

# The Structural Determinants of Dual Contraceptive Use Among Female Sex Workers in Conflict-Affected Gulu, Northern Uganda

### Background

Female sex workers (FSWs) in Sub-Saharan Africa face a high burden of HIV, gender-based violence, and unintended pregnancy, and have limited access to sexual and reproductive health (SRH) services.

#### The Question

What are the characteristics of FSWs in Gulu, northern Uganda who use dual contraceptives (i.e., use of non-barrier contraceptives and male condoms for pregnancy prevention) compared to those who do not?

## The Study

This analysis drew on data from the Gender & Sexual Health Initiatives' Gulu Sexual Health Project, a community-based cross-sectional study in Gulu District, northern Uganda (May 2011-January 2012). 400 female sex workers were recruited through peer/sex worker-led and community outreach. The study was conducted by Canadian and Ugandan researchers in partnership with The AIDS Support Organization (TASO) and other local community partners.

#### The Results

Of 400 female sex workers interviewed, 180 (45%) reported lifetime dual contraceptive use. Women who used dual contraceptives were:

- Older in age
- More likely to have had prior HIV testing
- More likely to report unintended pregnancies
- More likely to work in non-entertainment indoor establishments (brothels, lodges, hotels and rented rooms)

### Police presence:

Over 1/3 of participants reported that police presence affected where they worked and resulted in rushed negotiations with clients.

Those using dual contraceptives were less likely to report that police presence resulted it rushed negotiations.

# The Policy Implications

- Our findings highlight the numerous structural risks, including negative interactions with police, which reduce uptake of SRH for female sex workers living in conflict- affected northern Uganda.
- Integrated HIV and SRH services developed in partnership with sex workers should be considered to reduce barriers to contraceptive uptake and promote sexual and reproductive health and rights.

Margaret Erickson, Shira M. Goldenberg, Miriam Ajok, Katherine A. Muldoon, Godfrey Muzaaya, Kate Shannon. Structural determinants of dual contraceptive use among female sex workers in conflict-affected Gulu, northern Uganda. *International Journal of Gynecology & Obstetrics*, 2015.