

# Recruitment of Caribbean female commercial sex workers at high risk of HIV infection

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### Abstract

To evaluate novel eligibility criteria and outreach methods to identify and recruit women at high risk of HIV-1 infection in the Caribbean. The Methods A prospective cohort study was conducted in 2009–2012 among 799 female commercial sex workers in the Dominican Republic, Haiti, and Puerto Rico. Minimum eligibility criteria included exchange of sex for goods, services, or money in the previous 6 months and unprotected vaginal or anal sex with a man in the previous 6 months. Sites used local epidemiology to develop more stringent eligibility criteria and recruitment strategies. Participants were asked questions about HIV/AIDS and their level of concern about participating in an HIV vaccine trial. Logistic regression modeling was used to assess predictors of prevalent HIV infection and willingness to participate in a future HIV vaccine study. The Results for HIV prevalence at screening was 4.6%. Crack cocaine use [odds ratio (OR) = 4.2, 95% confidence interval (CI) (1.8–9.0)] was associated with and having sex with clients in a hotel or motel [OR = 0.5, CI (0.3–1.0)] was inversely associated with HIV infection. A total of 88.9% of enrolled women were definitely or probably willing to participate in a future HIV vaccine trial. The Conclusions for this study indicated that local eligibility criteria and recruitment methods can be developed to identify and recruit commercial sex workers with higher HIV prevalence than the general population who express willingness to join an HIV vaccine trial.

**Keywords:** HIV infection, Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome, vaccine trial, commercial sex workers, Caribbean, Dominican Republic, Haiti, Puerto Rico

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