



## Mobility & Migration: Impacts on Sex Workers' Health and Safety

### Background

While research has been conducted on the health and safety of mobile and migrant populations around the world, little research has focused on the working conditions, health, and safety of mobile and migrant sex workers specifically.

### The Question

How does short-term mobility and migration among sex workers in Vancouver, BC impact their work environment, health, and safety?

### The Study

The Gender & Sexual Health Initiative (GSHI) research team drew upon data from **interviews with 646 women in street and off-street sex work in Vancouver, BC between January 2010 and August 2012**. This project is part of AESHA (An Evaluation of Sex Workers Health Access), an ongoing study on working conditions, health and safety in the sex industry led by GSHI/BCCfE and UBC, in collaboration with a range of community partners, with ongoing outreach to street and indoor sex work venues (by experiential and non-experiential team).

### The Results

Mobile and migrant sex workers were more likely to:

- Be younger,
- Work in indoor sex work venues, and
- Earn higher income.

Mobile and migrant sex workers reported having:

- Less control over condom use with intimate partners, and
- Reduced access to health care.

Sex workers who did sex work outside of Vancouver reported:

- More sexual/physical violence at work.

*Migration & Mobility:  
Of 646 sex workers interviewed, almost 11% worked or lived in another city, province, or country during the study.*

### The Policy Implications

- This study shows that tailored, peer-based interventions to reduce isolation and improve mobile/migrant sex workers' control over their working conditions are needed, alongside efforts to link women to health and social supports.

Goldenberg S, Chettiar J, Nguyen P, Dobrer S, Montaner J, Shannon K. Complexities of short-term mobility for sex work and migration among sex workers: Violence and sexual risks, barriers to care, and enhanced social and economic opportunities. *Journal of Urban Health*, 2014.