

Study: U.S. rule is hurting HIV fight

A new study suggests the United States is hurting the fight against the human immunodeficiency virus with its anti-prostitution rule.

In order to receive U.S. funding for HIV prevention or control projects, recipient organizations must take a pledge that explicitly condemns prostitution. However, researchers have determined such condemnation is not effective at helping to control the global HIV epidemic.

Nicole Franck Masenior and Chris Beyrer of Johns Hopkins University's Bloomberg School of Public Health reviewed scientific evidence on strategies that effectively reduce rates of HIV among sex workers.

The researchers found substantial evidence suggesting the empowerment, organization, and unionization of sex workers can be an effective HIV prevention strategy.

"While sex work may be exploitative," they wrote, "and is illegal in many jurisdictions, sex worker advocates and HIV prevention program leaders generally concur that sex workers themselves need services, protection, peer outreach, and support from health professionals to reduce their risk of HIV infection."

The study is available at

<http://medicine.plosjournals.org/perlserv/?request=get-document&doi=10.1371/journal.pmed.0040207>

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