

HAZARDS OF SEX WORK IN KAZAKHSTAN: DETENTION AND POLICE ABUSE OF WOMEN

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BACKGROUND

Economic instability in Kazakhstan has forced many women to engage in street-based sex work (decriminalized)

Globally, female sex workers are at an increased risk of sexual violence

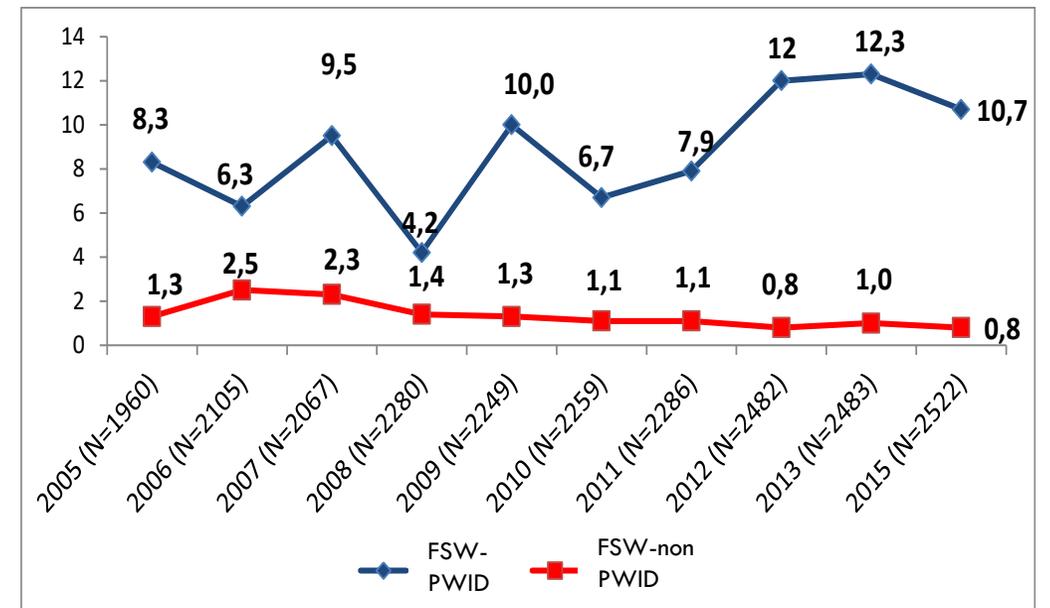
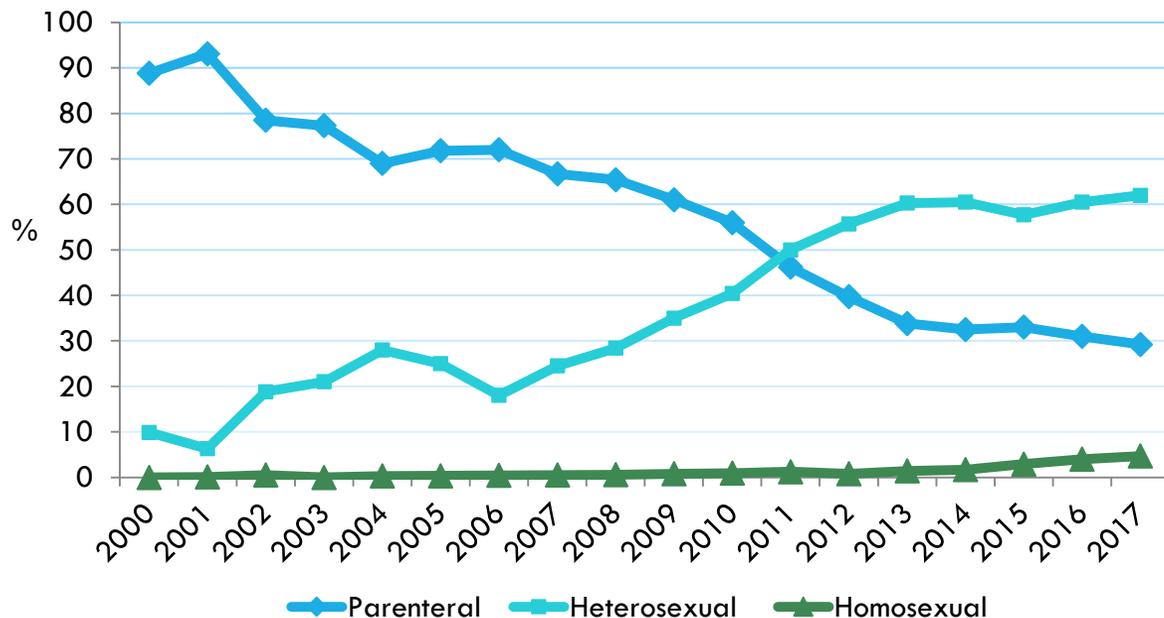
- Directly and indirectly increases HIV vulnerability
- Undermines effective HIV-prevention and intervention efforts

Overlapping risk factors related to sex work, substance use, incarceration creates a risk environment that enables police violence

Most studies examining police violence against FSW in Central Asia are qualitative or are descriptive due to the limited sample sizes that do not allow for statistical testing

FSW & HIV EPIDEMIC IN KAZAKHSTAN

- Sexual transmission of HIV on the rise (62% of new cases in 2017)
- Female sex workers (FSWs) have been identified as a key population in the global fight against HIV





Identify the prevalence and correlates of police detention and of police violence against women who use drugs and engage in sex work in Kazakhstan



Assess the relationship between recent detention, police violence and HIV risk

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

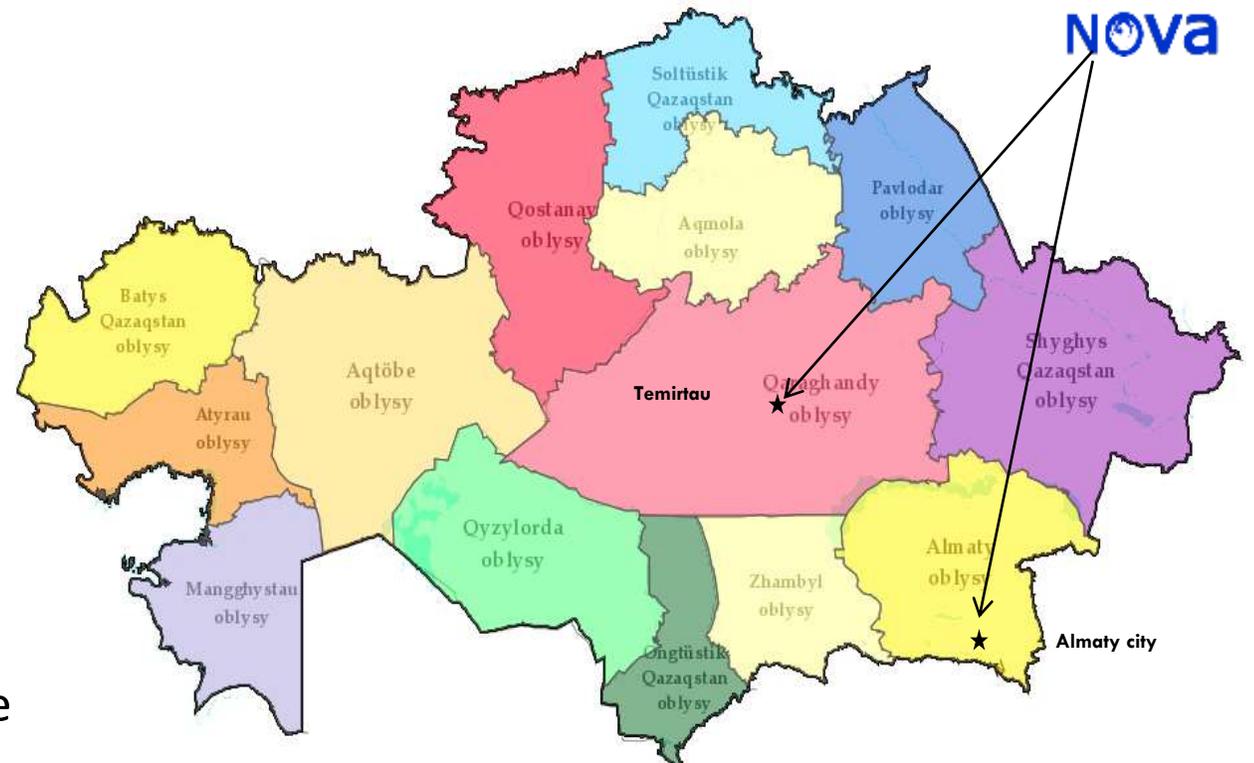
PROJECT NOVA

Aim: To examine the efficacy of a combined HIV and economic strengthening program for FSW who use drugs in decreasing:

- Cumulative incidence of *biologically confirmed* STIs and incidence of HIV/HCV
- Reported sexual and drug risk behaviors
- Monthly income from sex work

Project sites (RAC, 2017):

- **Almaty** (estimated # of FSW 6200; prevalence of HIV among FSW =1.1%)
- **Temirtau** (estimated # of FSW 200; prevalence of HIV among FSW =3.0%)

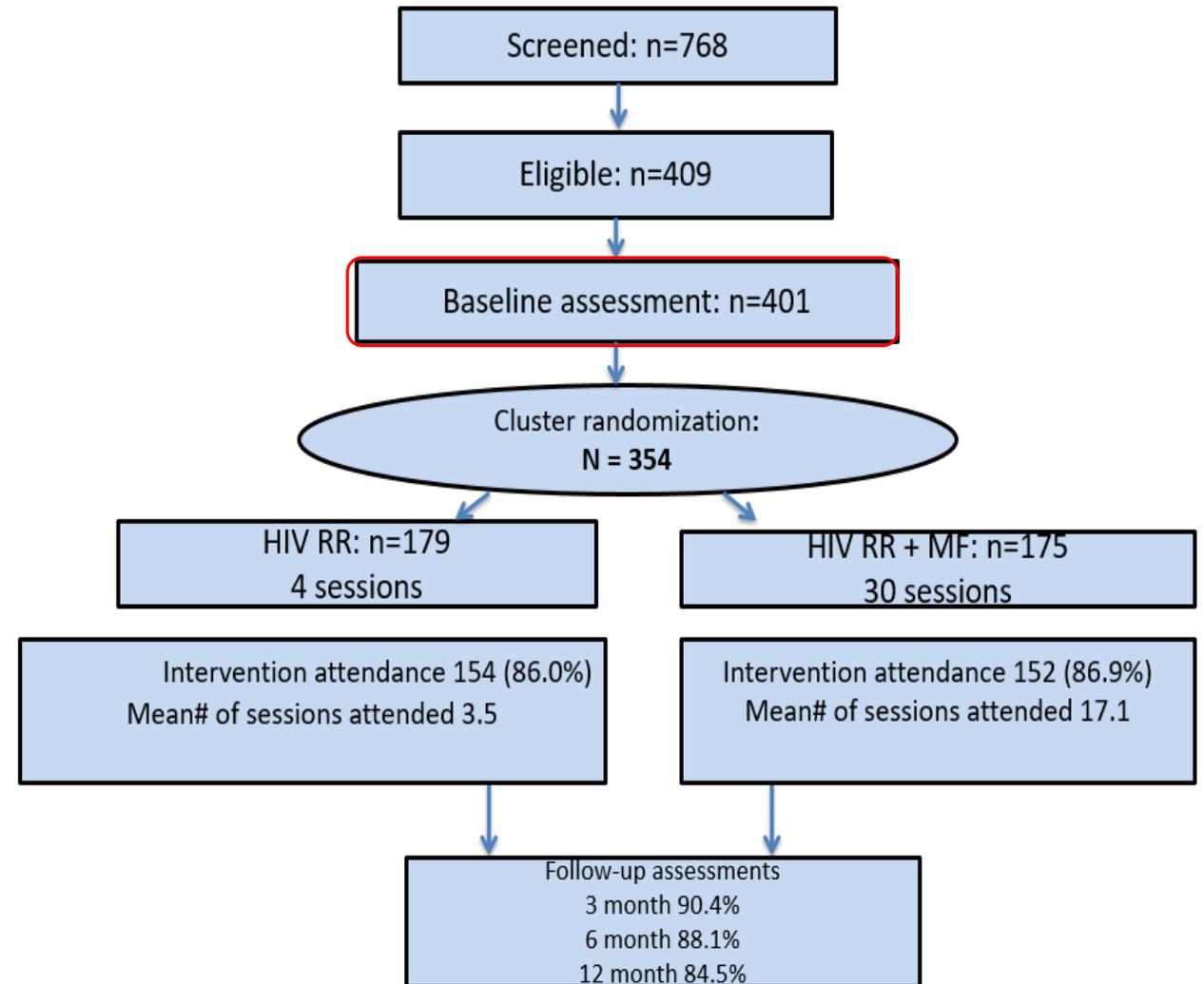


STUDY DESIGN

Eligibility criteria:

- Traded sex in past 90 days
- Drug use in past year
- Unprotected sex (any partner) in past 90 days
- Speak Russian
- Not planning to move for one year

Study dates: 2015-2019



Descriptive statistics of recent detention and police violence

Proportion of police violence subtypes to examine intersections of violence

Logistic regression examining correlates of police violence subtypes and associations with HIV risk factors

Logistic regression examining correlates of recent detention and associations with HIV risk factors

METHODS

Note: all models adjusted for study site, homelessness, and sex work characteristics

PARTICIPANT CHARACTERISTICS

Characteristics <small>*in past 90 days</small>	N (%)
Site: Almaty	255 (63.8)
Mean age [SD]	34.1 [8.4]
Homeless*	232 (58.0)

SEX WORK CHARACTERISTICS

Characteristics *in past 90 days	N (%)
Street-based	118 (29.5)
Mean years engaging in sex work [SD]	10.0 [7.4]
Mean number of commercial clients* [SD]	20.7 [39.8]
Work alongside other sex workers	168 (42.0)
Exchanged sex to avoid arrest*	18 (4.5)

HIV RISK FACTORS

Characteristics *in past 90 days	N (%)
Hazardous alcohol use	136 (34.0)
Injection drug use*	154 (38.5)
Needle sharing*	36 (9.0)
Self-reported STI*	85 (21.3)

RECENT DETENTION

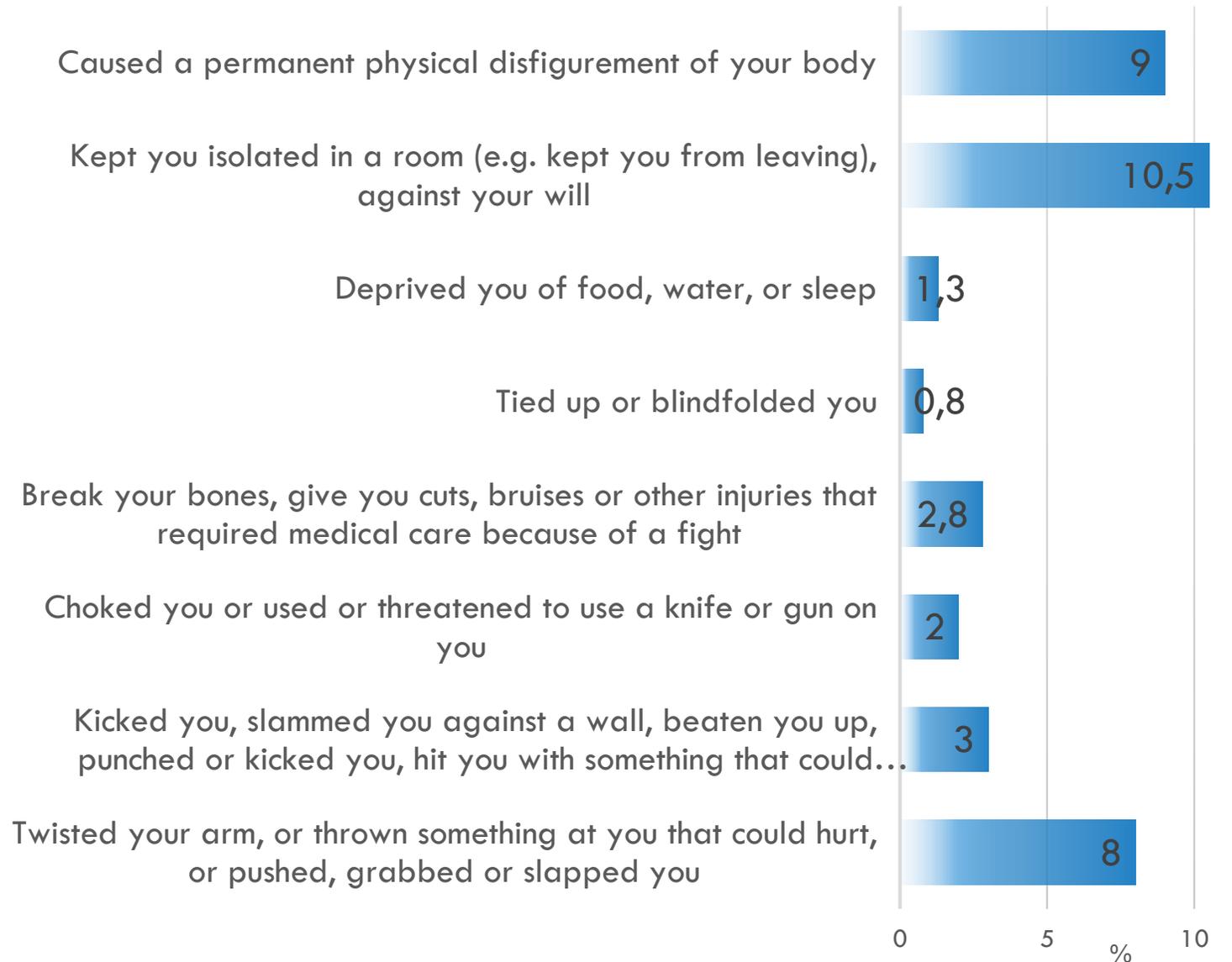
29%

	aOR (95%CI)
Homeless	1.80 (1.03, 3.14)
Number of commercial partners	1.33 (1.02, 1.74)
HIV RISK	
Hazardous alcohol use	2.13 (1.27, 3.57)
Needle sharing	2.47 (1.05, 5.80)
VIOLENCE	
Multiple forms of police physical violence**	2.09 (1.21, 3.63)
Multiple forms of police sexual violence**	0.58 (0.34, 1.00)

POLICE PHYSICAL VIOLENCE

20.3%

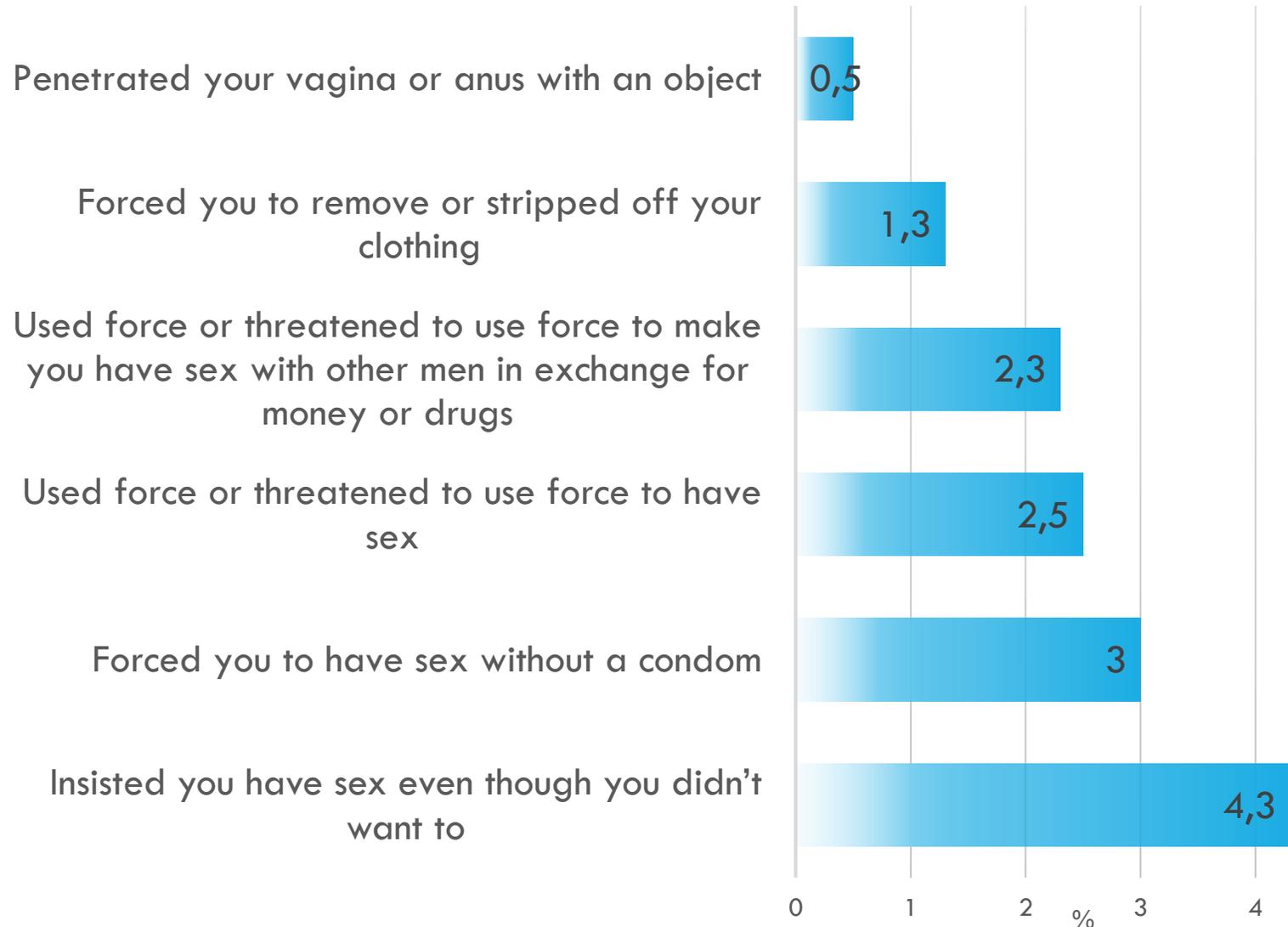
POLICE PERPETRATED PHYSICAL VIOLENCE IN PAST 90 DAYS



POLICE SEXUAL VIOLENCE

5.5%

POLICE PERPETRATED SEXUAL VIOLENCE IN PAST 90 DAYS



POLICE PSYCHOLOGICAL VIOLENCE

10%

POLICE PERPETRATED SEXUAL VIOLENCE IN PAST 90 DAYS

Prevented you from seeing family or friends, held you captive, stalked you, or verbally threatened to hurt you or your family

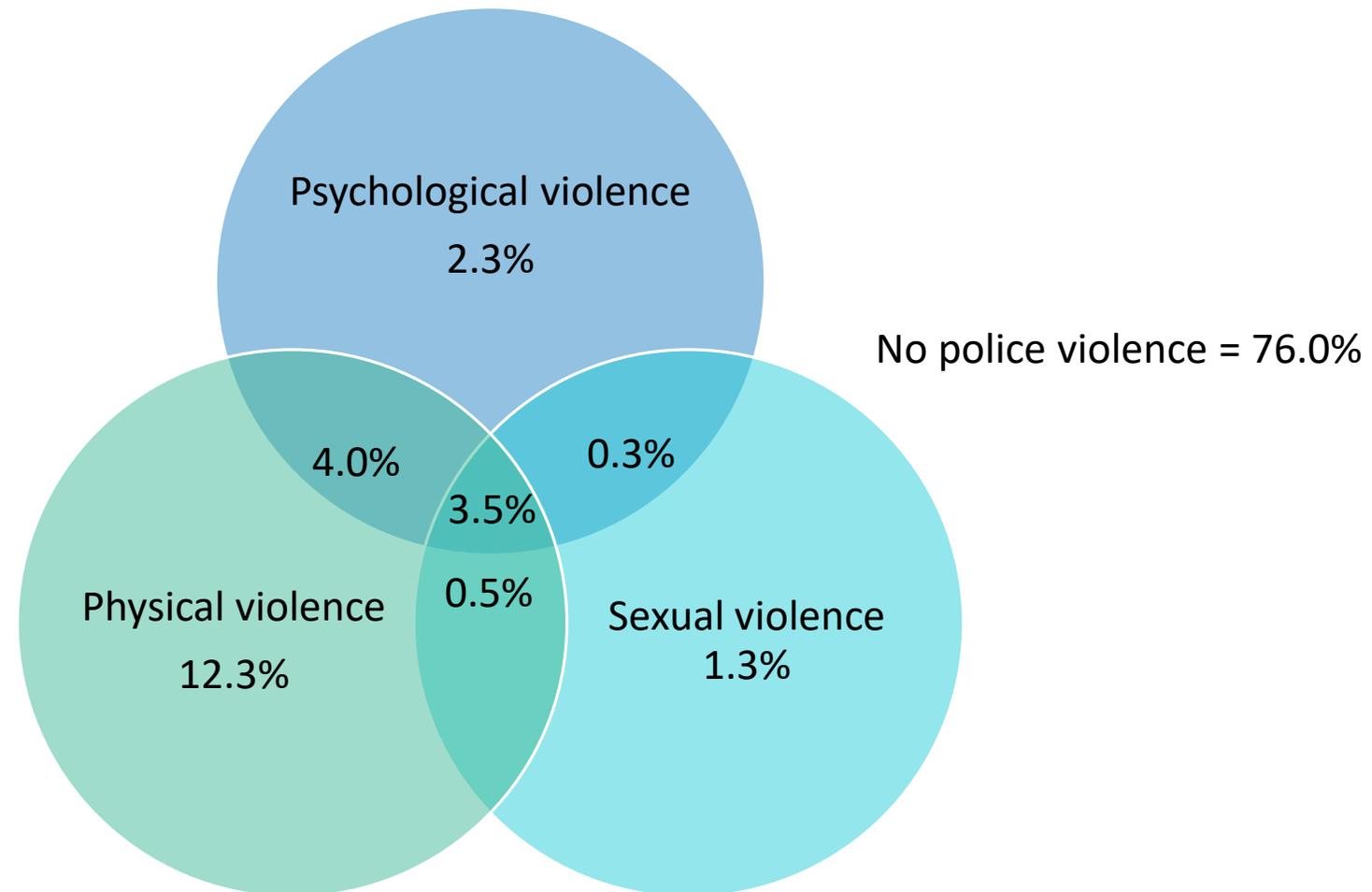
1,5

Called you insulting names, such as fat or ugly, slut or whore, destroyed something that belonged to you or accused you of being a lousy lover

9,8

0 2 4 6 8 10
%

INTERSECTIONS OF POLICE VIOLENCE IN PAST 90 DAYS



RESULTS: CORRELATES OF POLICE VIOLENCE

	Police Physical Violence aOR (95% CI)	
Homeless in past 90 days	2.11 (1.08, 4.11)	
Managed by boss	-	
Works alongside other sex workers	-	
Exchange sex to avoid arrest in past 90 days	-	
Detained in the past 90 days	-	
HIV RISK		
Hazardous alcohol use	2.46 (1.36, 4.49)	
Shared needle in past 90 days	4.03 (1.71, 9.50)	
STI in past 90 days	-	

RESULTS: CORRELATES OF POLICE VIOLENCE

	Police Physical Violence aOR (95% CI)	Police Sexual Violence aOR (95% CI)
Homeless in past 90 days	2.11 (1.08, 4.11)	-
Managed by boss	-	4.87 (1.63, 14.64)
Works alongside other sex workers	-	-
Exchange sex to avoid arrest in past 90 days	-	10.14 (2.79, 37.27)
Detained in the past 90 days	-	-
HIV RISK		
Hazardous alcohol use	2.46 (1.36, 4.49)	-
Shared needle in past 90 days	4.03 (1.71, 9.50)	-
STI in past 90 days	-	-

RESULTS: CORRELATES OF POLICE VIOLENCE

	Police Physical Violence aOR (95% CI)	Police Sexual Violence aOR (95% CI)	Police Psychological Violence aOR (95% CI)
Homeless in past 90 days	2.11 (1.08, 4.11)	-	-
Managed by boss	-	4.87 (1.63, 14.64)	-
Works alongside other sex workers	-	-	5.01 (1.83, 13.76)
Exchange sex to avoid arrest in past 90 days	-	10.14 (2.79, 37.27)	-
Detained in the past 90 days	-	-	3.13 (1.31, 7.45)
HIV RISK			
Hazardous alcohol use	2.46 (1.36, 4.49)	-	-
Shared needle in past 90 days	4.03 (1.71, 9.50)	-	-
STI in past 90 days	-	-	3.12 (1.37, 7.13)

CONCLUSION

Results indicate alarmingly high prevalence of GBV perpetrated by police and of detention of FSW who use drugs in Kazakhstan

Transactional sex with police may be used to avoid arrest or detention

Confirms police violence associated with HIV risk

- Police *physical* violence associated with homelessness, hazardous alcohol use and needle sharing
- Police *sexual* violence associated with lower odds of detention
- Police *psychological* violence is associated with STI diagnosis

Suggests that encounters with police may increase HIV vulnerability by undermining HIV prevention efforts

IMPLICATIONS

Examining police violence and detention will be an important first step in understanding the role police can play in HIV prevention work in Kazakhstan

Structural and community-led interventions to increase police training and sensitization are needed

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS



Ministry of Health of Kazakhstan



Republican (oblast and city) AIDS Centers



STI clinics



NGOs and communities of FSW and PLWH



Local government municipality agencies



Women – participants of our study



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