

**Reproductive Health and Gender Awareness in
Shenzhen's Migrant Population**
(Based on research within 10 Shenzhen enterprises)

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I. Background of Shenzhen City

With the intensified reform, opening-up and accelerated urbanization of China, an increasingly large proportion of China's rural population is moving into the cities, especially in the east and south east of China. These migrant workers play a critical role in cities' economic development. In Guangzhou, migrant workers generate more than 25 percent of the annual gross domestic product (GDP) ^[1] and this is very similar to its neighbour city, Shenzhen.

Shenzhen was established in 1979. Prior to that, Shenzhen was a county named Bao'an in Guangdong Province. The total population of Shenzhen was only about 314,100 in 1979, ^[2] however by the end of 2007, the population size had increased dramatically to 28 times that of 1979. Currently, Shenzhen has 1.71 million people with local hukou permits and 10.35 million migrant workers. ^[3] As such, Shenzhen has become the biggest migrants' city in China.

Shenzhen has six districts. Four districts are in the Special Economic Zone, which is located downtown. These include Futian, Luohu, Nanshan and Yantian. The other two districts, Bao'an and Longgang are located in suburban areas. Shenzhen is a city with one of the youngest populations in China. The average age of the whole population is less than 28 years old. ^[4] It also has the highest incidence of STIs. The prevalence of STIs in Shenzhen is 14 times higher than the national average. ^[5]

Migrant workers in Shenzhen are characterized by low education levels, endure poor working conditions and have low social status. More than 70 percent of migrant workers in Shenzhen are only educated to junior middle school and many do not receive even that level of education ^[6]. They typically work in tedious, physically demanding and low-income jobs ^[7] in low-tech and labour-intensive

industries such as hospitality, housekeeping, textile manufacturing and construction ^[8]. Their social status is much lower than the local residents ^[9]. Generally, they lack the power to negotiate with employers and influence any decision making both at the enterprise and government level ^[10].

II. Research Background

In order to better understand the vulnerabilities faced by migrant workers in Shenzhen, the International Labour Office for China and Mongolia (ILO) and the Shenzhen Family Planning Association (FPA) conducted a survey on HIV/STI, reproductive health, and gender among 3,029 migrant workers from ten companies in January 2011. This was complemented by a series of in-depth individual interviews held with 27 young migrant workers in February 2011.

This report documents and analyzes the vulnerabilities of Shenzhen's migrant worker population with regards to HIV/STI, reproductive health and gender equality before providing a series of recommendations on how to move forward with programs to address the primary needs of migrant workers.

III. Main Findings

1. Limited options available for occupying spare time

Many migrants said their work hours were very long and they had very little leisure time ^[11]. If they did have some leisure time, migrants reported that the activities they engaged in were boring. Research conducted by Ji Dongdong in Fuzhou showed that migrant workers' life after work was monotonous. The majority of workers would select watch TV programs (59.7 percent), some would sleep (43.3 percent), chat with hometown fellows (41.4 percent), read newspapers (36.7 percent), surf online (26.6 percent), listen to radio programs (21.9 percent) or play cards (18.5 percent) ^[12]. As a big city in China, Shenzhen has many established entertainment facilities for citizens including but not limited to cinemas, library, museum, karaoke, bars and tea houses. The study in Fuzhou suggested that migrant workers preferred to enjoy low cost or free entertainment activities ^[13] in their spare time and low wages are one of the key reasons that prevent them from

enjoying a greater spectrum of the entertainment facilities available in the city. According to research carried out by Guangdong Federation of Trade Unions in 2006, the monthly salary for migrants increased by only 68 Yuan in the past 12 years in the Pearl River Delta. The same research reported that the salary of migrant workers was only 54.9 percent of the amount earned by their counterparts in urban areas in Guangdong Province in 2006 ^[14]. Lou Chaohua's research in Shanghai suggested that because migrant workers' life after work was flat, forming friendships and relationships with their hometown fellows had become one of their key entertainment activities. This in turn may lead migrant workers to engage in high risk behaviors such as premarital or casual sex, or one night stands ^[15].

In addition, many migrant workers in Shenzhen work in remote places that are isolated from the city centre. The afterhours activities available to workers in these areas are even more limited. These areas are called Pure Industry Zones and typically very few local people live in these areas. Bao'an district is one example of these zones. More than 90 percent of the population in Bao'an is made up of migrant workers ^[16]. In Bao'an, migrant workers are limited to working in the big factories. Interviews with migrant workers in Bao'an reflected this issue.

"We have nothing to do after work, because there is nothing at all around the factory. If we want to go out for fun, or even go to supermarket, we have to go to Longgang Town or Pingshan Town. I need to get out of the big factory and go to bus stop. If I am lucky enough to get a bus on time, it will take me another at least 20 minutes to the town" (Female, 26 years old from Hunan Province)

Some migrant workers work in the hospitality industry and similarly, leisure activities available to them are very few.

"I am in a restaurant. It is really impossible for us to have any leisure time with friend or hometown fellows. You know we work when others finish their work and when we finish our work, others start to work or sleep... It is also impossible for us to make friends outside. We have no time to get together with others... The key entertainment for us is to watch TV. Sometime, the employer organizes party for us, but very few" (female, 27 years old from Hunan Province)

The social network for migrant workers is critically small. The majority of migrants only socialize with their hometown fellows or co-workers. Research in Fuzhou showed that migrant workers rely on their hometown fellows when they need help. For instance, 49.2 percent of migrant workers reported that they obtained their current job opportunity through the introduction of their hometown fellows ^[17]. Very few migrant workers extended their social network while living and working in the city. Research conducted by Yang Xusong showed that more than half of migrant workers only knew 1-2 persons in Shenzhen, 9.9 percent of migrant workers reported that they couldn't find a person to share their concerns or get emotional support when they were in need and 6.8 percent said they couldn't find anybody to shop, eat, play cards or chat when they wanted to socialize with others ^[18].

In addition to working tedious and menial jobs and lacking support networks, migrant workers face other challenges in their lives. For example, a study in 2005 in Shanghai found that 66.7 percent of migrant workers felt discrimination from local people ^[19]. Arriving in a new city, migrant workers have to adapt themselves to the new environment, look for job, deal with financial pressure as well as other challenges that arise when relocating to a new city. As a result, they are more likely to have psychological problems than local residents ^[20]. Research conducted by Li Xiaofang in 2004 found that 40.6 percent of migrants experienced anxiety and 33.9 percent suffered depression. Again, the incidence of these mental health issues was much higher amongst migrant workers than those in the local population.

2. Risk sexual behavior

2.1 Pre-marital sex, cohabitation and casual sex

Pre-marital sex was relatively common among the migrant workers surveyed. Among 1,555 unmarried migrants that participated in the ILO/FPA research (average age: 23.5 years), more than three quarters (78.6 percent) stated they had had sex in the past year (87.9 percent of males and 70.7 percent of females). This is largely consistent with previous studies such as that by Yang Kezhi which

found that 85.08 percent of male and 81.89 percent of female migrant workers had sex^[21].

Cohabitation was another common issue among migrant workers. Our research showed that 32.1 percent of unmarried migrants were living with their partner. This result is similar to that of another survey carried out by Shenzhen Jing Newspapers, which showed that 65.6 percent of male migrants and 34.4 percent of female migrants in Shenzhen were in cohabitation^[22]. The research conducted by Lou Chaohua in Shanghai found that one third of migrants who had sex with their partner were in cohabitation however 10 percent of them reported that they didn't have any plans to marry their partner^[23].

Research conducted by Chi Shujun found that 64.0 percent of unmarried migrants held a positive attitude towards cohabitation and thought living together was normal and acceptable^[24]. These attitudes towards cohabitation before marriage were also revealed throughout our individual interviews.

“After one or two months dating, many people decide to rent a place outside of the dorm. Only those girls without boyfriends will live in the dorm... I originally had 8 roommates, look at now, only 3 or 4 are still here. Eight out of ten couples are living together outside (of the dorm)”. (20 year-old, female from Guizhou Province)

“I rent a place at 500 Yuan per month... The dorms in the factory have lots of rules. It's much freer outside... My girl-friend often comes. Every week, we will spent two to three days together...when people start dating, having sex is natural...” (24 year-old male from Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region)

“I rent a place outside. It's a small apartment, 300 Yuan per month, including water and electricity bill. My girlfriend lives in a factory dorm on work day. She comes to me every Friday and we are together for each weekend.” (26 year-old man from Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region)

“My former girlfriend...moved to my place. We were together now...Actually it is very difficult for me. I was not very serious about the relationship. We come from

different provinces. I know it is almost impossible for us to be together in the future...” (24 year-old male from Hubei Province)

Casual sex is another serious issue among young migrant workers. In-depth individual interviews provided insight into the prevalence of casual sex.

“I have been seeing a girl for just one month and we have not had sex...but previously...I did have sex with a girl. She is my coworker, in another workshop. I didn’t really know much about her... It was a friend’s birthday and a dozen people threw a party for him. We got drunk and then I took the girl to a hotel... I knew what I was doing at the time. I used a condom, for both my safety and hers... I never regret that... Several months later, after a game of ball, I felt boring and called her to ask her eat out and she agreed. Afterwards we went to the hotel again. It was nothing... I know from the very beginning there’s no possibility for her to be my girlfriend.” (27 year-old male, from Guangdong Province)

“It takes about one week for my buddies to get to know a girl and have sex with her. Nothing serious, people around are all alike.” (23 year-old male, from Hubei Province)

“If they get to know each other through online chatting, it takes them about one week before they have sex. If the girl likes drinking and hanging out, it takes 1 or 2 days...” (24 year-old male, from Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region)

“We had an OSH focal point in the factory before. He was gone last year. He was in his thirties, and had a three months baby. He had sexual relationships with five girls in the factory...I was really shocked when I knew this. I came to him and what he said made me even more shocked. He said ‘I have had vasectomy. I would not hurt any of them...think about it, I had sex with someone, and she enjoyed it. Such a thing is about my giving and their taking, nothing wrong with it... Why I should be blamed?’ He liked smoking, it was just unbelievable, these girls even bought cigarettes as gift for him....” (HIV focal point in company)

Lou Chaohua proposed several root causes of the high incidence of premarital sex, cohabitation and casual sex among migrant workers in her research paper. Among these were that the majority of migrant workers are alone in the big cities

and lack emotional support from family. In this situation, making friends or forming relationships is of paramount importance to overcoming the challenges faced living in the city, share their concerns and get support. These friendships or relationships however often lead to sexual relationships. At the same time, moral rules that governed their relationships in their hometowns do not apply to the same extent in the city and workers make decisions on their own without thinking too much about how their family or neighbor will regard them as a consequence of their behavior. Lou also suggested that sexuality was one means by which some migrant workers could obtain further economic gain ^[25].

2.2 Unplanned pregnancy

Unplanned pregnancies are relatively common among migrant workers. In the research conducted, we found that 36.5 percent of respondents reported having an unplanned pregnancy with their sexual partner (35.2 percent of males and 37.6 percent of females) and this issue was raised repeatedly during individual in-depth interviews with migrant workers.

“...half a year later, Xiaoli got pregnant again. I told her it was not good for her to do abortion again and again. If it was okay, she should get married and have the baby. Later on I discovered that her boyfriend didn’t agree. He told me sex with Xiaoli was purely physical need and that he was not the only one to blame for the relationship as it took two people to have it...” (HIV focal point in a factory in Shenzhen)

“Three girls from the factory went roller skating and met three boys. They even didn’t know each other before, but they paired up on that day... Then one of the girls got pregnant and came to me for help. After hearing this story, I immediately talked to the two other girls.... But several months later, these two girls also became pregnant one after another... It really grieved me. I asked them how come? One of them said ‘When the boys ask for sex, we feel like we cannot say no. We cannot make them feel they lose face’” (HIV focal point in a factory in Shenzhen)

“Younger brother of my wife and daughter of my brother were classmates in primary school. They got together when they arrived in Shenzhen. They were both 23 years old. In the one and a half years they were together, they went to the hospital for abortions three times... They often fought. Finally they split up at the end of last year.” (38 year-old male from Hubei Province)

Rates of unplanned pregnancies among migrant workers appear to be consistently high. Research among migrant workers in Shanghai found that 40 percent of young migrant workers had experienced an unplanned pregnancy and approximately one third had experienced multiple unplanned pregnancies ^[26]. Another similar study in Shanghai showed that among 1100 female migrant workers aged from 15 to 24 years old, as high as 47.4 percent reported that they had had unplanned pregnancies ^[27].

The majority of unplanned pregnancies amongst migrant workers ended with abortion ^[28]. A study conducted in four cities (including Shenzhen) found that 38.7 percent of unmarried female migrants had had abortions, and of these, 32 percent had had 3 or more abortions and 22 percent had their first abortion before they turned 19 years old^[29]. Moreover, not all abortions are carried out in hospital settings. Among those unmarried migrant workers who had had an abortion, more than 30 percent underwent an abortion at home or in a private clinic ^[30]. In addition to these, migrant workers generally have low awareness of the appropriate timing for abortions to be performed. The same research showed that 46.3 percent of abortions were conducted in the third month of pregnancy and 21.7 percent were conducted even after the woman had been pregnant for more than three months^[31].

Attitudes of migrant workers towards abortion are worrisome. Research conducted in Shanghai showed that 67.5 percent of unmarried migrant workers thought abortion was understandable and acceptable (71.1 percent of male and 64.5 percent of female migrant workers) ^[32].

Part of the issue here is that migrant workers simply lack adequate knowledge about conception and contraception. According to studies in Guangzhou, Wuhan

and Chongqing, 57 percent of unmarried migrants reported that they didn't have knowledge surrounding pregnancy ^[33]. The ILO/FPA research showed that only 45.3 percent of respondents believed they understood menstruation (29.3 percent of males and 56.8 percent of females) and only 46.5 percent of unmarried migrant workers believed they understood "how children are made" (46.4 percent of males and 46.6 percent of females). Furthermore, the primary source of information about sex and reproductive health for migrant workers is unreliable. For male migrant workers, the main source of information was the internet whilst among women it was their boyfriend or spouse.

2.3 Multiple sexual partners

In the ILO/FPA research, most migrant workers did not report having had multiple sex partners in the past year. However, it should also be noted that a sizeable proportion of those surveyed did report having had multiple sex partners in the past year and this was more common among male migrant workers than female migrant workers (28.0 percent of men versus 14.4 percent of females.) Although not common, the practice of having multiple sex partners among a small subset of the migrant worker population is concerning given that those who engage in this behavior have an increased risk of contracting STIs.

Table 2.3.1 Number of sex partners migrant workers had in the past 12 months

Number of sex partners in the past year	Male		Female		Total	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
One	849	72.0	1270	85.6	2119	79.6
Two	144	12.2	113	7.6	257	9.7
Three	89	7.5	39	2.6	128	4.8
Four	37	3.1	19	1.3	56	2.1
Five	13	1.1	12	0.8	25	0.9
Six	47	4.0	30	2.0	77	2.9
Total	1179	100.0	1483	100.0	2662	100.0

Among the unmarried migrant workers, a total of 78.6 percent had had sex and, of these, 76.5 percent had one fixed sex partner (70.7 percent of males and 82.6 percent of females), and 23.5 percent reported multiple sex-partners (29.3 percent of males and 17.4 percent of females).

Table 2.3.2 Number of sex partners unmarried migrant workers had in the past 12 months

Number of sex partners in the past year	Male		Female		Total	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
One	446	70.7	489	82.6	935	76.5
Two	77	12.2	47	7.9	124	10.1
Three	46	7.3	22	3.7	68	5.6
Four	26	4.1	10	1.7	36	2.9
Five	7	1.1	7	1.2	14	1.1
Six	29	4.6	17	2.9	46	3.8
	631	100.0	592	100.0	1223	100.0

These figures are lower than previous studies on the sexual behavior of migrant workers. For instance, Wang *et al.* found that 47.3 percent of migrant workers surveyed had two or more sex partners ^[34] and Li reported multiple partner rates of 47.4 percent among migrant workers in Shenzhen ^[35]. As with this current study, Li also found that men were more likely to have multiple sexual partners than women and the rate was the same for unmarried migrant workers as compared to their married counterparts ^[36]. Another study in STI clinics in Shenzhen found that 62 percent of migrants patients reported multiple sexual partners, whilst among local residents the rate was 37 percent ^[37].

2.4 Commercial sex

Aside from multiple sex-partners, commercial sex is also occurring within Shenzhen's migrant population, albeit at relatively low levels. Wang *et al.* found that approximately 8.2 percent of male migrant workers in Shenzhen had engaged in commercial sex ^[38] while Cai Wende reported that 6 percent of migrant workers in Shenzhen had utilized commercial sex services ^[39].

Use of commercial sex services is accompanied by a laissez-faire attitude towards commercial sex that is reflective of attitudes held broadly among migrant workers. One 2007 study found that 32.8 percent of migrants in Shenzhen believed commercial sex is "nothing serious" while 9.2 percent believed that "commercial sex can help release tension and ease emotional distress" and 1.7 percent reported their first experience of sex was with a commercial sex worker

[40]. These kinds of attitudes were reflected in the individual in-depth interviews in the ILO/FPA study.

“Nowadays, hair dressing salons and foot massage bars all provide commercial sex services... There are girls in the street too. Street girls are very cheap, 10 to 20 Yuan for a night. I used to have a friend in the factory. He was in his thirties and unmarried. He often visited the female sex workers.” (38 year-old male from Hubei Province)

“Majority of my co-workers spend spare time with their girlfriends. Those who don’t have girlfriends play poker or eat together. Some people also visit female sex workers. One of my roommates in my dorm, he asked me to hang out with him several times. He said ‘those girls are in marvelous shape. You pay 200 Yuan and then you get to play with a girl’. I haven’t been with him yet. I don’t know whether I’ll visit a sex worker in the future. I can’t promise that I won’t. But at least not now.” (24 year-old male from Hubei Province)

“I visited... I had to ride on a bus for 1 hour from the place I work to get there. If I feel good about the girl the first time, then I will visit her again...300 Yuan per time. This (visiting sex workers) is not a big deal. Our team leader also goes there. A bunch of people eat together, go to Karaoke and then find some fun with our team leader and coworkers. Normally 7 or 8 people together... One of my colleagues goes there at least twice a month... It’s normal to visit female sex workers after one has a girlfriend or has gotten married. I maybe will go after marriage too. Maybe it’s an addiction. Compared to girlfriend, the service there is better... If one day my team leader and coworkers stop going, I’ll stop. Actually, I never went there alone. It feels better when we go together. Such a thing should not be done without any moral rule! When we have long holidays, for example, for 3 or 5 days, we will go and visit female sex workers.” (23 year-old man from Hubei Province)

Migrant workers may access commercial sex services through a number of different avenues ranging from approaching prostitutes on the streets to visiting brothels operating out of legitimate establishments such as Karaoke bars, hair dressing salons, beer bars and others^[41]. The use of commercial sex services is

noteworthy as rates of STIs among sex workers are known to be high. Research among sex workers in a reeducation center in Shenzhen showed that more than 20 percent of sex workers have at least one STI ^[42]. Commercial sex therefore constitutes one channel through which migrant workers may contract STIs.

2.5 Forced sex

Forced sex refers to either sex or sexual contact made without consent. Female migrant workers are known to be a particularly vulnerable group in the city in this respect as they have low awareness of self protection ^[43] and, of the women who took part in the ILO/FPA study, 12.7 percent reported that they had been forced to have sex in the past.

Table 2.4.1 Forced sex

Has forced sex been encountered?	Frequency	%
Yes	188	12.7
Seldom	83	5.6
No	935	81.3
No answer	6	0.4
Total	1483	100.0

These figures are similar to those of other studies on female migrant workers. Zhao *et al.* reported that as many as 15.6 percent of respondents had been forced to have sex at some point ^[44]. The figures were even higher in Wu *et al.*'s research, which found that 18.1 percent of unmarried female migrant workers had been forced to have sex. Zhao suggested that forced sex can be extremely detrimental to the victim, reducing self esteem and increasing the likelihood of multiple sexual partners later in life. In many cases the offenders are people with whom the victim is already familiar with, including boyfriends ^[45]. Despite this, current education and training targeted at female migrant workers in China rarely incorporates elements on identifying and coping with sexual harassment or violence.

2.6 STIs and reproductive health

Migrant workers are known to be at higher risk of contracting STIs than the general population. A wide body of research, including studies conducted in the Shenzhen area support this conclusion. For example, Lv *et al.* conducted research in Longgang District in Shenzhen and found that STI reporting cases were closely linked with the movement of migrant workers. During the Spring Festival period in January and February, when migrant workers leave Shenzhen for their hometowns, the number of reported cases of STIs drops dramatically. Conversely, in March when migrant workers return to Shenzhen, the number of STI cases reported starts to increase. The number of STI cases reported peaks in June and July^[46]. Zhao Gengli's research in four cities including Shenzhen found that the STI prevalence rate among migrant workers was 9.7 percent^[47]. Cheng *et al.* conducted a study of 300,000 pregnant women in Shenzhen and found that 89.5 percent of pregnant women with syphilis are either members of the transient population or migrant workers, while only 10.5 percent were local residents^[48].

In addition to STIs, young migrant workers are more likely to suffer from a number of other reproductive health issues. A 2006 study by Wu *et al.* on young migrant women in 12 enterprises in a district of Shenzhen found that 64.0 percent had one or more infections of the reproductive tract^[49], whilst another study by Lou on unmarried migrant workers in Shanghai found that of those who had had sex, 32.8 percent of men and 38.2 percent of women had either reproductive tract infections or STIs in the past year^[50].

Although STIs and reproductive health are serious issues among migrant workers, this group visits the outpatient departments of Shenzhen's hospitals less than half as often as members of the local urban population^[51]. A study by Ye Jian *et al.* on male unmarried migrant workers in 4 factories in a district of Shenzhen found that only 22.8 percent of those experiencing discomfort in their urethra, increased frequency of urination and dysuria had received treatment^[52]. Liu *et al.* did research in Guangzhou and found that 52.5 percent of female migrant workers went to the general hospital for treatment, whilst 37.0 percent went to private clinics and 10.5 percent bought drugs over the counter when they were sick with reproductive illness^[53]. This suggests that although migrants are at increased risk, they are less likely to receive the care they require.

2.7 Condom use

The use of condoms is essential for protection against the spread of STIs, HIV and unwanted pregnancies. However, just under a quarter (22.8 percent) of all migrant workers reported never using a condom (23.5 percent of males and 22.3 percent of females) whilst only 24.1 percent used condoms consistently (22.2 percent of males and 25.6 percent of females).

Table 2.5.1 Condom use

How often are condoms used during sex?	Male		Female		Total	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Never	277	23.5	330	22.3	607	22.8
Sometimes	582	49.4	691	46.6	1273	47.8
Consistently	262	22.2	380	25.6	642	24.1
No answer	58	4.9	82	5.5	140	5.3
Total	1179	100.0	1483	100.0	2662	100.0

Similar figures were observed among unmarried migrant workers. Out of this group, 21.5 percent never used a condom (22.3 percent of males and 20.6 percent of females), whilst 28.5 percent used a condom consistently (22.7 percent of males and 28.5 percent of females).

Table 2.5.2 Condom use among unmarried respondents

How often are condoms used during sex?	Male		Female		Total	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Never	141	22.3	122	20.6	263	21.5
Sometimes	308	48.8	228	38.5	536	43.8
Consistently	143	22.7	206	34.8	349	28.5
No answer	39	6.2	36	6.1	75	6.1
Total	631	100.0	592	100.0	1223	100.0

Rates of condom use among migrant workers visiting sex workers also appear to be low. In some instances, rates are as low as 18 percent ^[54]. Despite this, respondents to our survey gave conflicting accounts about the frequency of condom use when visiting sex workers.

“Some of my friends like to visit female sex workers. If one uses a condom, then the price is 60 to 80 Yuan, otherwise, the price doubles. I have a friend in the

factory I used to work in. He was in his 30s, unmarried and often visited female sex workers. He said he could tell whether those girls had disease. When the girl was all right, he didn't use a condom.” (38 year-old man from Hubei Province)

“Some people I know visited female sex workers, but they all used condoms. If you don't use it, the girl would require that...” (23 year-old man from Hubei Province)

2.8 Sources of knowledge about sex and reproductive health

Based on the results of our survey, many migrant workers appear to depend upon unreliable sources for information about sex and reproductive health. The majority of male migrant workers primarily received their information either online or through friends while female migrant workers largely relied on their boyfriends or spouses.

Table 2.8.1 Sources of knowledge about sex and reproductive health

Source of knowledge about sex/ reproductive health	Male		Female	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Internet	292	22.9	289	16.5
Friends	291	22.8	261	14.9
School	262	20.5	320	18.2
Sexual partner	177	13.9	476	27.1
Other	140	11.0	250	14.3
Parents	100	7.8	127	7.2
Refuse to answer	13	1.0	31	1.8
Total	1275	100.0	1754	100.0

Neither the internet nor friends can be considered adequate sources of information about sex and reproductive health. The reliance of migrant workers upon such sources points to a systematic problem that may well underlie other issues discussed in this report, particularly those relating to high-risk behavior and perceptions of low-risk. The reliance of more than a quarter (27.1 percent) of

female respondents upon their boyfriends and spouses for information suggests a gendered dimension to this issue that may contribute to the increased vulnerability of female migrant workers.

3. Gender, women and vulnerability to HIV/STIs

Inequality based on gender¹ makes women uniquely vulnerable to both STIs and HIV. Ma *et al.* analyzed STI prevalence data in Bao'an District Shenzhen in the period of 1990-2002 and found that STI prevalence among female migrant workers was increasing dramatically. For example in 1995, STI prevalence among male migrant workers was 2.36 times that of female migrant workers, however this figure decreased to 1.16 in 2002^[55]. Guangdong CDC carried out research in 2010 and found that female migrant workers were more vulnerable than male migrant workers to contracting HIV in recent years, the percentage of female PLHIV (People living with HIV) increased from 12.54 percent in 2000 to 23.58 percent in 2009^[56]. It is worth exploring the attitudes, perceptions, stereotypes and inequalities surrounding gender in more depth so as to better assess the vulnerabilities of male and female migrant workers.

3.1 Stereotypes of gender – “Man for the field and women for the hearth”

*“Man for the field and woman for the hearth;
Man for the sword and women for the needle.
Man to command and woman to obey.”*

Traditional attitudes towards gender in China assign distinct roles to men and women in the economic, political and sexual arenas. These often require women to adopt a passive role within family life with an excessive dependence on their husband or boyfriend that leads to increased vulnerability with regards to HIV and STIs^[57].

¹ Gender is a socially constructed concept distinct from sex. While sex refers to the biological differences between males and females, gender refers to the socially defined characteristics, roles, activities and responsibilities of men and women.

When female migrant workers move to the city, find work and earn an income of their own, they no longer subscribe to the traditional, gender-based division of labour ^[58]. This change was reflected in the responses of female migrant workers to our survey. Over two thirds of female respondents (67.1 percent) did not agree with the traditional division of labour, as compared to just 49.8 percent of male respondents. Female migrant workers were more likely to be aware of issues surrounding gender equality than their male counterparts.

Table 3.1.1 Respondents view on the traditional division of labour

Do you agree with the traditional division of labour?	Male		Female		Total	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Agree	630	49.4	558	31.8	1188	39.2
Disagree	635	49.8	1177	67.1	1812	59.8
No answer	10	0.8	19	1.1	29	1.0
Total	1275	100.0	1754	100.0	3029	100.0

These attitudes amongst female migrant workers appear to differ significantly from those of their rural counterparts and may signal a shift in thinking when migrants begin working in the cities. Research by Liu Tieying *et al.* found migrant women hold different views towards the status of women within the family than those working on the farms. In their study, 52.6 percent of female migrant workers felt that it was unimportant whether a husband or wife earned more, 12.84 percent believed that women should have a higher income than their husband and 70 percent agreed that women should have the same responsibility for family as the man does ^[59].

“It’s better for a couple to share the housework. If only the woman attends to household matters, she will be isolated from society, and the couple’s relationship will become unbalanced. If a woman doesn’t have her own work but only takes care of the children, she will lose her ego and her husband will ignore her presence.” (26 year-old woman from Hunan Province)

“Nowadays, men and women are equal. When we are together, he cooks. It’s his business. After we get married, it will be the same. Actually, he couldn’t cook but he learnt. I don’t want to get busy in the kitchen. We have talked about this. After we have gotten married, we plan to share chores like laundry and cooking equally.” (22 year-old woman from Hubei Province)

However, attitudes among male migrant workers about gender equality appeared to vary.

“For housework, the one able to do it will do it, even if that is the man. I can do the laundry, cook and mop the floor. So I will take turns with my girlfriend to do that!” (24 year-old man from Guangdong Province)

“I agree with the statement ‘man for the field and woman for the hearth’. This is an accurate description of my current situation. I am a bit man-centered. My girlfriend takes care of all the housework.” (24 year-old man from Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region)

Several of the women interviewed did not rely financially on a husband or boyfriend but instead demonstrated a high level of confidence in their own economic independence.

“I also want to take care of the housework, but I have to consider the reality. When my husband’s salary can’t cover the daily expenditure of the family, I must help him and take some of the burden off his shoulders.” (27 year-old woman from Hunan Province)

3.2 Gender inequality and sex

Gendered inequality based on sex where the power balance favors men has the potential to put women at risk of contracting STIs and HIV. This imbalance puts men at the center of the decision as to when, where, with whom and in which way to have sex with a woman^[60]. For this reason, it is encouraging to see that gender awareness among female migrant workers appears to be rising. Of the female

migrant workers that took part in our survey, 63.6 percent thought that men and women should have equal autonomy when it comes to sex.

3.2.1 Views on autonomy with regards to sex

Who should hold greater autonomy with regards to sex	Male		Female		Total	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Male	433	34.0	396	27.4	829	27.4
Female	100	7.8	130	7.6	230	7.6
Shared	734	57.6	1183	63.3	1917	63.3
No answer	8	0.6	45	1.7	53	1.7
Total	1275	100.0	1754	100.0	3029	100.0

Interviews with both male and female young migrant workers touched upon topics relating to autonomy and sex. In many cases they seemed to illustrate a trend towards increasing autonomy for young female migrant workers.

“One of my former classmates didn’t have sex with his girlfriend because she said she would not have sex before marriage... actually, whether or not to have sex is really up to girl. In a relationship, if girl keeps saying no, man can’t force her. It only happens when they both agree.” (24 year-old man from Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region)

“Many of my friends believed when two people feel right, sex is normal, natural and common. I asked them if they considered the consequences. I intuitively can’t accept this attitude. After all, it’s just a relationship and you don’t know who will be the last person and marry you. Having sex with one person after another is not good for you. What if you get pregnant? You can’t always have a condom at hand when you have sex.” (27 year-old women from Guangdong Province)

Some young female migrant workers were very aware of the benefits of condom use and showed their capacity to initiate condom use during sexual intercourse.

“The first time (we had sex) was after we had eaten snacks and drank mid night outside... He was drunk and I had to take care of him...so we went to a hotel nearby... He woke up after sleeping and came out for shower... I wanted to refuse, but since we were ready to meet each other’s parents and thought we would be together anyway...We used a condom. I asked (to use a condom)

because I was so young (19 years old) and worried about getting pregnant...” (27 year-old-girl from Hunan Province)

“I asked her for sex... She said ‘It’s too early, isn’t it?’ I said ‘I will certainly marry you.’ She asked ‘Would you mind, if I am not a virgin?’ I said ‘no’. She said ‘Really? You are not fooling me? And afterwards you dump me?’ I said ‘no, I am serious’. We used a condom. She was the one that asked. I was not surprised. She was very young then, what if getting pregnant...” (24 year-old man from Hubei Province)

Our interviews also revealed changing attitudes among many male migrant workers towards their girlfriends. These changing attitudes among male migrant workers appear to be linked to a more general shift towards equal autonomy when it comes to sex.

“I don’t care about her past. What I care is how good she treats me now... Nearly all women coworkers around have boyfriends. I don’t believe any of them are still virgins. At such an age, I don’t believe they are. If a girl is, it must be that she is very conservative and people don’t like her... If you want to find a virgin, go to kindergartens and book one... Virgin or not, it doesn’t matter...” (24 year-old man from Hubei Province)

“I don’t care about her past... Virgins must be rare nowadays... They must be old-minded... I don’t discriminate on this ground. If she’s a virgin, then she has had little experience in handling relationships, and it’s hard to be together with such a girl.” (24 year-old man from Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region)

3.3 Vulnerability to HIV/AIDS among female migrant workers

Nowadays in China, approximately only 30 percent of migrant workers are female^[61]. However in Shenzhen, Kong *et. al* found that the number of female migrant workers was 1.27 times higher than that of their male counterparts in 2010.

Although awareness of gender equality among female migrant workers is improving, they remain vulnerable to HIV and STIs. In many cases, this vulnerability to HIV is linked to a number of commonly shared characteristics among female migrant workers.

The first of these is a low education level. All China Women’s Federation carried out research in 2000 and found that the education levels of females were much lower than those of males, especially in rural areas. For females in rural areas, only 58.8 percent were educated to primary school level with many not even receiving that level of education. In rural areas, the illiteracy rate of females was as high as 13.6 percent^[62]. As the majority of migrant workers come from rural areas, Shenzhen faces the same challenge as rural areas in that women generally have low education levels. According to the ‘*Report on General Investigation of Women in Shenzhen*’ by the Shenzhen Women’s Federation, most women in Shenzhen are educated to senior middle school level or below, which is below the national average^[63]. The majority of female migrant workers also do not have occupational skills, with as many as 70 percent lacking special skills^[64]. This low skill level combined with a low education level serves to marginalize female migrant workers in the city.

3.3.1 Education level of women in Shenzhen

Category	People (10 thousand)	Percent	Average length of education (years)
Local women	12.09	5.5	9.13
Migrant worker women	158.8	72.36	10.7
Migrant women	45.58	22.14	13.44
Total	216.47	100.0	11.19

Source: “Lifelong Education and Development of Women in Shenzhen”

This is compounded by the fact that many female migrant workers do not have reliable sources of information about sex and reproductive health. More than a quarter (27.1 percent) obtained this information from their boyfriends or spouses while only 18.2 percent received this information at school (see section 2.6). Furthermore, knowledge about sexual and reproductive health among female

migrant workers is lower than that of male migrant workers^[65]. These findings were echoed in the interviews with migrant workers conducted as part of our study.

“At the time I knew nothing about sex, but later he (my boyfriend) told me bit by bit and I got to know some information...reproductive health education in rural areas didn’t have any substantial content and students just didn’t take it seriously. (26 year-old woman from Hunan Province)

“I proposed to use a condom. She (my girlfriend) has a poor sense of safety, but is quite obedient...” (23 year-old man from Hubei Province)

“I have learnt some knowledge about reproductive health in high school and there are advertisements about this on TV, so I know some. I can get 60, if the total score on this is 100. She (girlfriend) doesn’t know much about this. She listens to me.” (21 year-old man from Guizhou Province)

Many female migrant workers also face issues surrounding coerced sex with 12.7 percent of respondents reporting that they experienced forced intercourse or sexual contact in the past year (see section 2.4). Awareness of safety amongst female migrant workers was typically quite poor and this may contribute to the vulnerability of these women. This is reflected in the low rates of condom usage and high rates of unplanned pregnancies reported.

“When I knew I was pregnant, I made the decision. There is no reasonable way I could have the baby... I have some lines that I can’t cross and some principles that I can’t violate. I should not get pregnant before marriage!” (26 year-old woman from Hubei Province)

“Now young people ‘buy the ticket after they get on the bus’. My girlfriend got pregnant accidentally. I was aware of condom use but purposely didn’t use it. I wanted her to get pregnant so that we could get married... She should be blamed for the abortion. I wanted to have the baby, she was the one who didn’t.” (24 year-old man from Hubei Province)

“We didn’t use condom in the first time. I was young (19 years old) and didn’t know any measure at all. And the first sex had happened unexpectedly. There was no way to take measures.” (26 year-old woman from Hunan Province)

“He asked for sex and I felt it was natural. We didn’t use a condom. We didn’t usually keep condoms at hand. Besides, I think if he had to bring a condom with him, I would feel bad of him.” (22 year-old woman from Hubei Province)

Our study also found that female migrant workers had lower awareness of safe sex behaviors than their male counterparts. Further, female migrant workers were not aware of the high-risk behaviors their male counterparts engaged in. For instance, many male migrant workers reported visiting commercial sex workers, and one stated that *‘but you know it is impossible for the girls to know about this’*. When we interviewed their female co-workers and found it was true. Very few of women suspected their colleagues may be buying commercial sex. One even went so far as to explain *“Male colleagues, they are relatively pure and simple. They just play poker, hike or surf online in their spare time. They even don’t go to Karaoke. If they decide to go, they will ask us (girl colleagues) to be with them... They would never visit female sex workers.”*

The majority of female migrant workers interviewed indicated that they trusted their boyfriends and did not believe they were at risk of becoming infected with HIV.

“I have heard of HIV. But I do not believe my boyfriend or I will get it. I know myself and trust my boy friend. We are together almost every day.” (27 year-old woman from Hunan Province)

“I think I don’t have the risk and neither does my boyfriend. I know him well.” (22 year-old woman from Hubei Province)

“It’s totally impossible for my boyfriend to visit female sex workers. He is not that kind of guy.” (19 year-old woman from Hainan Province)

Many female migrant workers are also engaging in sex outside of marriage such as pre-marital and casual sex. The incidence of this kind of sex is higher among female migrant workers than among other groups including women in rural areas, female local residents or female university students ^[66].

4. Labour Rights

In addition to vulnerabilities amongst migrant workers to HIV/STI and reproductive health issues, this study investigated a series of employment issues faced by migrant workers including salary, work hours, occupational safety and health and labour contracts. Overall, awareness of rights among migrant workers was found to be low and this had implications for both their economic wellbeing and their health and safety at work.

4.1 Salary

Migrant workers typically receive modest salaries. The Guangdong Provincial Federation of Trade Unions reported that the monthly salary for migrant workers in 2006 was approximately half (54.9 percent) that of their non-migrant counterparts in the province ^[67]. According to the year statistics book in 2005, in Shanghai the average monthly salary for local residents was 6,705 Yuan, whereas it was 1,783 Yuan for migrant workers ^[68]. The majority of migrant workers in Shenzhen (77.6 percent) have monthly incomes below 2,000 Yuan and more than a quarter (26.8 percent) believed they were living in poverty ^[69].

Migrant workers also experience a number of other challenges surrounding their salaries. Only 63.3 percent of respondents in our study believed their company had clearly stated their salary before they commenced employment (59.8 percent of males and 65.8 percent of females) and 38.8 percent of respondents reported not being paid on time (40.5 percent of males and 37.4 percent of females).

4.2 Work hours

In many cases, work hours are not clearly communicated to migrant workers before commencing employment. Of the respondents who took part in our study, only 59.4 percent were informed about their work hours before starting their positions.

Once migrant workers were in their positions, their work hours varied significantly. More than half (58.2 percent) of respondents worked 8 hours or less each workday while 13.6 percent worked 11-12 hours and 3.4 percent worked 13 hours or more. Long work hours are particularly conspicuous among joint ventures and solely foreign-funded enterprises where nearly half of respondents work overtime ^[70]. A study in Shanghai showed that on average migrant workers worked 60 hours per week. This rate was much higher than the standard 44 hours that the *Labor Contract Law* requests. Furthermore, around 12.7 percent of migrant workers reported that they worked 70 hours per week ^[71].

In addition to this, leave is not consistently available to migrant workers. A small proportion of respondents (4.1 percent) did not have any leave each month, while the largest group (40.6 percent) had 1-4 days of leave each month. This is broadly consistent with a study by Weizhen *et al.* in 2004, which found that 8.8 percent of respondents did not have access to any leave and a total of 47.3 percent were entitled to 1-4 days of leave per month ^[72].

Table 4 .2.1 Leave per month of respondents

Leave	Male		Female		Total	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
8 or more days	217	17.0	302	17.2	519	17.1
5-7 days	431	33.8	705	40.1	1136	37.5
1-4 days	537	42.2	693	39.6	1230	40.6
No leave	82	6.4	42	2.4	124	4.1
No answer	8	0.6	12	0.7	20	0.7
Total	1275	100.0	1754	100.0	3029	100.0

4.3 High occupational hazards

Occupational hazards have the potential to cause great harm to employees and adversely affect their working life. However, only 42.7 percent of respondents reported being told about potential occupational hazards by their employer before commencing employment (40.8 percent of males and 44.1 percent of females). These numbers are similar to those in other studies, such as that by Wu Chuan *et al.*, which found that 62 percent of migrant workers in one of Shenzhen's districts were informed about the risks surrounding occupational disease and 37.3 percent of the labour contracts of migrant workers clearly address occupational hazards [73].

These findings are concerning given that migrant workers are known to be at increased risk of occupational injuries and accidents compared to their non-migrant counterparts. Migrant workers represent more than 80 percent of those who suffered occupational injuries or accidents in non-publicly owned enterprises in Guangdong Province [74] and the incidence rate of occupational injury is approximately 23.76 percent among male migrant workers and 14.83 percent among female migrant workers [75]. These figures are noticeably higher than the 9.51 percent incidence rate reported among Shenzhen's general population in 1999 [76].

High rates of occupational injury among migrant workers may be due to a lack of employer provided safety training [77]. Wu *et al.* found that only 35.2 percent of employees (90 percent of respondents were migrant workers) attended education or training on the prevention of occupational diseases [78]. This lack of training may be of even greater significance given the intense and physically demanding jobs often performed by migrant workers, thus making them more prone to occupational injuries and accidents [79].

4.4 Labour contracts

Labour contracts are essential for protecting the rights of migrant workers. For this reason, it is encouraging to see that the majority of migrant workers are signing

labor contracts. Of the respondents to our survey, 81.5 percent reported having signed a contract with their employer (78.9 percent of males and 81.5 percent of females). This figure is higher than that observed in previous studies, such as that by Liu Linping *et al.* in 2008, which found that only 58.14 percent of respondents had signed labor contracts ^[80]. Labour contracts in China are closely linked to social insurance as employers are required to contribute funds towards the social insurance of their employees. When unemployed, individuals must provide this contribution themselves in order to remain covered. Migrant workers who have not signed labour contracts are therefore at risk of not receiving the attached social insurance and are known to be disproportionately at risk of ??? compared to the urban population. For example, in 2007, 33 percent of Shenzhen's migrant workers lacked social security compared to 9.4 percent of the urban population ^[81].

Although an increasing number of migrant workers are signing labour contracts, it is concerning that nearly a fifth of respondents have not. This reflects a situation where some migrant workers do not have adequate support available after entering the city and either lack the knowledge that they should demand a labor contract from their employer or feel unable to do so. Without a labour contract and in the absence of any official organization for safeguarding their interests and rights means, migrant workers cannot resolve employment issues that arise through organized or collective action ^[82]. Liu's research in Pearl River Delta showed that because migrant workers had nowhere to go to claim their rights, as many as 92.13 percent of migrant workers did nothing when their employers refused to sign a labour contract. For other migrant workers who took action, 4.2 percent went to the company management, 0.58 percent used personal relationship to coordinate with the employer, 0.15 percent went to the trade union and 0.15 percent complained to the government. The majority of migrant workers with employment issues could not find an appropriate way to protect their rights ^[83].

5. The future of migrant workers

5.1 Where is home?

Migrant workers occupy a unique place within China. Although they may have lived in the cities for extended periods of time, they typically comprise an enclave set apart from their urban counterparts^[84] and are not accepted as 'belonging' to the city^[85]. On the other hand, they are fundamentally different from farmers as they have taken on many aspects of urban culture and would find it difficult to return to their original rural life^[86].

"Definitely, I will stay here... It's impossible for me to return. I came out from the rural area and now I will not even consider returning to the town close to the countryside." (27 year-old man from Guangdong Province with 10 years living in Shenzhen)

"I'll stay in Shenzhen. I am so familiar with it... I haven't found a way to make a good living here... after all, my capacity is limited...but it is very clear to me that I will not go back home" (23 year-old man from Hubei Province with 6 years living in Shenzhen)

"I came to Shenzhen when I was 19 when I just graduated from high school. My life now is all right... Previously, we who were born in the 1980s replaced the ones who were born in the 1970s, now the ones born in the 1990s will replace us... You get replaced. I feel I can't stay here anymore... I am going to return the next year... But I can't get in the sun. Sometimes, I got ill after doing some farming..." (29 year-old man from Guangxi Province, 10 years living in Shenzhen)

The current migrant workers find themselves in an uneasy position where they are unable to settle in the cities but find it difficult to return to the countryside^[87]. This differs from the movement patterns of their predecessors who moved to the city purely for economic gain and when they found the city could not make their needs met, they were back in the countryside farming^[88]. This current generation of migrant workers has more expectations than their predecessors. They moved to city not only for survival or a better income, they desired significant change in their lives, from rural farmer to urban worker and from migrant to resident in the city^[89].

These expectations appear to be far beyond what society can provide to them at the current time..

5.2 Plans for the future

Most of the current generation of migrant workers wants to remain in the cities, though they are less satisfied with the city life than their counterparts in the past^[90]. Nearly half (47.7 percent) of migrant workers aspire to become an urban resident as they believe life in the city is better than in their hometown and would provide more opportunities for both their children and themselves^[91]. These migrant workers wish to immerse themselves in urban society, learn new skills in their spare-time, make enough money to buy an apartment in the city and try their best to remodel themselves as local residents. However, it is too difficult for many migrant workers to overcome these barriers^[92] and many hold a great deal of uncertainty about the future.

“My father brought me here when I was 5 years old. Look at me I am 24 this year. For me Shenzhen is my home. I grew up here, from primary school to junior college... In the future...I might go to Guangzhou or somewhere else... The price of houses in Shenzhen is too high... (24 year-old man from Guangxi Province)

“My parents have been working in Shenzhen for more than 20 years. I went to primary school here and junior and senior middle school back in hometown. When I was in school here, I felt my hometown was better than Shenzhen, because I couldn't understand the dialect here ...When I was young, my parents rarely took me out and my neighbors were from other provinces so I couldn't understand their language. In 2008, I graduated from high school and came here to work. I suddenly realized that this is the place I really like... In the future, I want to open a clothing store. I think I will be in Shenzhen.” (23 year-old woman from Guangdong Province)

“I've been in Shenzhen for 9 years. My boyfriend and I plan to continue working here. Now we have saved some money and are paying installations for an apartment in my hometown. You know it's unrealistic to buy an apartment here... I

want to save money for one year before our wedding ceremony. If I get pregnant, I will go back to my hometown to give birth but will eventually return to Shenzhen. I will leave my baby at my parents... I have never thought of how and where we three (my husband, the baby and me) would live together..." (27 year-old woman from Hunan Province)

"I've been here for 6 years. If I get married, I think I will not be in Shenzhen. It's unrealistic...I want to see which city is better, Wuhan (my hometown) or Chengdu, the hometown of my boyfriend. Then decide where we should go." (22 year-old woman from Hubei Province)

What the future holds for migrant workers has become an increasingly important and sensitive social issue. There is some speculation that if current regulations remain the same and measures are not taken to help migrant workers settle into life in cities, the current generation of migrant workers will continue to face the same limited futures as their predecessors did^[93]. To avert this, action should be taken to enable these migrants to smoothly transition into urban life ^[94].

6. Recommendations

Migrant workers face great challenges in cities. Both their living and working conditions need to be improved. To address these issues, a deep reform is urgently needed, especially reform of the Hukou system and reform of social protection programs. The Hukou system is the root cause of inequality between migrant workers and urban residents and it has prevented migrant workers from accessing the same services and receiving the same treatment as their urban counterparts ^[95]. Social policies that promote "equality of opportunity for security" need to be developed. Migrants should enjoy the same entitlements that urban residents have. Only then can issues surrounding migrant workers such as STI/HIV, reproductive health, employment, occupational safety and health, and others be adequately addressed.

Long term reform will be required to resolve these problems, however, a series of steps can be taken in the short term to improve the life, health and work conditions of migrant workers in China today.

6.1 Reproductive Health

Improving reproductive health among young female migrants should be a core priority for enterprises, government and the health sector. Our study has shown that the majority of these women do not have access to reliable and accurate sources of information about reproductive health, with many relying on their sexual partners for this information. In addition to this, a large proportion of migrant women have STIs and reproductive health infections and more than 46 percent of the migrant women surveyed reported unwanted pregnancies. A significant number of these women will undergo abortions either in their home or in small private clinics. This is a clear indicator that reproductive health knowledge among young female migrants is low and raises concerns about the accessibility of health services. Poor reproductive health among female migrants not only detrimentally impacts on the migrants themselves, it also has the potential to reduce productivity in enterprises due to lost work time.

To address this, reproductive health training should be held in all enterprises that employ large numbers of female migrant workers. This will ensure that female migrant workers are empowered to protect themselves and make informed decisions about their reproductive health. Enterprises should complement this training by facilitating referrals to approved clinics to improve reproductive health, and reduce the numbers of unwanted pregnancies and unsafe abortions.

An assessment of reproductive health services available to migrant workers should also be completed. Proper treatment of reproductive tract infections and STIs is essential and STI treatment and diagnosis should be closely linked to HIV voluntary testing and counseling. Furthermore, access to adequate health services would assist in ensuring that invasive procedures, such as abortions, are only performed by trained professionals in safe and sterile environments.

It is recognized that even where health services are available, a number of barriers including accessibility and affordability may prevent migrant workers from benefiting from these services. Conducting an assessment of reproductive health services available will enable an assessment as to the extent to which these barriers exist and also identify other key issues that can be later addressed at the operational and policy level.

6.2 Gender Equality

It is striking to see that attitudes about the roles of women and their potential for careers and responsibilities outside the household have shifted considerably among migrant workers compared to their rural counterparts. Attitudes towards premarital sex have also changed significantly among male and female migrants. However, there appears to be a slower pace of change among male migrant workers, with many still holding conservative attitudes towards gender roles related to household responsibilities and work.

Issues of gender equality should be addressed in all reproductive health training. It is important to ensure that both male and female migrant workers alike receive training on gender equality as equality between the genders can only be achieved as a joint undertaking. Taking steps towards this goal is important not only for empowering women in employment and home settings, but also to assist them in navigating relationships and improving their reproductive health outcomes.

6.3 Addressing Vulnerability for HIV infection

Sexual behaviors reported in this and other surveys show that the sexual behavior of both male and female migrant workers is fairly conservative. More than 80 percent of female migrants and over 70 percent of male migrants report having had only one sexual partner in the past year. Moreover, the percentage of men who reported visiting sex workers was relatively low at 8 percent, and on par with non-migrants in other urban areas.

However, STI rates among migrant workers in the Shenzhen area are critically high and are 14 times higher than the average in this country. In addition to this, condom use rates were fairly low for these men, with only 22.2 percent reporting consistently using condoms. Overall, this data suggests that while there may be vulnerabilities to HIV infection among migrant workers, due to a lack of knowledge and pre-marital sexual activity, the migrant population as a whole should not be considered as being at significant risk of contracting HIV.

Given that STI rates are unusually high among migrant workers, STI training and referrals should be a priority in all reproductive health programs. If migrant workers are adequately trained on STIs and provided with a referral service, they will have the knowledge they need to protect themselves and determine when and where they can seek help. HIV information should also be integrated into these programs to ensure migrants are aware of the risks and what they can do to protect themselves.

6.4 Labour Rights

Other key issues for migrant workers include labour rights and access to social health insurance. The findings clearly show that wage levels for migrants, both men and women, are much lower than urban residents for comparable work. Working times in the companies surveyed, however, tended to be on par with other non-migrant workers. With regards to access and use of social security, 33 percent of migrants did not have access to any social health insurance compared to 9 percent of non-migrants².

To address this, migrant workers should be trained on their rights at work. Any training should include elements on relevant laws and regulations such as the *Labor Contract Law* and the *Employment Promotion Law* to improve migrant worker knowledge of their legal rights. This should be complemented by

² It should be noted that the factories included in this survey are large scale and working conditions and wages are at the upper tier of the migrant workforce as a whole. Nonetheless the data clearly shows that improving occupational health and safety programs should be a priority in all companies employing migrants.

education about policies related to STIs and HIV/AIDS, such as the *Regulation on the Prevention and Control of HIV/AIDS* and the ‘Four Frees and One Care’ policy.

Training on rights at work should be complemented by the establishment of a referral service for migrant workers to access legal aid in addition to scaling up efforts to establish more non-profit legal aid centers. Improving the accessibility of legal aid in this way will provide an avenue for migrant workers to take action when their rights are infringed upon.

Occupational health and safety in industries that hire large numbers of migrant workers appears to be poor. For example in the electronic industry, the accident rate for men was 27 percent whereas the non-migrant rate was 9 percent. In the Bao’an district of Shenzhen, only 35 percent of all migrant workers had been trained on occupational health and safety. Improving occupational health and safety should therefore be a priority for all companies that hire migrant workers.

Companies should be encouraged to implement comprehensive occupational health and safety programs for their migrant workers. This should include training for migrant workers on good practice as well as training for management on their obligations and good workplace policy. Incorporating consistent occupational health and safety into the day-to-day management will go a long way to protecting the migrant workers who work within these companies.

Tables

Result of the Survey on STI/HIV and Gender among migrant workers in ten companies in Shenzhen

The questionnaire based survey was conducted among 3,029 migrant workers in ten companies in Shenzhen. The questionnaire was developed by the ILO based on consultation with China Family Planning Association, UNAIDS and other stakeholders. Shenzhen Family Planning Association carried out the survey in January 2011 and submitted all questionnaires that were completed by the migrant workers surveyed to the ILO in February 2011. Data analysis was conducted by the ILO.

Program of EPI-Info 6.04 was utilized to establish database, and SPSS-13 to analyze data.

1. Characteristics of the migrant workers participating in the survey

1.1 Age of migrant workers

Age group	Male		Female		Total	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Less than 20y	156	12.2	257	14.7	413	13.6
21-25	458	35.9	601	34.3	1059	35.0
26-30	303	23.8	483	27.5	786	26.0
More than 31y	329	25.8	376	21.4	705	23.3
Refuse to answer	29	2.3	37	2.1	66	2.1
Total	1275	100.0	1754	100.0	3029	100.0

1.2 Hukou of migrant workers

Hukou	Male		Female		Total	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Urban	503	39.5	508	29.0	1011	33.4
Rural	766	60.1	1236	70.5	2002	66.1
Refuse to answer	6	0.4	10	0.6	16	0.5
Total	1275	100.0	1754	100.0	3029	100.0

1.3 Education level of migrant workers

Education level	Male		Female		Total	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Junior high school or below	297	236.3	569	32.4	866	28.6
Senior high school	516	40.5	557	31.8	1073	35.4
College or vocational school	347	27.2	523	29.8	870	28.7
University or above	113	8.9	101	5.8	214	7.1
Refuse to answer	2	0.2	4	0.2	6	0.2
Total	1275	100.0	1754	100.0	3029	100.0

1.4 Marriage status of migrant workers

Marriage status	Male		Female		Total	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Single	718	56.3	837	47.7	1555	51.3
In marriage	518	40.6	885	50.5	1403	46.3
Divorced	39	3.1	30	1.7	69	2.3
Refuse to answer	0	0	2	0.1	2	0.1
Total	1275	100.0	1754	100.0	3029	100.0

1.5 Living arrangement of migrant workers

Living with whom	Male		Female		Total	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Sexual partner	682	53.5	946	53.9	1628	53.7
Parents/relatives	129	10.1	180	10.3	309	10.2
Coworkers/friends	306	24.0	454	25.9	760	25.1
Alone	156	12.2	164	9.4	320	10.6
Refuse to answer	2	0.2	10	0.6	12	0.4
Total	1275	100.0	1754	100.0	3029	100.0

2. Sexual behaviors

2.1 Percentage of migrant workers had sex in the past year

Sex	Male		Female		Total	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
No sex	96	7.5	271	15.5	367	12.1
Yes	1179	92.5	1483	84.5	2662	87.9
Total	1275	100.0	1754	100.0	3029	100.0

2.2 Percentage of unmarried migrant workers had sex in the past year

Sex	Male		Female		Total	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
No sex	87	12.1	245	29.3	332	21.4
Yes	631	87.9	592	70.7	1223	78.6
Total	718	100.0	837	100.0	1555	100.0

2.3 Number of sexual partners of migrant workers in the past year

Number of Sexual partners	Male		Female		Total	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
1	849	72.0	1270	85.6	2119	79.6
2	144	12.2	113	7.6	257	9.7
3	89	7.5	39	2.6	128	4.8
4	37	3.1	19	1.3	56	2.1
5	13	1.1	12	0.8	25	0.9
6	47	4.0	30	2.0	77	2.9
Total	1179	100.0	1483	100.0	2662	100.0

2.4 Number of sexual partners of unmarried migrant workers in the past year

Number of Sexual partners	Male		Female		Total	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
1	446	70.7	489	82.6	935	76.5
2	77	12.2	47	7.9	124	10.1
3	46	7.3	22	3.7	68	5.6
4	26	4.1	10	1.7	36	2.9
5	7	1.1	7	1.2	14	1.1
6	29	4.6	17	2.9	46	3.8
Total	631	100.0	592	100.0	1223	100.0

2.5 Condom usage among migrant workers who had sex in the past year

Condom usage	Male		Female		Total	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Never	277	23.5	330	22.3	607	22.8
Sometime	582	49.4	691	46.6	1273	47.8
Every time	262	22.2	380	25.6	642	24.1
Refuse to answer	58	4.9	82	5.5	140	5.3
Total	1179	100.0	1483	100.0	3029	100.0

2.6 Condom usage among unmarried migrant workers who had sex in the past year

Condom usage	Male		Female		Total	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Never	141	22.3	122	20.6	263	21.5
Sometime	308	48.8	228	38.5	536	43.8
Every time	143	22.7	206	34.8	349	28.5
Refuse to answer	39	6.2	36	6.1	75	6.1
Total	631	100.0	592	100.0	1223	100.0

2.7 Unexpected pregnancy among migrant workers in the past year

Unexpected pregnancy	Male		Female		Total	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Yes.	415	35.2	557	37.6	972	36.5
No.	748	63.4	911	61.4	1659	62.3
Refuse to answer	16	1.4	15	1.0	31	1.2
Total	1179	100.0	1483	100.0	2662	100.0

2.8 Unexpected pregnancy among single migrant workers in the past year

Unexpected pregnancy	Male		Female		Total	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Yes.	194	30.7	167	28.2	361	29.5
No.	429	68.0	418	70.6	847	69.3
Refuse to answer	8	1.3	7	1.2	15	1.2
Total	631	100.0	592	100.0	1223	100.0%

2.9 Experience of language harassment among female migrants in the past year

Workplace language harassment	Frequency	%
Yes	699	39.9
Very few	513	29.2
No.	522	29.8
Refuse to answer	20	1.1
Total	1754	100.0

2.10 Body harassment among female migrants in the past year

Workplace body harassment	Frequency	%
Yes.	462	26.3
Very few	302	17.2
No.	972	55.4
Refuse to answer	18	1.0
Total	1754	100.0

2.11 Forced sex among female migrant workers in the past year

Forced sex in workplace	Frequency	%
Yes.	188	12.7
Very few	83	5.6
No	1206	81.3
Refuse to answer	6	0.4
Total	1754	100.0

2.12 Trade for sex among female migrant workers in the past year

Trade for sex	Frequency	%
Yes.	165	9.4
No.	1387	79.1
Refuse to answer	202	11.5
Total	1754	100.0

2.13 Channels that migrant workers got HIV/STI knowledge and information

Channels	Male		Female	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Website	292	22.9	289	16.5
Friends	291	22.8	261	14.9
School	262	20.5	320	18.2
Fixed sexual partner	177	13.9	476	27.1
Others	140	11.0	250	14.3
Parents	100	7.8	127	7.2
Refuse to answer	13	1.0	31	1.8
Total	1275	100.0	1754	100.0

2.14 Channels that unmarried migrants got HIV/STI knowledge and information

Channels	Male		Female	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Website	204	28.4	191	22.8
Friends	166	23.1	172	20.6
School	151	21.0	172	20.5
Fixed sexual partner	76	10.6	89	10.6
Others	70	9.7	126	15.1
Parents	42	5.8	66	7.9
Refuse to answer	9	1.3	21	2.5
Total	718	100.0	837	100.0

3. Awareness on gender equity

3.1 Opinion on “Men’s work centers around outside, women’s work centers around the home”

	Male		Female		Total	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Agree	630	49.4	558	31.8	1188	39.2
Disagree	635	49.8	1177	67.1	1812	59.8
Refuse to answer	10	0.8	19	1.1	29	1.0
Total	1275	100.0	1754	100.0	3029	100.0

3.2 Opinions on “Good husband is better than a good job”

	Male		Female		Total	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Agree	642	50.4	809	46.1	1451	47.9
Disagree	627	49.2	931	53.1	1558	51.4
Refuse to answer	6	0.5	14	0.8	20	0.7
Total	1275	100.0	1754	100.0	3029	100.0

3.3 Opinions on “Who has the initiative on sexuality”

	Male		Female		Total	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Man	433	34.0	396	27.4	829	27.4
Woman	100	7.8	130	7.6	230	7.6
Both	734	57.6	1183	63.3	1917	63.3
Refuse to answer	8	0.6	45	1.7	53	1.7
Total	1275	100.0	1754	100.0	3029	100.0

3.4 Opinions on “Man decides sexual quality”

	Male		Female		Total	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Agree	373	29.3	285	16.2	658	21.7
Disagree	881	69.1	1416	80.7	2297	75.8
Refuse to answer	21	1.6	53	3.0	74	2.4
Total	1275	100.0	1754	100.0	3029	100.0

3.5 Opinions on “If it is acceptable if your spouse having casual sex ”

	Male		Female		Total	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Acceptable	177	13.9	210	12.0	387	12.8
Unacceptable	600	47.1	687	39.2	1287	42.5
Difficult to say	468	36.7	813	47.5	1281	42.3
Refuse to answer	30	2.4	44	2.5	74	2.4
Total	1275	100.0	1754	100.0	3029	100.0

3.6 Opinions on “Which is more important between career and family”

	Male		Female		Total	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Family	295	23.1	512	29.2	807	26.6
Career	259	20.3	141	8.0	400	13.2
Both important	715	56.1	1090	62.1	1805	59.6
Refuse to answer	6	0.5	11	0.6	17	0.6
Total	1275	100.0	1754	100.0	3029	100.0

3.7 Opinions on housework arrangement

	Male		Female		Total	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Husband’s responsibility	127	10.0	146	8.3	273	9.0
Wife’s responsibility	359	28.2	230	13.1	589	19.4
Both	774	60.7	1360	77.5	2134	70.5
Refuse to answer	15	1.2	18	1.0	33	1.1
Total	1275	100.0	1754	100.0	3029	100.0

3.8 Opinions on “Expectation of baby’s sex”

	Male		Female		Total	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Male baby	332	26.0	290	17.6	622	20.5
Female baby	135	10.6	178	10.8	313	10.3
Same	719	56.4	1180	71.6	1899	62.7
Refuse to answer	89	7.0	106	6.0	195	6.4
Total	1275	100.0	1754	100.0	3029	100.0

3.9 Opinions on “A woman with a successful career must rely on something else rather than her capacity”

	Male		Female		Total	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Agree	449	35.2	447	25.5	896	29.6
Disagree	813	63.8	1288	73.4	2101	69.4
Refuse to answer	13	1.0	19	1.1	32	1.1
Total	1275	100.0	1754	100.0	3029	100.0

3.10 Opinions on “A man is more appropriate for a leader than a woman”

	Male		Female		Total	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Agree	560	43.9	386	22.0	946	31.2
Disagree	694	54.4	1342	76.5	2036	67.2
Refuse to answer	21	1.6	26	1.5	47	1.6
Total	1275	100.0	1754	100.0	3029	100.0

4. Awareness of Employment Rights

4.1 Percentage of migrant workers signed a labour contract

	Male		Female		Total	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Signed	1006	78.9	1463	81.5	2469	81.5
Not yet	202	15.8	220	13.9	422	13.9
Don't know	63	4.9	60	4.1	123	4.1
Refuse to answer	4	0.3	11	0.5	15	0.5
Total	1275	100.0	1754	100.0	3029	100.0

4.2 Percentage of migrant workers kept the copy of labour contract

	Male		Female		Total	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Yes	814	80.9	1237	84.6	2051	83.1
No.	188	18.7	224	15.3	412	16.7
Refuse to answer	4	0.4	2	0.1	6	0.2
Total	1275	100.0	1754	100.0	3029	100.0

4.3 Percentage of migrants informed potential occupational hazards before starting a job

	Male		Female		Total	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Clearly informed	520	40.8	773	44.1	1293	42.7
Some Informed	466	36.5	616	35.1	1082	35.7
Never	282	22.1	353	20.1	635	21.0
Refuse to answer	7	0.5	12	0.7	19	0.6
Total	1275	100.0	1754	100.0	3029	100.0

4.4 Percentage of migrant workers informed of working hours before starting a job

	Male		Female		Total	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Clearly informed	720	56.5	1080	61.6	1800	59.4
Some Informed	469	36.8	572	32.6	1041	34.4
Never	80	6.3	86	4.9	166	5.5
Refuse to answer	6	0.5	16	0.9	22	0.7
Total	1275	100.0	1754	100.0	3029	100.0

4.5 Percentage of migrant workers informed salary each month before starting a job

	Male		Female		Total	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Clearly informed	762	59.8	1154	65.8	1916	63.3
Some Informed	416	32.6	477	27.2	893	29.5
Never	88	6.9	108	6.2	196	6.5
Refuse to answer	9	0.7	15	0.9	24	0.8
Total	1275	100.0	1754	100.0	3029	100.0

4.6 Percentage of migrant workers got their salary on time

	Male		Female		Total	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Always on time	748	58.7	1082	61.7	1830	60.4
Sometime on time	360	28.2	523	29.8	883	29.2
Always not on time	157	12.3	133	7.6	290	9.6
Refuse to answer	10	0.8	16	0.9	26	0.9
Total	1275	100.0	1754	100.0	3029	100.0

4.7 Percentage of migrant workers deposit their ID or other document in the workplace

	Male		Female		Total	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Yes	296	23.2	286	16.3	582	19.2
No	962	75.5	1452	82.8	2414	79.7
Refuse to answer	17	1.3	16	0.9	33	1.1
Total	1275	100.0	1754	100.0	3029	100.0

4.8 Percentage of migrant workers having holidays each month

	Male		Female		Total	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
8 days or more	217	17.0	302	17.2	519	17.1
5-7days	431	33.8	705	40.1	1136	37.5
0.5-4 days	537	42.2	693	39.6	1230	40.6
No holiday	82	6.4	42	2.4	124	4.1
Refuse to answer	8	0.6	12	0.7	20	0.7
Total	1275	100.0	1754	100.0	3029	100.0

4.9 Percentage of migrant workers who know other workers lose job because of pregnancy in their factory

	Male		Female		Total	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Yes	187	14.7	207	11.8	394	13.0
No	644	50.5	1056	60.2	1700	56.1
Don't know	434	34.0	476	27.1	910	30.0
Refuse to answer	10	0.8	15	0.9	25	0.8
Total	1275	100.0	1754	100.0	3029	100.0

4.10 Percentage of migrants who know where to seek help when rights violation occurs

	Male		Female		Total	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Know	895	70.2	1241	70.8	2136	70.5
Don't know	360	28.2	494	28.2	854	28.2
Refuse to answer	20	1.6	19	1.1	39	1.3
Total	1275	100.0	1754	100.0	3029	100.0

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