

Inconsistent condom use for fellatio among female sex workers in Northern Sydney

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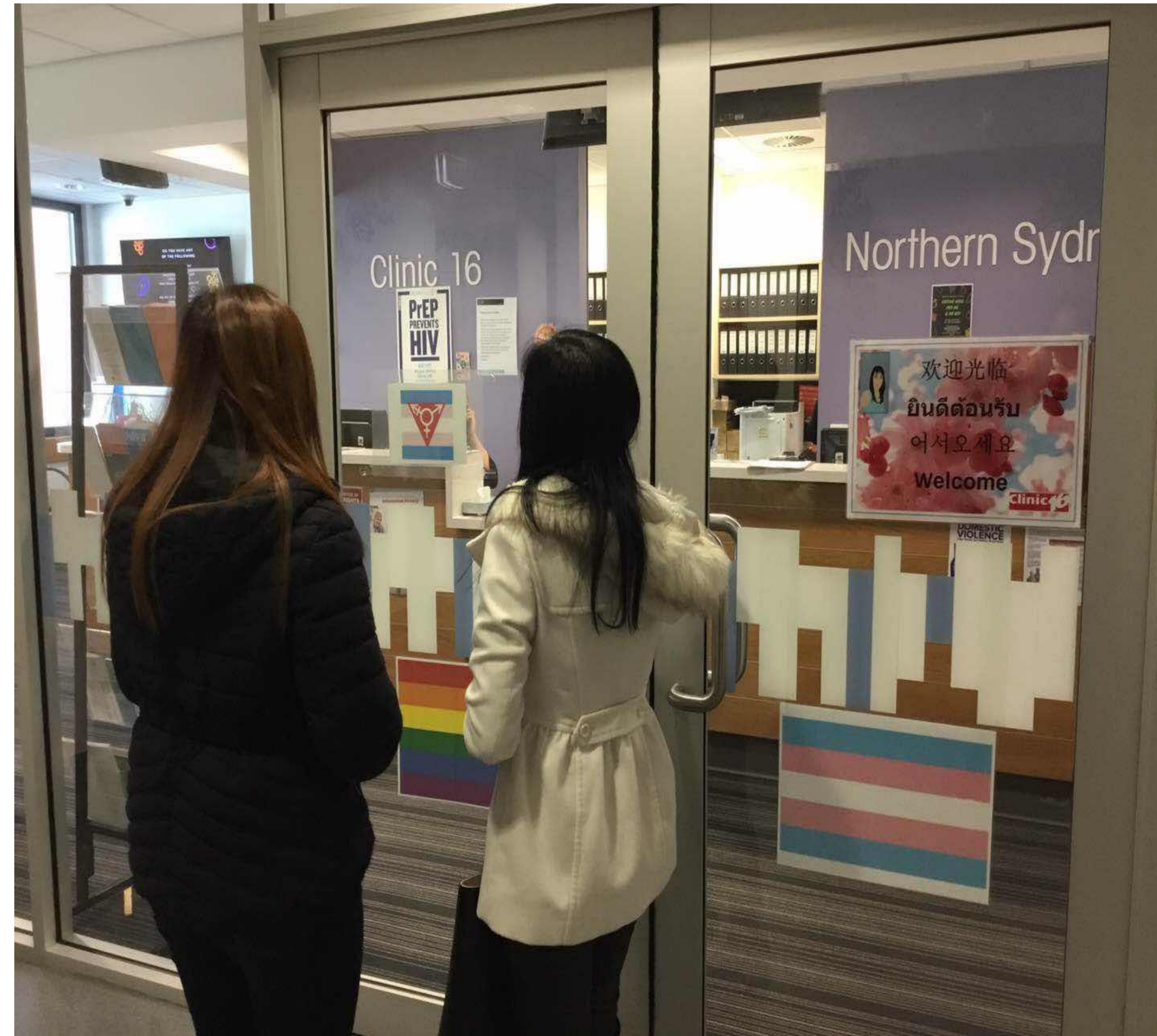
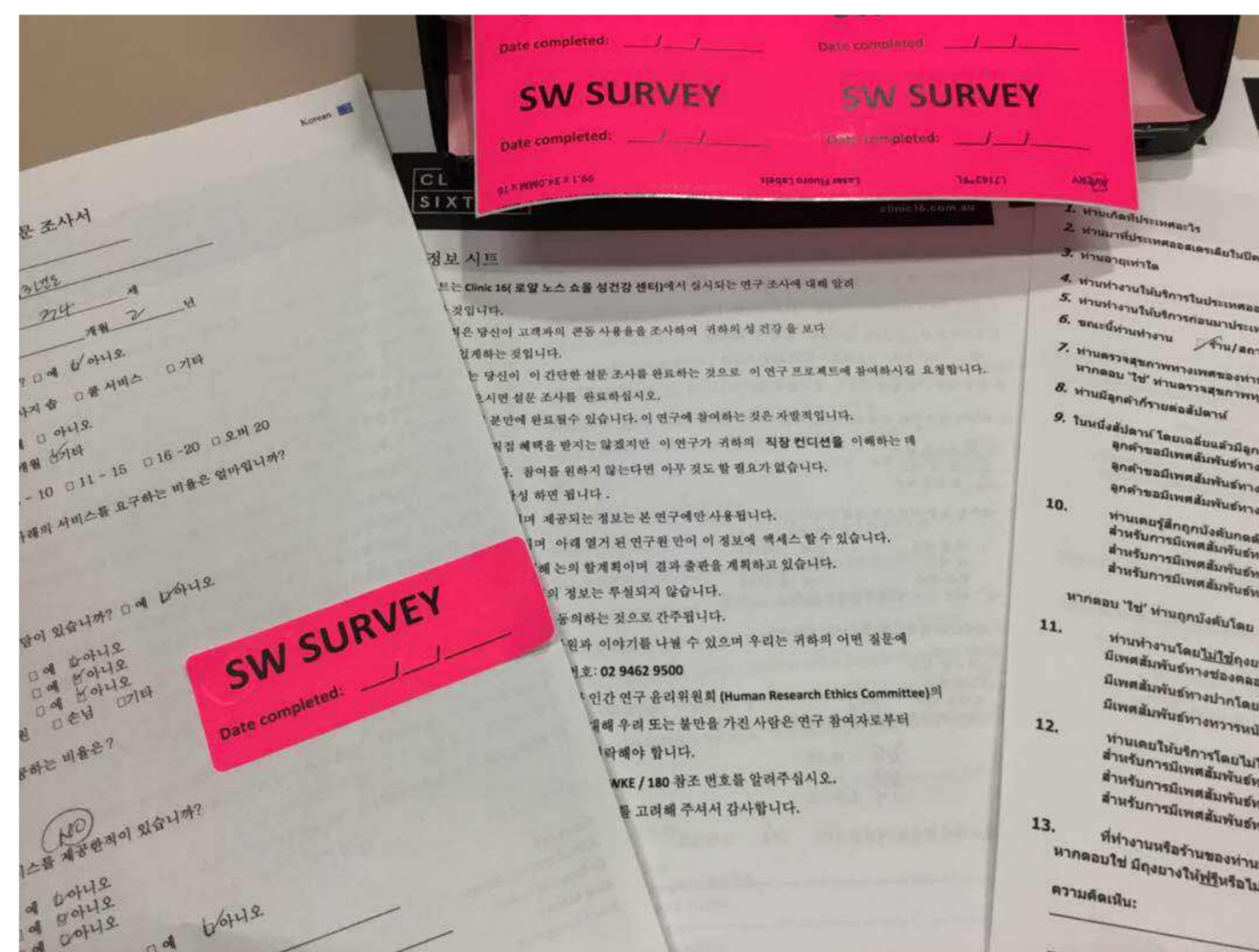
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Background

Safe sex practices among female sex workers (FSWs) are dynamic with many influences. In the last 10 years, FSWs in Sydney are more likely to have come from China and Korea than from Thailand, who were the dominant nationality of foreign FSWs previously.^{1,2,3} Chinese FSWs use condoms less frequently, especially for oral sex,^{3,4}. Northern Sydney Sexual Health Service (NSSHS) provides dedicated clinics and outreach in Chinese and Korean to FSWs in northern Sydney, and to English-speaking FSWs. We describe safe sex practices among FSWs attending our clinic.

Methods

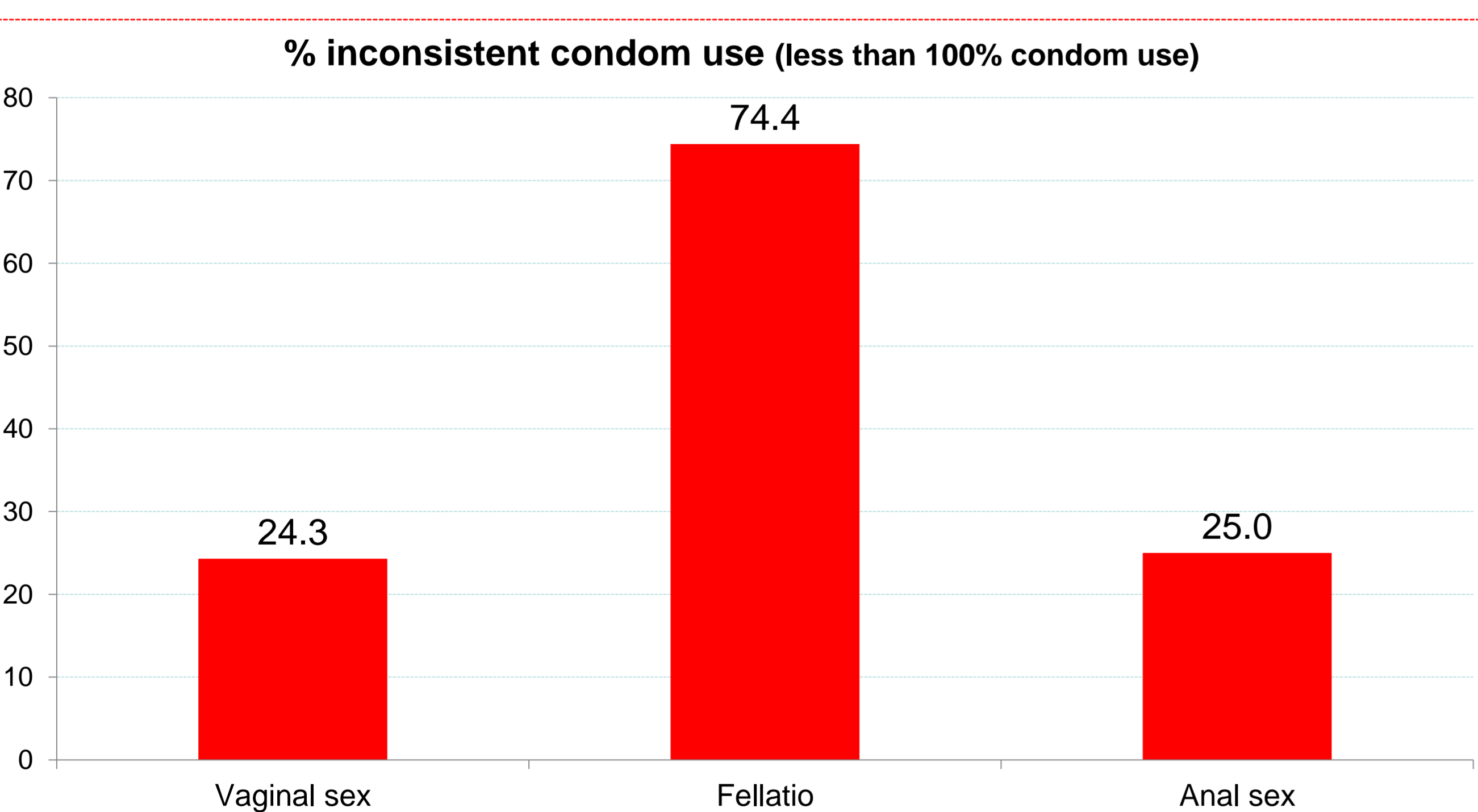
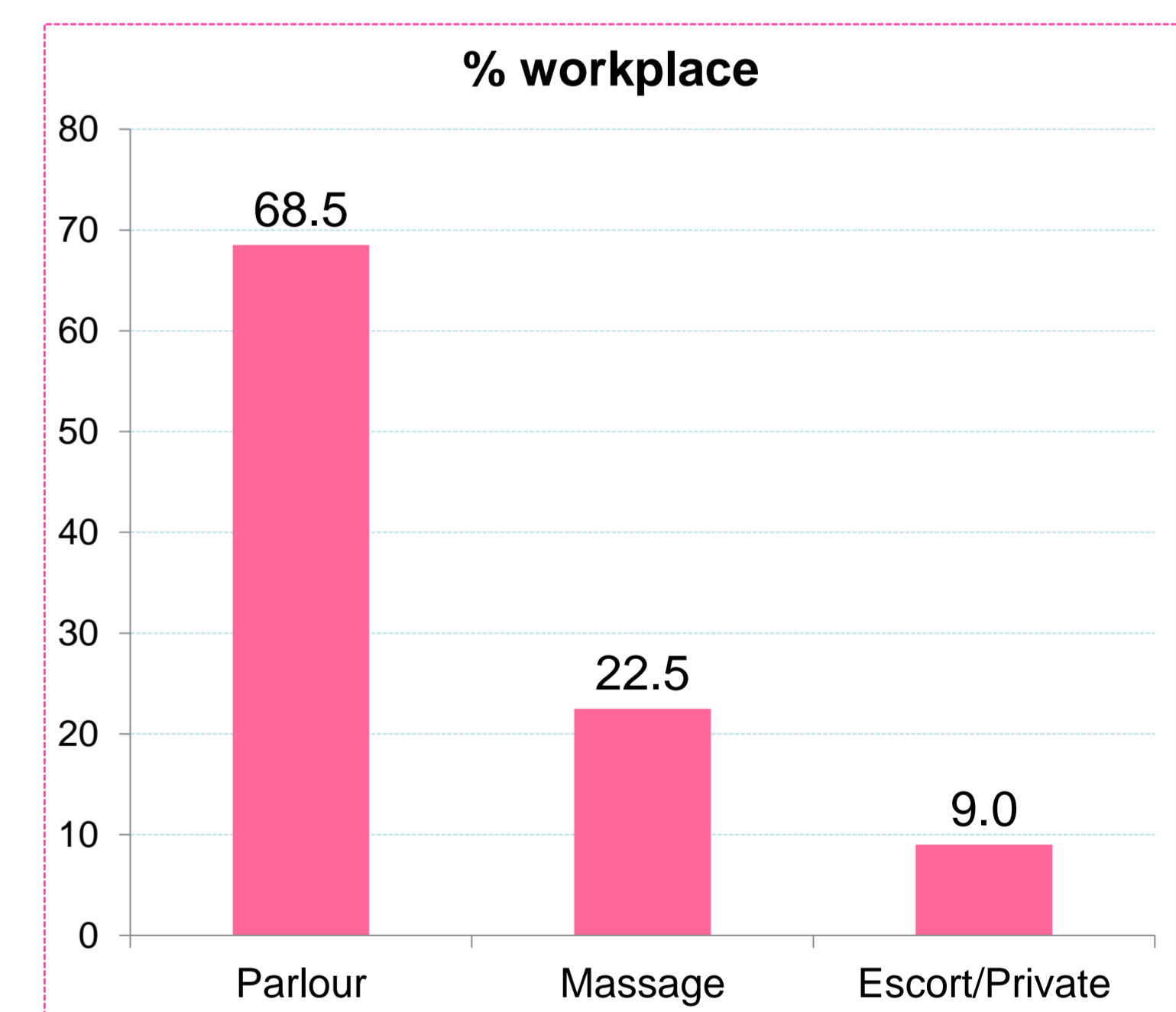
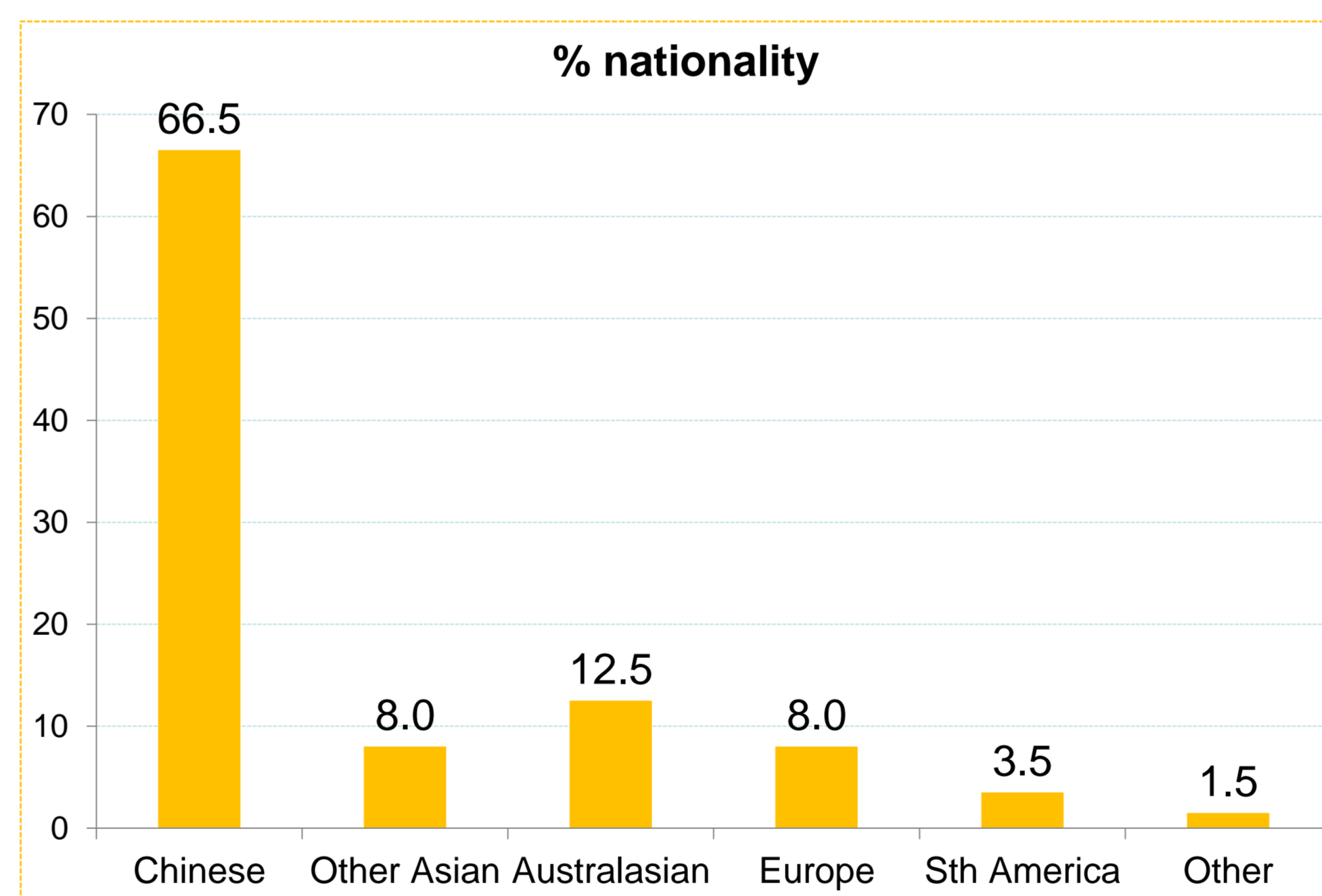
- We designed an anonymous questionnaire, translated into Chinese, Thai and Korean.
- This was administered to FSWs when attending our clinic.
- Logistic regression determined independent associations with inconsistent condom use for fellatio.



Results

Between August 2017-November 2018, 201 surveys were provided to FSWs; all were self-completed.

- Median age: 35 years (IQR 29-44)
- If born overseas, 88% not engaged in sex work before arrival in Australia.
- Majority were sex working for ≤12 months
- 99%, 98.5% and 8.5% of the FSWs reported vaginal sex, fellatio and anal sex respectively with clients.
- Clients requesting unprotected fellatio was reported by 95% of participants
- Approximately two-thirds reported feeling pressure to have unprotected vaginal and oral sex



Statistically significant independent associations with inconsistent condom use for fellatio as adjusted odds ratios (aOR):

	aOR	95% CI	P-value
age 30-39 years	12.5	2.35 - 66.1	0.003
age ≥40 years	7.94	1.44 - 43.6	0.017
sex working in Australia for ≤12 months	4.17	1.23 - 14.1	0.022
more than 15 clients per week	5.05	1.30 - 19.7	0.020
client requesting unprotected fellatio	1.02	1.00 - 1.04	0.044
offered more money for unprotected fellatio	84.4	7.8 - 904	<0.0001
feeling pressured to have unprotected vaginal sex	7.29	1.15 - 46.4	0.035

Discussion

Our study reveals considerably higher frequency of inconsistent condom use for fellatio than has been previously reported locally. Health promotion should focus on helping FSWs develop skills to deal with requests and pressure for unprotected fellatio.

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