**THE MYTH IS...**

- Sex workers have lower levels of HIV than men who have sex with men (MSM).
- Sex work is a temporary job that young women enter as a way out of poverty.
- All sex workers are women.
- Female sex workers have lower levels of HIV than men who have sex with men (MSM).

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**THE IMPACT BEING...**

- Sex workers have higher burden of HIV.
- Police harassment forces sex workers to labour rights.
- Globally, sex workers have the right to labour rights.
- Criminalisation of sex work prevents HIV spread.
- One third of sex workers don’t carry condoms as they are used as evidence of illegal sex work.

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**THE BURDEN**

Sex workers have a major share of HIV epidemic burdens, with sex workers making up more than 15% of the HIV-positive population in Brazil.

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**HIV PREVALENCE**

- **Worldwide:** 0.8%
- **Sweden:** 0.9%
- **Sydney:** 0.8%
- **Tel Aviv:** 0.8%

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**HOW MUCH COULD HIV INFECTIONS BE AVOIDED?**

- **Decriminalisation alone:** 9–34% reduction
- **Combination with scale-up of condom use:** 21–45% reduction

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**MISCONCEPTIONS ABOUT SEX WORKERS**

- The myth is... Sex workers have lower levels of HIV than men who have sex with men (MSM).
- The impact is... Sex workers have higher burden of HIV.

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**THE LANCET series on HIV and sex workers**

- **Read the full series at www.thelancet.com/series/hiv-and-sex-workers**

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**SOURCES**

- UNAIDS/JC2502/1/E, revised November 2013.
- United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS.
- Strathdee SA, Crago A-L, Butler J, et al. Dispelling myths about sex workers and HIV. Lancet 2014; published online July 22. DOI: http:/ dx.doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(14)60975-8

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