in Tashkent. USAID provided funding through The MEASURE *Evaluation* Project. Results were shared with USAID, PSI, the Soros Foundation, UNAIDS, the City AIDS Center, and other organizations.

## Step 1: Identifying areas for assessment in Tashkent

### A. Objective

The objective of this step was to identify high transmission areas in Tashkent.

### B. Methods

Focus groups and in-depth interviews were conducted to identify which units were likely to be high transmission areas. Focus groups participants, including commercial sex workers, injection drug users, physicians, taxi drivers, and youth, were asked where people were most likely to go to meet new sexual partners, where sex workers were most likely to solicit clients, and where injection drug users were most likely to be found. In-depth interviews were also conducted to identify areas.

### C. Results

Focus groups and in-depth interviews identified 124 geographic areas throughout the city. An additional 34 areas encircling metro stations and busy bus stops were also selected for a total of 157 areas in the city.

## Step 2: Key Informant Interviews

### A. Objectives

The objective of this step was to identify all sites in the high transmission units and the randomly selected units where injecting drug users can be reached and where people meet new sexual partners.

### B. Methods

Key informants in each area were asked to name sites in the area where people meet new sexual partners, where sex workers solicit clients, or where injection drug users can be found. Key informant reports were compiled into a master list of sites.

### C. Results

Nineteen interviewers conducted 1206 key informant interviews in nine days. There were 5,866 site reports and 1,157 unique sites. Almost two-thirds of the key informants were male. Adults age 18 and older of all types were interviewed.

## Step 3: Site Visits

### A. Objectives

The objective of this step was to describe the characteristics of sites named by key informants.

### B. Methods

An interview team was assigned to each unit and given a list of sites inside the unit to visit and describe. There were so many reported sites (1,157) that it was not feasible to visit every site. Every site named by 5 or more key informants was visited, but flats, basements, roofs, and stairwells were not visited if they were named by less than 5 key informants. Sites located outside the study units were also not visited. The team also questioned a responsible party at each site about characteristics of the site relevant to HIV prevention.

### B. Results

Interviews were conducted at 448 sites meeting the eligibility criteria over a period of ten days. Interviews were declined at 72 sites. The remainder of this section of the report describes the sites where interviews were completed.

#### Site characteristics

The most common types of sites were bars, cafés, and restaurants and streets (Figure 2). Alcohol was consumed at the majority of sites. Other popular activities included dining, listening to music, and dancing.

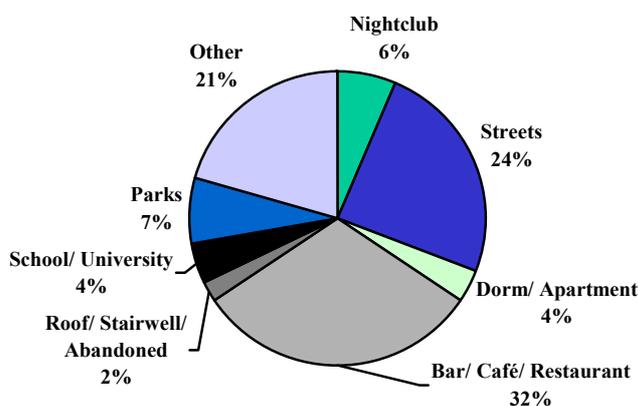
#### Site visitor characteristics

Many respondents reported that site visitors lived within a ten-minute walk, visited the site at least once a week, were students, and/or consumed alcohol at the site. Respondents at 47% of sites reported that men met new female sexual partners at the site of interview. Twenty-eight percent reported that sex workers solicited clients. Less than 4% reported that men met new male (gay) sexual partners.

#### Injection drug use

One-third (31%) of the respondents thought that injection drug use was “very common” or “somewhat common” in the area. One-quarter thought that injection drug use did not occur in the area. Thirty-one percent of the respondents reported that injection drug users socialized at

Figure 2. Type of Site



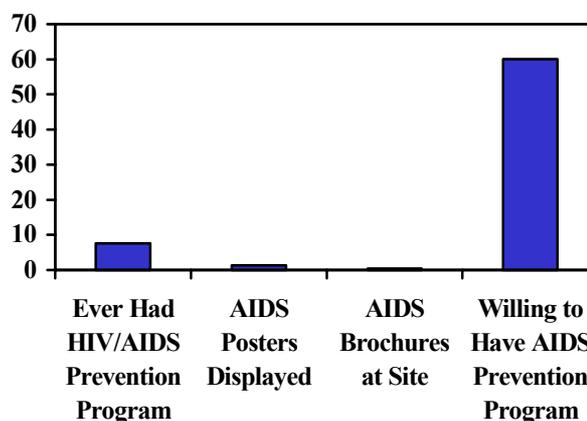
the site. Twenty-five percent said that they had seen used syringes at the site during the three months prior to the interview. Interviewers saw used syringes at 5% of the sites.

### HIV prevention activities

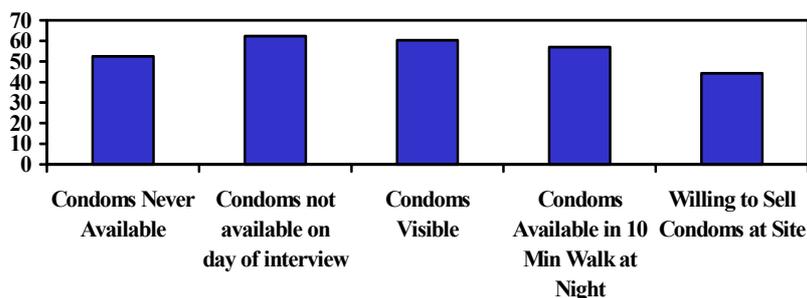
Site-based AIDS prevention activities were rare (Figure 3). Only 8% of respondents reported that HIV prevention activities had ever occurred at the site. HIV posters and brochures were displayed at only 1% of the sites. Approximately 60% of respondents were willing to have HIV educational programs at their sites.

Interviewers saw condoms at over 60% of the sites (Figure 4) but 62% of respondents reported that condoms were not available on the day of interview, and 52% reported that condoms had never been available during the twelve months preceding the interview. Over 44% of respondents were willing to sell condoms at their site. Fifty-seven percent said that it was possible for someone to find a condom within 10 minutes of leaving the site at night.

**Figure 3. AIDS Educational Activities at all Sites**



**Figure 4. Condom availability at all Sites**



## Step 4: Interviews with people socializing at sites

### A. Objective

The objective of this step was to describe the demographic, social, and behavioral characteristics of site visitors.

### B. Methods

Interviews were conducted with people socializing at a random sample of sites. In addition, interviews were conducted at sites named by 15 or more key informants but not selected in the random sample. These sites were considered important potential intervention sites.

An interview team visited each site and selected a sample of people to interview. The goal was to interview 1,600 people in total, including 200 injection drug users and 200 commercial sex

workers. Ten people were interviewed at small sites, 20 people at medium-sized sites, and 30 people at large sites. Interviewers tried to obtain a representative sample at a site by using the following strategies:

- Not approaching more than one person from a group of people socializing together;
- Numbering the people at a site and identifying potential respondents using numeric intervals;
- Approaching individuals at different locations within a site.

### C. Results

Interviews were conducted at one-quarter of the sites that were visited (Table 2). It took 35 interviewers 30 days to complete the interviews. The target number of interviews was obtained, but oversampling of injection drug users was necessary to reach the target for this group. Results are reported separately for the representative sample and three high-risk groups: youth, commercial sex workers and their clients, and injection drug users.

**Table 2. Summary of Individual Interviews Field Work**

Number of Sites Visited for Individual Interviews	104	
% of Verified Sites Visited	23.2%	
Number of Days of Interviews	30	
Number of Interviewers	35	
<i>Numbers Interviewed</i>	<b>M</b>	<b>W</b>
Total	1203	1036
Representative Sample	1039	1015
Youth	596	639
CSWs and Clients	312	234
IDUs	178	25

#### **Part 1: Representative Sample of People Socializing at All Sites**

The representative sample includes everyone interviewed except for the injection drug users that were added later to reach the target for this risk group.

#### Sociodemographic Characteristics

Slightly more than half of the people interviewed were men. The average age of male visitors (26.8 years) was higher than that of females (25.6 years). Approximately 90% of men and women were residents of Tashkent, and about 47% of men and women had lived in Tashkent for their entire lives. Men were slightly more likely than women to be married (42% vs. 36%), employed full-time (55% vs. 34%), to have slept outside the city in the past three months (57% vs. 47%), and to have had at least some higher education (46% vs. 37%). Similar proportions of men and women were currently students (30%).

#### Social and Sexual Behavior

Many men and women reported that they visited the site of interview on a regular basis; about one-quarter of respondents said that they came every day. Approximately 60% of men and women believed that people came to the interview site to meet a new sexual partner. In fact, 22% of men and 25% of women said that they had personally met a new sexual partner at the site.

Large proportions of men (69%) and women (63%) had had at least one sexual partner in the four weeks prior to the interview. Equal proportions of men (29%) and women (27%) had had at least one new sexual partner during the same period. Approximately one-quarter of men

reported giving money in exchange for sex during the past 3 months. The proportion of women who had received money in exchange for sex was 22%.

Seventy percent of men and 62% of women reported that they had had a regular sexual partner during the 12 months prior to the interview. Of these, significant proportions of men (62%) and women (52%) reported that they had had at least one new partner in addition to their regular partner during this period.

Men rarely reported having sex with another man during the four weeks prior to the interview (1%).

### Condom Use

Most men (71%) and 58% of women said that they had used a condom. Two-thirds of men (67%) and 79% of women who had had a new partner in the last four weeks reported using a condom with their last new partner (Figure 5). Modest proportions of men (28%) and women (29%) who had a regular partner reported using a condom during the last sexual act with that partner. Approximately 12% of men and women had a condom with them at the time of the interview.

Men most frequently reported obtaining condoms from pharmacies and grocery stores. Women reported that they obtained condoms from pharmacies or from their partners.

### HIV Knowledge

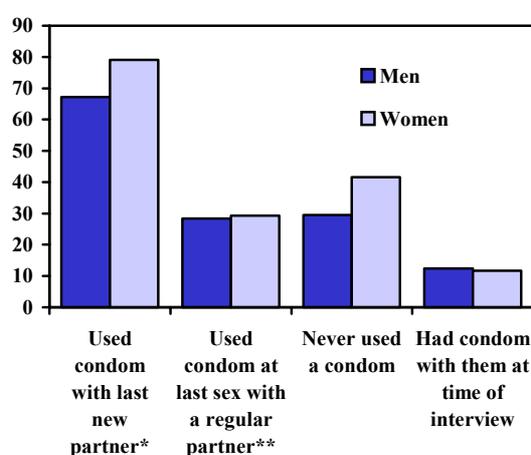
Approximately 18% of men and 22% of women had attended an HIV educational session in the 12 months prior to the interview. Over 95% of men and women knew that HIV can be transmitted by sharing needles or by sexual contact without a condom. However, only 76% of men and 70% of women identified condom use as a way to reduce their personal risk of HIV infection. Only 42% of men and women knew that using sterile needles is another way to prevent infection. Approximately two-thirds of men and women knew that a person who looks healthy can be infected with HIV.

Twenty-eight percent of men and 33% of women interviewed had been tested for HIV in the 12 months prior to the interview. Only 35% of men and 45% of women tested had done so voluntarily.

### Injection drug use

Almost 30% of men and women reported that injection drug use was “very common” or “somewhat common” in the unit where they were interviewed. Less than 10% of respondents thought that drug use did not occur in the unit. One third said that they did not know. Approximately 40% of men and women thought that injection drug users socialized at the interview site (Figure 6).

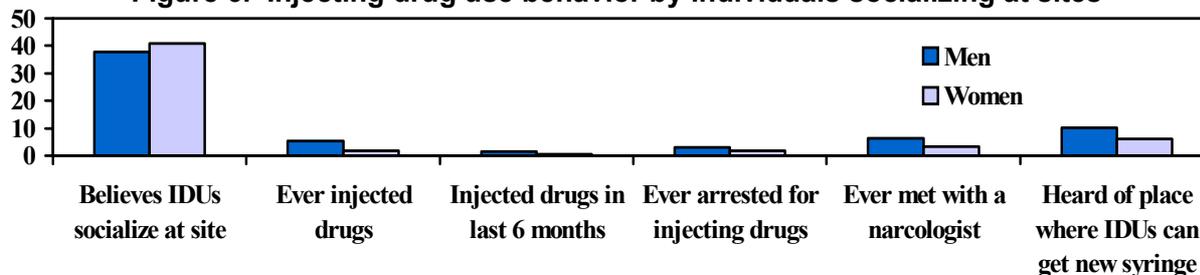
**Figure 5. Condom use by gender**



\*Among individuals with at least 1 new partner in past 4 weeks  
 \*\*Among individuals with a regular partner

Only 5% of men and 2% of women reported that they had ever injected drugs. Of these, approximately one quarter of men and women had used injection drugs during the past six months. Three percent of men and 2% of women had been arrested for drug use. Less than 10% of respondents had heard of a place in the city where injection drug users could get new syringes.

**Figure 6. Injecting drug use behavior by individuals socializing at sites**



### **Part 2: Youth**

Youth aged 18 to 25 years were examined as a separate group. Over 57% of men and 63% of women in the representative sample were youth. Results that differed from the representative sample are emphasized here.

#### Youth: Sociodemographic Characteristics

Twelve percent of male youth and 19% of female youth were married. Only 39% of male youth and 23% of female youth were employed full-time. Half of male youth and 46% of female youth were currently students.

#### Youth: Social and Sexual Behavior

Almost two-thirds of male and female youth believed that people came to the site to meet new sexual partners. Slightly over one-quarter of male (26%) and female (29%) youth had personally met a new partner at the site. One-third of male and female youth reported that they had had a new sexual partner in the 4 weeks preceding the interview. Only 54% of male youth and 51% of female youth said that they had had a regular sex partner in the past 12 months.

One-quarter of male youth had given money in exchange for sex in the 3 months prior to the interview. One-quarter of female youth said that they had received money in exchange for sex during the same period.

Only 1% of male youth reported having sex with another man in the four weeks preceding the interview.

#### Youth: HIV Knowledge and Prevention

Nearly one-quarter (24%) of male youth and 28% of female youth had attended an AIDS education session during the three months prior to the interview. Nearly all youth were aware that unprotected sex and needle sharing were risk factors for HIV transmission. Smaller proportions identified using condoms and avoiding needle sharing as ways to reduce personal risk. Most youth had used condoms with their last new sexual partner. Smaller proportions had used condoms with their last regular sexual partners.

### Youth: Injection drug use

Thirty-nine percent of male youth and 44% of female youth thought that injection drug users socialized at the interview site. Male youth (5%) were slightly more likely than female youth (2%) to report that they had ever used injection drugs. Among those who had ever injected drugs, only 26% of male youth and 30% of female youth had done so in the past 6 months.

### **Part 3: Commercial Sex Workers and Clients**

Commercial sex workers were defined as women who reported receiving money in exchange for sex in the 3 months prior to the interview. Clients were defined as men who reported giving money or other gifts in exchange for sexual services during the same period. Approximately 23% of women interviewed were commercial sex workers and 30% of the men were clients. Results that differed from the representative sample are emphasized here.

#### CSWs and Clients: Sociodemographic Characteristics

The majority of CSWs were under the age of 30 and only 10% were married. Only 12% reported that they were employed full-time; 37% reported that they were employed occasionally or part-time. Less than 12% were currently students and approximately 60% had completed high school. The average CSW was 23 years old, while the average client was 25 years. Only 30% of the clients were married.

#### Clients and CSWs: Social and Sexual Behavior

Over 80% of clients and 94% of CSWs thought that people came to the interview site to meet new sexual partners. In fact, half of the clients (51%) and the majority of CSWs (84%) had met a new sexual partner at the site. The majority of CSWs visited the site of interview more than once a week. Most CSWs went to only one or two sites to solicit clients.

Approximately 48% of CSWs had 4 or more new sexual partners in the 4 weeks preceding the interview. Over 60% had had 15 or more new partners during the past 12 months. Sixty-two percent of CSWs interviewed said that they had a regular sexual partner.

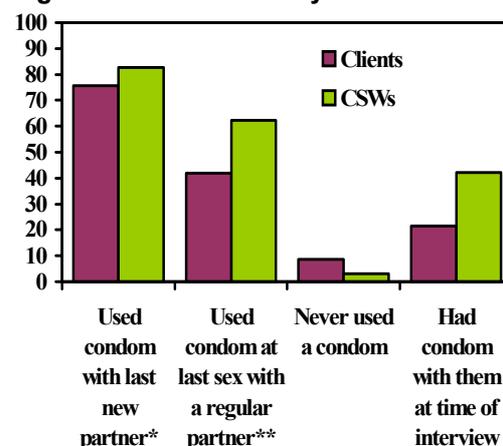
Sixty-nine percent of the clients reported that they had had a new partner in the 4 weeks prior to the interview, and 66% had had 4 or more new partners in the past 12 months. One percent of clients reported that they had recently had sex with another man.

#### CSWs and Clients: Condom use

Condom use was high among CSWs and their clients (Figure 7). Less than 10% of clients had never used a condom. A large proportion (76%) of clients who had a new partner in the past 4 weeks used a condom with the last new partner. Less than half (42%) of clients with regular partners reported using a condom at last sex with that partner.

Only 3% of CSWs had never used a condom.

**Figure 7. Condom use by CSWs and clients**



\*Among individuals with at least 1 new partner in past 4 weeks

\*\*Among individuals with a regular partner

Approximately 83% had used a condom with their last new partner. Approximately two-thirds also used a condom at last sex with a regular partner.

Approximately 21% of clients and 42% of CSWs had a condom at the time of the interview. CSWs were likely to depend on their partners to provide condoms.

#### CSWs and Clients: HIV Knowledge

Only 11% of CSWs and 15% of clients had attended an HIV education session in the 3 months prior to the interview. Large proportions of CSWs (86%) and clients (89%) knew that condom use is a way to reduce the risk of getting HIV. Approximately 60% of CSWs had been tested for HIV in the past 12 months. Almost three-quarters (74%) had done so voluntarily. Forty percent of clients had been tested.

#### Clients and CSWs: Injection Drug Use

Fifty-eight percent of CSWs and clients thought that injection drug users socialized at the interview site. One-third of clients said that they had ever used injection drugs; of these, 79% had done so in the past six months. Approximately 11% of CSWs reported that they had used injected drugs. Of CSWs who had ever injected drugs, 56% had done so within the past 6 months.

### **Part 4: Injection Drug Users**

An IDU was defined as someone who reported that they had used injection drugs in the 6 months preceding the interview. Eighty-eight percent of the IDUs interviewed were men. Because only 25 female IDUs were interviewed, much of the analysis will be restricted to male IDUs. Results that differed from the representative sample are emphasized here.

#### IDUs: Sociodemographic Characteristics

The average age of male IDUs was 27 years. Thirty-seven percent of male IDUs were married, and half were employed full-time. Only 10% were students and 15% had at least some higher education.

#### IDUs: Social and Sexual Behavior

Over 80% of male IDUs visited the site of interview at least once a week. Most male (94%) and female (88%) IDUs thought that people came to the site to meet new sexual partners. In fact, 61% of male IDUs and 60% of female IDUs had met a new partner at the site. Ninety-one percent of male IDUs had at least one sexual partner in the past 4 weeks; of these, 58% had at least one new partner during this period. Three-quarters of male IDUs had a regular sex partner. Approximately 46% of male IDUs paid for sex during the 3 months prior to the interview. Eighty percent of the 25 female IDUs interviewed said they had received money in exchange for sex during the past 3 months. Few (1%) male IDUs reported recent sex with another man.

#### IDUs: HIV Knowledge and Prevention

Less than 15% of male IDUs attended an AIDS educational session in the past year. Male IDUs were likely to identify using sterile needles as a way to reduce the risk of getting HIV. Eighty-five

percent of the male IDUs with a new partner in the past 4 weeks used a condom with the last new partner. Approximately 43% of male IDUs with a regular partner used a condom at last sex with that. Fifty-six percent of male IDUs had been tested for HIV in the past year.

### IDUs: Injection Drug Use

Most male IDUs (72%) said that injection drug use was “very common” or “somewhat common” in the unit where the interview took place. No male IDUs reported that injection drug use did not occur in the unit. Approximately 97% thought that other IDUs socialized at the interview site.

Heroin was the most commonly reported drug. Most had used drugs for years; only 15% reported injecting for less than one year. Over half of male IDUs reported taking drugs alone, 19% always took drugs with the same group, and for 23%, the main way to take drugs depended on circumstances.

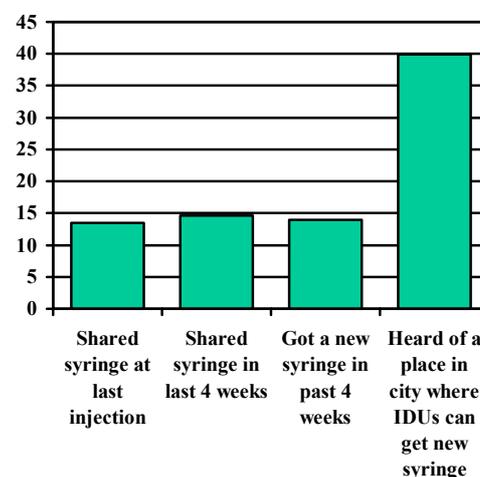
Only 37% of male IDUs had injected drugs in the previous 7 days; about 22% the day before. Those who injected the previous day did so 1.5 times, on average.

In the 4 weeks preceding the interview, 39% of male IDUs took drugs from a common reservoir, and 35% used a ready made drug solution without boiling. Fourteen percent of male IDUs shared a syringe at last injection, and 15% had shared a syringe in the past 4 weeks (Figure 8). Only 14% of male IDUs had obtained a new syringe in the last 4 weeks. Forty percent had heard of a place in the city where IDUs can get new syringes. The majority of male IDUs (87%) said that they had obtained their last syringe from a pharmacy. Only 7% obtained their last syringe from a trust point. Ninety-two percent said that they could always get a new syringe whenever they wanted. Male IDUs cited a lack of money and fear of police as obstacles to obtaining new syringes.

### IDUs: Arrests and registration

Over half of male IDUs had been arrested for injecting drugs. Of these, 42% thought they had been registered with the police and 60% of these thought they were registered as IDUs. One-third of male IDUs had met a narcologist or visited a narcologist dispensary.

Figure 8. Needle sharing and use by male IDUs



## Step 5: Summary and Recommendations

**Sexual and injection drug use networks are extensive and diffuse. There is significant overlap among groups at high risk for HIV infection.**

This study identified over 1150 unique sites in Tashkent where people at high risk of HIV infection socialize. There was significant overlap among groups at high risk, including youth, injection drug users, and commercial sex workers and their clients.

**The rate of new partnership formation is high. A large proportion of men visit sex workers.**

Approximately 30% of men and women interviewed at sites reported at least one new partner during the past 4 weeks. Approximately one-quarter of men had given money in exchange for sex during the 3 months prior to the interview.

**Condom use is high, particularly with new partners.**

Condom use was high among all sub-populations. The proportion of individuals who had ever used a condom ranged from 57% of female youth to 97% of sex workers. Two-thirds of men and almost 80% of women with a new partner in the past 4 weeks had used a condom with the last new partner.

**Condoms are not consistently available at sites, but they are available nearby.**

Thirty-six percent of sites had condoms always available. However, condoms were available nearby at 57% of sites. Approximately 44% of site representatives were willing to sell condoms at their sites.

**Pharmacies are a common place to obtain condoms and syringes.**

Men frequently obtained condoms from pharmacies and grocery stores. Women frequently obtained condoms from their partner or a pharmacy. Over 85% of IDUs obtained syringes from pharmacies.

**Injection drug use is rare among individuals in the representative sample but is common among CSWs and clients.**

Only 5% of men and 2% of women in the representative sample had ever injected drugs and only one quarter of these had done so in the past 6 months. One third of clients and 11% of CSWs had ever injected drugs and 79% of clients and 56% of CSWs had done so in the past 6 months. Forty-six percent of male IDUs had given money in exchange for sex in the past 3 months.

**Recommendations**

- HIV interventions should be implemented at sites where people at high risk of infection socialize, particularly at sites where these high-risk populations, such as CSWs and clients and IDUs, overlap.
- Condoms should be available at sites where people meet new sexual partners.
- More publicity is needed about places where IDUs can get a clean syringe in the city.
- Current programs promoting condom use need to be strengthened and maintained.