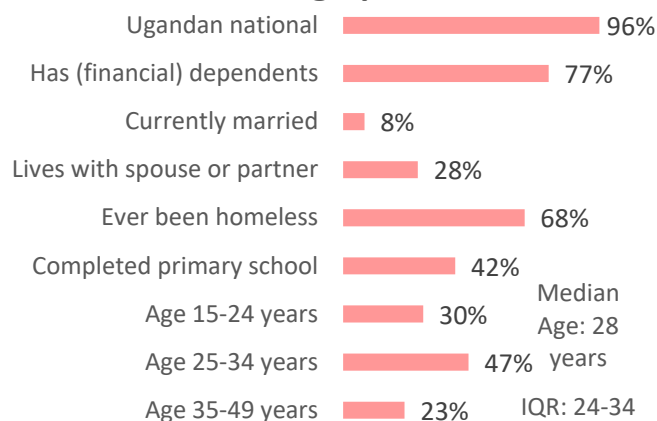


Crane 3 Survey Summary – Female Sex Workers and Sexually Exploited Children in Busia, Uganda 2023

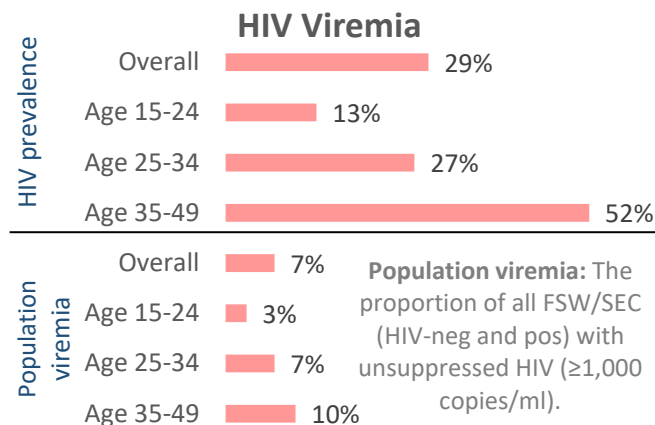


Survey methods. This respondent-driven sampling survey took place from September 2022 to February 2023 using a single survey office in Busia. Enrolled female sex workers (FSW, 18-49 years) and sexually exploited children (SEC, 15-17 years) resided in Busia and reported selling sex to men in the last 6 months. SEC were referred to social protection services. Data were collected through audio computer-assisted self-interviews; blood was tested for HIV, viral load, and active syphilis (ChemBio Diagnostics, Medford, NY, USA); cervical vaginal swabs were tested for human papilloma virus (HPV). Sample size was 759 participants; estimates are weighted unless stated otherwise. *Note: Interquartile range (IQR) refers to the middle half of those who responded.*

Demographics



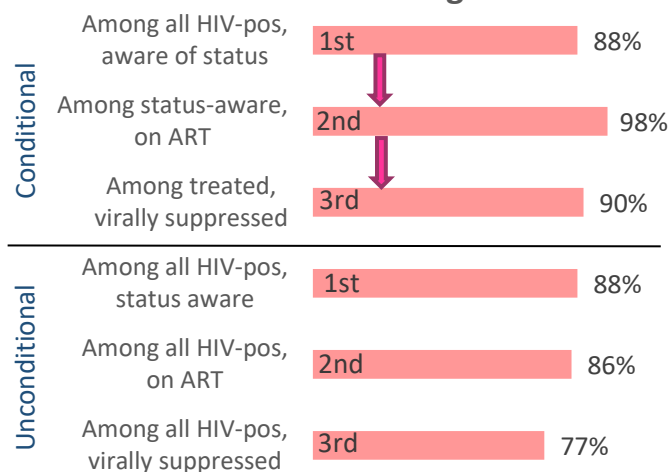
HIV Prevalence and Population



The median age of FSW/SEC was 28 years; one in three were 15-24 years old. Less than half had completed primary school. Two-thirds reported ever being homeless; nearly all were Ugandan nationals; three quarters had financial dependents.

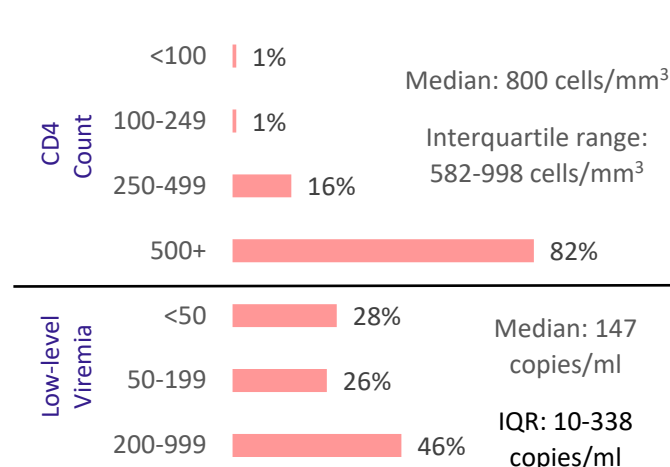
More than a quarter of FSW/SEC were living with HIV. HIV prevalence increased with age and was highest among 35-49-year-olds. The prevalence of population viremia was substantially lower due to treatment-related viral suppression.

UNAIDS 95-95-95 Targets



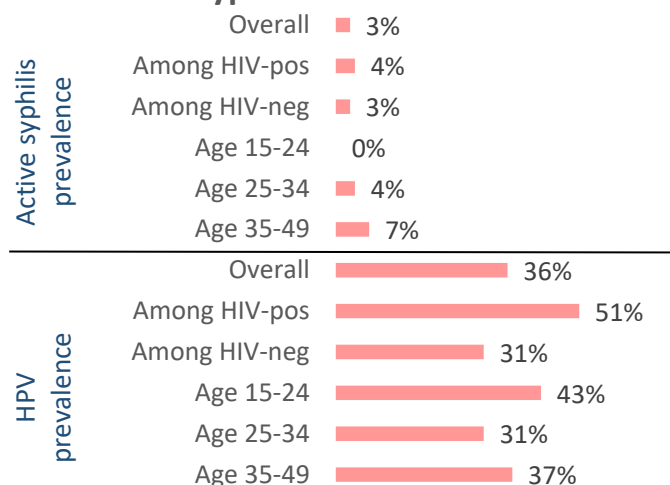
HIV status awareness and treatment uptake were based on self-report with adjustment for viral suppression. Nine out of ten FSW/SEC living with HIV (FSW/SECLHIV) knew about their positive status and three quarters were virally suppressed.

CD4 Count & Low-level Viremia



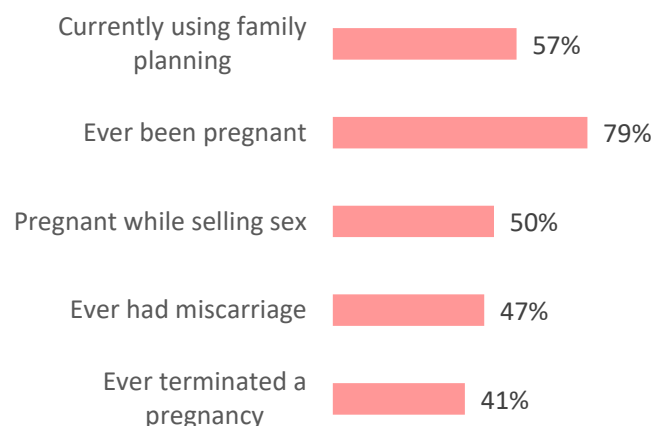
Among FSW/SECLHIV, four out of five had CD4 counts of 500 cells/mm³ or more, suggesting good immune status. Among virally suppressed FSW/SEC (<1000 copies/ml), about half had viral loads between 200 and 999 copies/ml.

Active Syphilis & HPV Prevalence



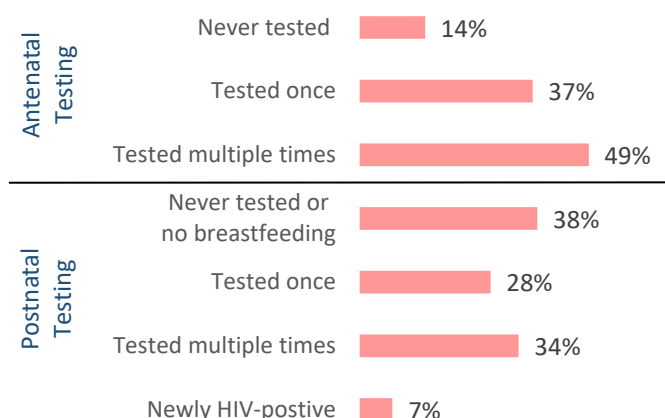
Prevalence of active syphilis among FSW/SEC was low and increased with age. About half of FSW/SEC living with HIV had HPV co-infection putting them at risk of developing cervical cancer. HPV infection peaked among the 15-24-year-olds.

Maternal Health: Pregnancy



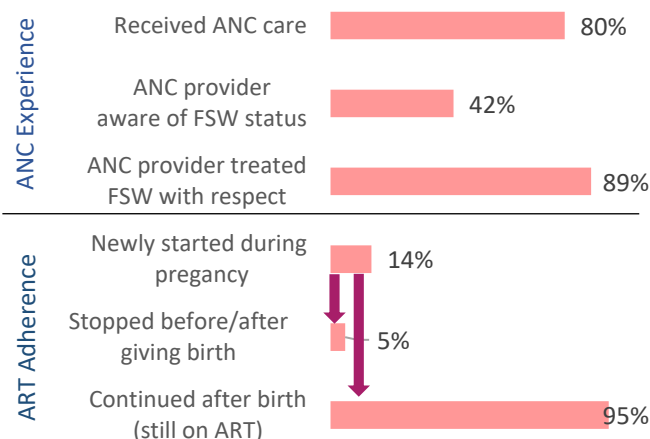
Among FSW/SEC more than half reported using family planning. Four in five had ever been pregnant and half had sold sex while pregnant. About half reported having had a miscarriage and two in five reported ever terminating a pregnancy.

Maternal Health: Ante- and Postnatal HIV Testing



About one in seven FSW/SEC were never tested for HIV during pregnancy; about half were tested multiple times. About 1 in 14 of FSW/SEC reported having tested newly HIV positive at postnatal testing.

Maternal Health: Antenatal Care (ANC) and ART



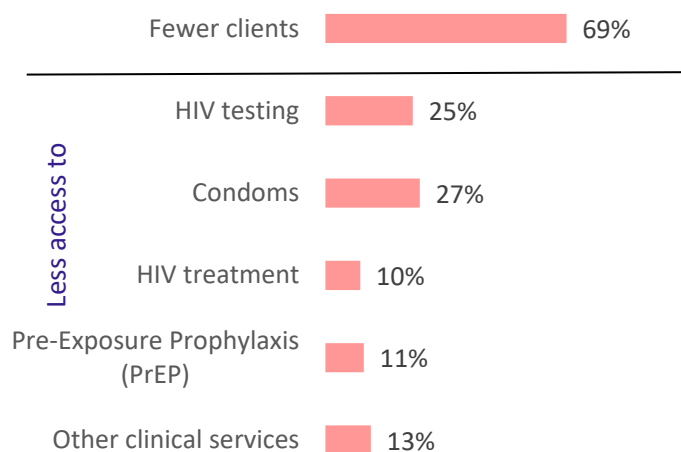
While pregnant most received antenatal care and were treated with respect by the provider, yet less than half disclosed their sex work to the health care worker. Almost all who started ART during pregnancy continued ART after giving birth.

Population size estimate: Using this survey and two separate rounds of sampling at hotspots (three source capture recapture) we estimated the Busia FSW/SEC population size at 2,700 (95% confidence interval: 1,900-3,500) or 2.7% of the female population aged 15-49.

Pediatric HIV prevalence: The survey also sampled children of enrolled FSW/SEC. Out of 22 eligible children aged 0-16 years, 22 (100%) were tested for HIV during the survey. Of these, 1 (5%) tested HIV-positive (unweighted).

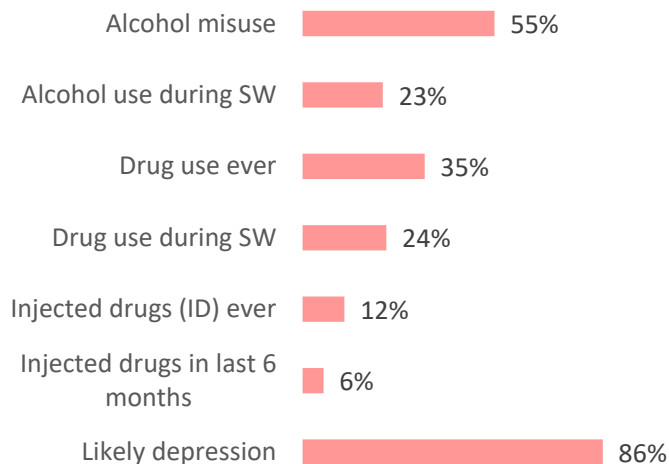
Crane 3 Survey Summary – Female Sex Workers and Sexually Exploited Children, Busia, Uganda, 2023

COVID-19 Impact



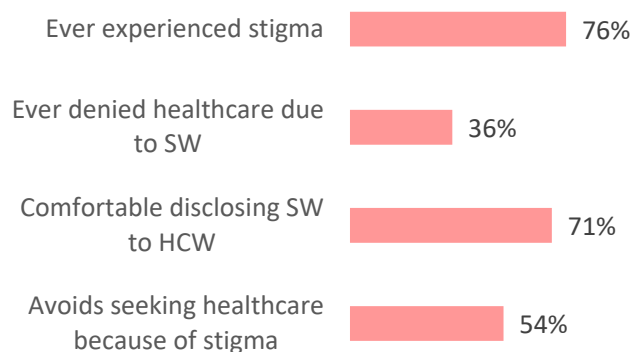
Most FSW/SEC reported fewer clients due to COVID-19. About a quarter reported decreased access to condoms or HIV testing. Access to HIV treatment and PrEP were less impacted.

Alcohol, Drug Use, Depression



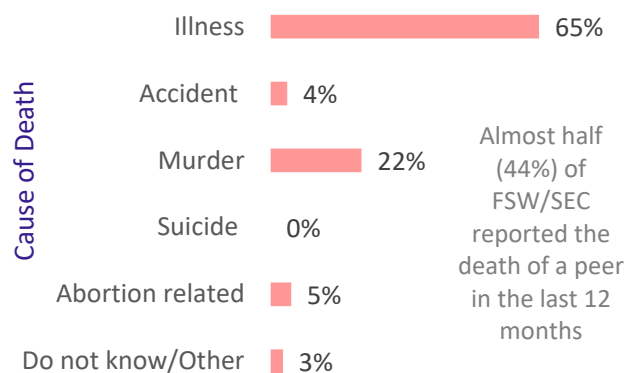
More than half of FSW/SEC screened positive for alcohol misuse, and most screened positive for possible depression. About one quarter reported using alcohol or drugs during sex work (SW); about 1 in 20 had injected drugs recently.

Sex Work (SW) Related Stigma



Three quarters of FSW/SEC reported ever experiencing SW-related stigma. About one-third had been denied healthcare because of their sex work (SW)/sexual exploitation (SE), and about half avoided healthcare due to stigma although most felt comfortable disclosing their SW to healthcare workers.

Mortality among Peers

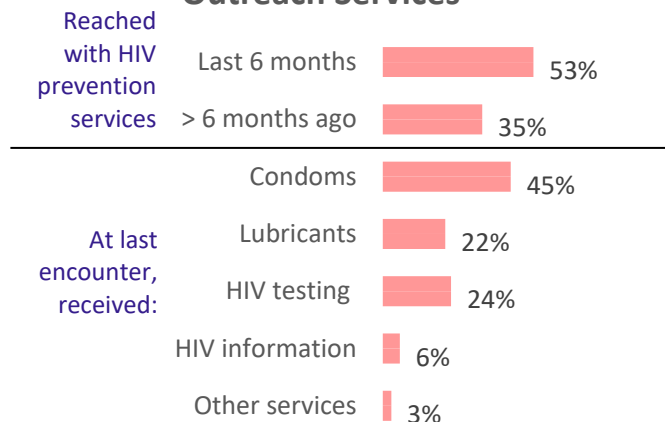


Slightly less than half of FSW/SEC reported deaths among their known FSW/SEC peers within the last 12 months. Illness accounted for most reported deaths; murder accounted for one-fifth of deaths. Deaths from a failed abortion or accidents were reported by about 1 in 20 respondents.

Crane 3 Survey Summary: HIV Prevention

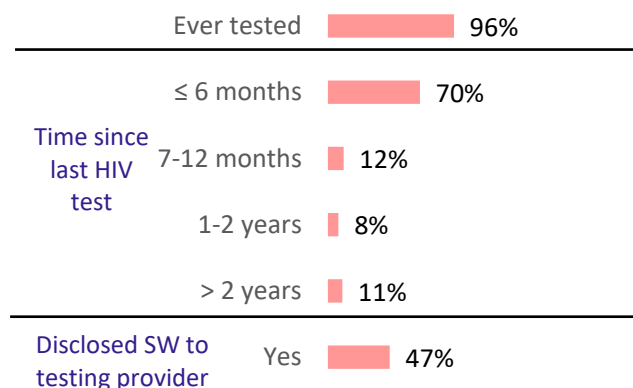
Female Sex Workers and Sexually Exploited Children in Busia, Uganda 2023

Outreach Services



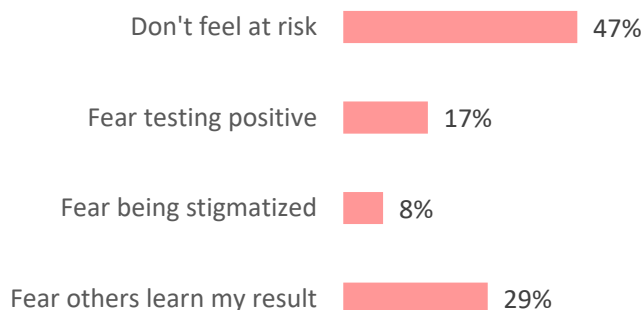
Most FSW/SEC had been reached with outreach services; more than half within the last six months. Condoms were most frequently received, followed by HIV testing services, lubricants, and HIV information at the last encounter with provider.

HIV Testing



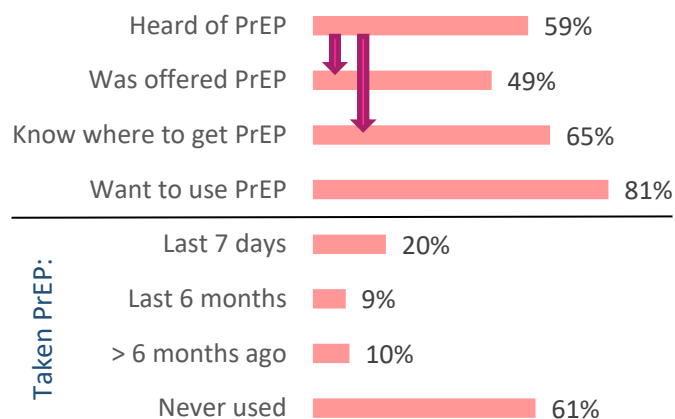
Almost all FSW/SEC had ever tested for HIV, and 7 in 10 had tested in the last 6 months. Less than half of FSW/SEC had disclosed their sex work (SW) to their testing provider.

Reason for not testing for HIV in the last 12 months



Among FSW/SEC who did not test for HIV in the prior 12 months, almost half felt they were not at risk. Other reasons included fear of other people learning their test results and fear of testing HIV positive.

Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP)



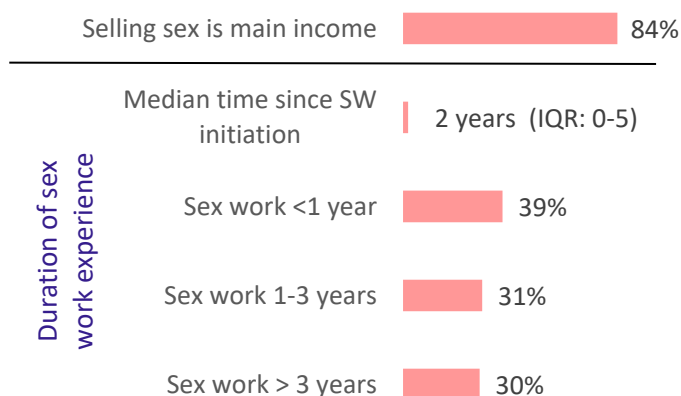
Three out of five FSW/SEC had heard of PrEP; of these, about half were offered PrEP. The majority of HIV-negative FSW/SEC reported wanting PrEP but more than half had never used PrEP.

Crane 3 Survey Summary: HIV Prevention

Female Sex Workers and Sexually Exploited Children in Busia, Uganda 2023

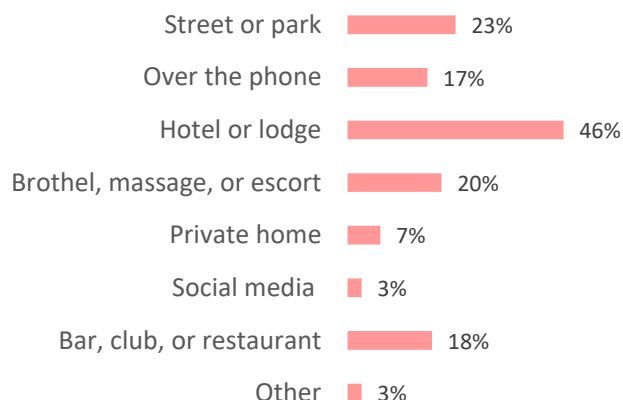
Non-Paying Partners (NPP): A NPP is a sex partner who does not pay for sex, for example, a spouse or boyfriend. About 2 in 5 (43%) of FSW/SEC had sex with an NPP in the last 12 months. Few (8%) reported their last NPP was living with HIV, and about two thirds (65%) reported to have used a condom at least once during the last three sex acts with an NPP. About 2 in 5 (37%) of FSW/SEC reported that their HIV status was known to their most recent NPP.

Sex Work Characteristics



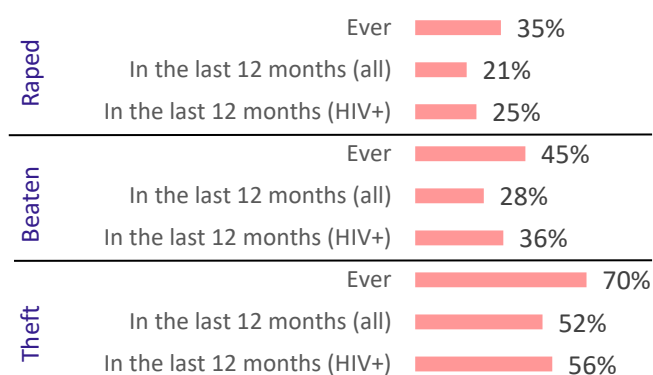
Four out of five FSW/SEC saw sex work as their main income. On average, FSW/SEC started selling sex two years prior to the survey and more than two-thirds began SW within the last three years.

Where Sex Workers Meet Clients



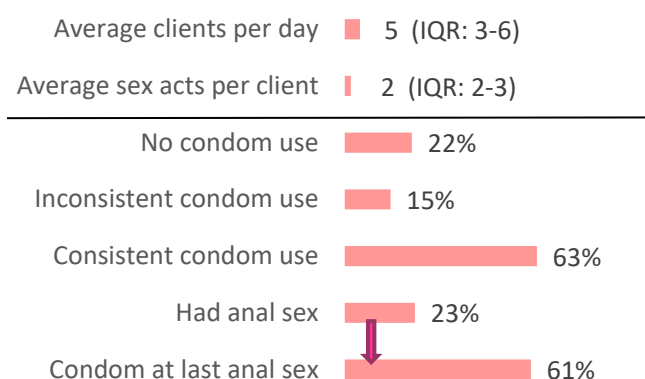
Almost half of FSW/SEC met their clients at hotels or lodges; other common locations include streets or parks, brothels and bars, clubs or restaurants, massage places, and over the phone.

Experienced Violence



About one-third of FSW/SEC reported ever been raped; one-fifth had been raped in the last 12 months. Almost half had ever been beaten, about 3 in 10 were beaten in the last 12 months. Theft was frequently experienced.

Sex Acts & Condom Use



FSW/SEC reported five clients per day and two sex acts with each client. Two-thirds used condom consistently during the last three sex acts with clients. One-fifth ever had anal sex with clients; condoms were used in almost two-thirds of anal sex acts.

Crane 3 Survey Summary: Care and Treatment

Female Sex Workers and Sexually Exploited Children in Busia, Uganda 2

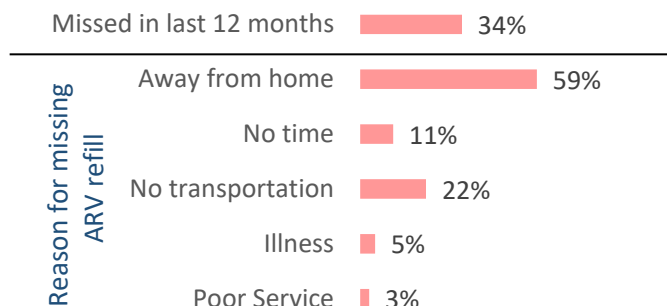
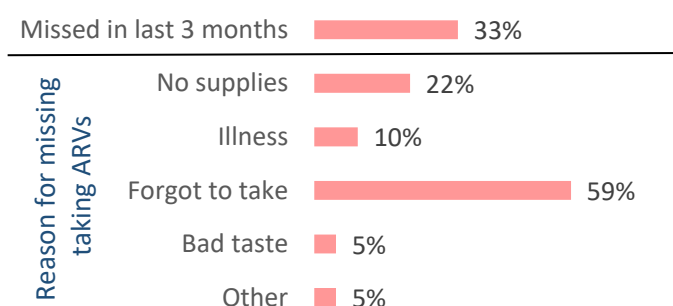
Viral load (VL) testing: Among HIV-positive FSW/SEC aware of their HIV status, nearly two-thirds stated that their VL had been measured in the previous 12 months. Of these, 11% had received and understood their result.

U=U: Almost half of FSW/SEC living with HIV in Busia had heard about *Undetectable=Untransmittable*. After learning the meaning of U=U, two-thirds stated that they believed U=U was true.

Food security: Of FSW/SEC living with HIV and on ART, over three-quarters reported not having enough food.

Missed ARV Dose(s)

Missed ARV Refill

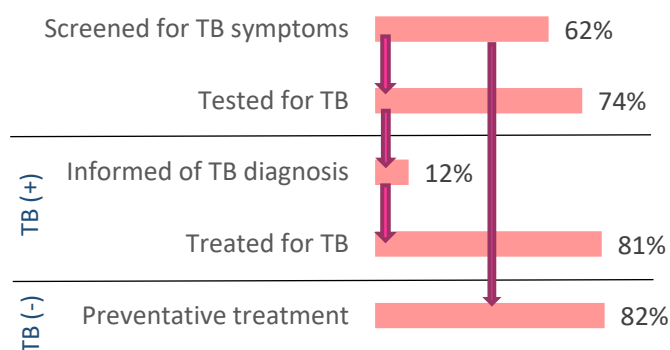
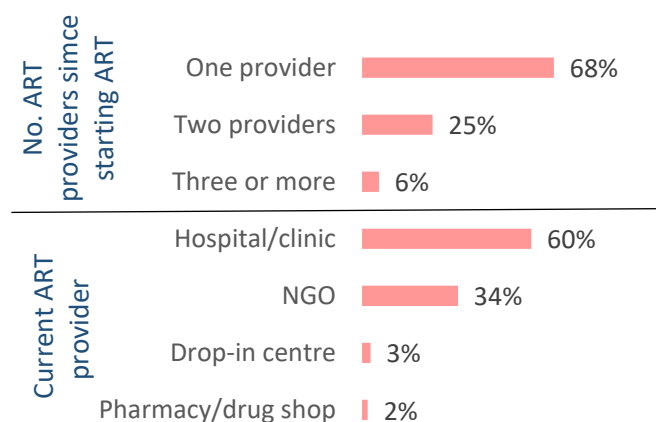


One-third of FSW/SECLHIV on ART had missed taking some of their ARVs in the last three months; the most frequent reasons included forgetfulness and needing supplies.

A third of FSW/SEC on ART sometimes missed refilling their ARVs in the last 12 months, mostly due to being away from home or lack of transportation.

Select ART Characteristics

Tuberculosis (TB) Among HIV Positive FSW/SEC



Among FSW/SECLHIV on ART, two-thirds had switched ART service providers at least once. Most received ART from hospitals, clinics, or NGOs.

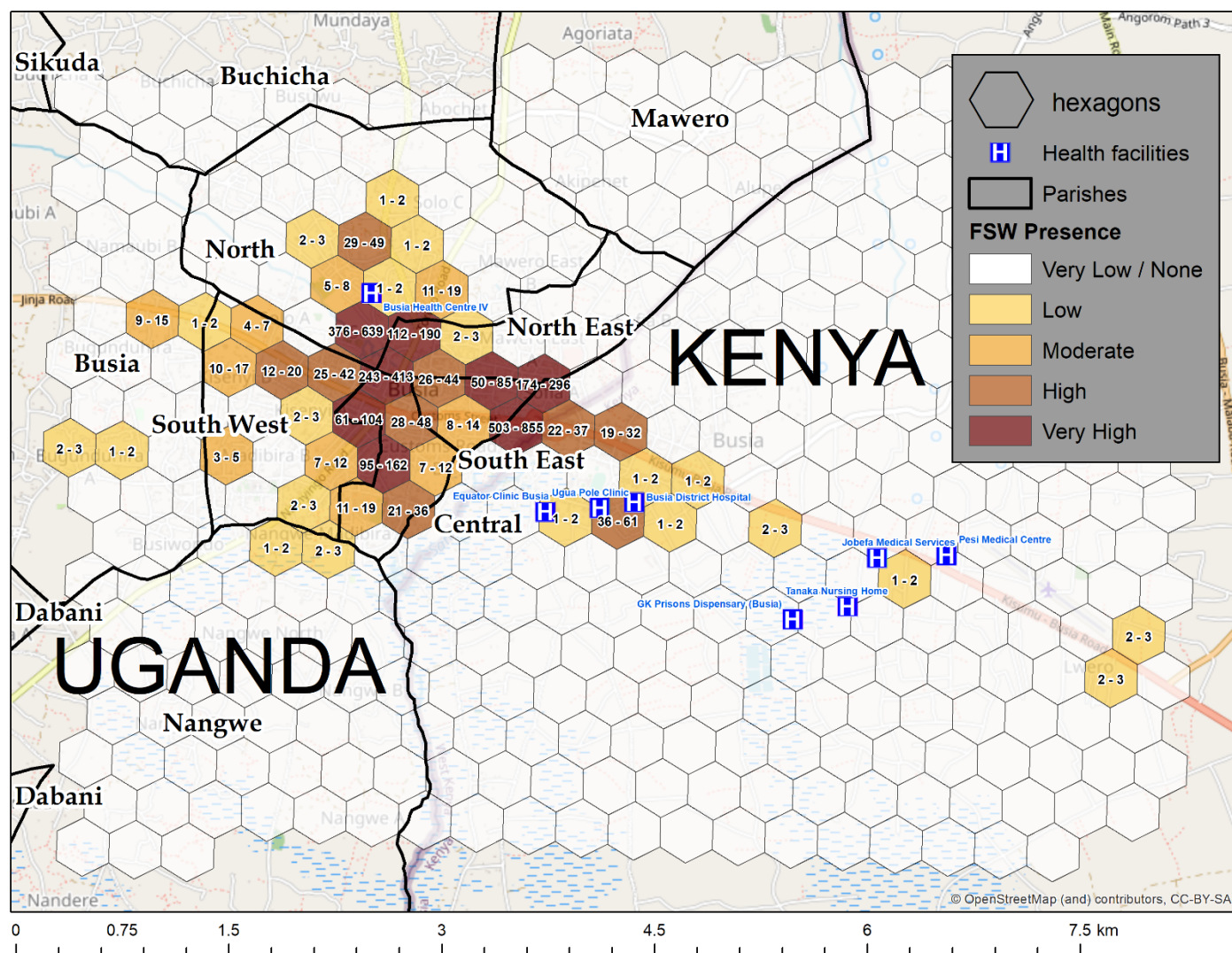
Among FSW/SEC reporting living with HIV, 3 in 5 were screened for TB symptoms at HIV diagnosis; of these, three-quarters were tested for TB. Among them, 1 in 8 were informed of a TB positive diagnosis, and of those 4 in 5 reported receiving TB treatment. Among TB negatives, 4 in 5 received preventive treatment.

Crane 3 Survey Summary: Sex Work Distribution in Busia

Female Sex Workers and Sexually Exploited Children, Busia, Uganda 2023

Busia borders Kenya and includes five parishes. The coloring in the map below indicates where SW/SE is more common: Dark areas indicate areas with a high presence of FSW/SEC and white areas indicate very low presence of FSW/SEC. Range values shown indicate crude estimates about the possible number of FSW/SEC in each area over time, also accounting for multiple sex work locations for each FSW/SEC. Only publicly accessible sex work locations were asked about, such as bars, lodges, intersections, etc. Central, Northeast, Southwest, and North had the highest presence of FSW/SEC.

Figure 1. Distribution of sex work in Busia, Uganda, 2023.



The **Crane Survey** is a collaboration of Makerere University/School of Public Health, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and Ministry of Health.

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