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**Female Commercial Sex Workers and the Female Condom in HIV / AIDS Prevention and Control in Nigeria: A Geographical Perspective**

One of the primary concerns of the Millennium Development Goals is to combat and reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS. About three million people in Nigeria now live with AIDS, and unprotected sex accounts for about 90 per cent of the infections among the high risk groups of adolescent girls and commercial sex workers (CSWs). The paper considers effective and equitable ways to contain the spread of the virus among the socially excluded female CSWs, and the programmes of government, donor agencies and NGOs on condom use and AIDS control in general. About 1,500 brothel based CSWs responded to a questionnaire on the extent of AIDS infection among them, and on current attitudes and measures to control the spread of the pandemic in four major geographical zones of Nigeria selected for the study. Government officials and health representatives were also interviewed. Secondary sources were consulted for theoretical and comparative insights on the spatial and behavioral aspects of disease and health.

The study confirms that female commercial sex workers suffer discrimination and neglect, and have limited access to information on the new devices and other resources available to reduce and treat HIV infections. Since women are in a subordinate position in sexual relations with men, the female condom, over which the women have greater control, is the only safe-sex method available, and should be an essential component of any strategy for contraception, microbicide and AIDS prevention. There is need for well targeted government interventions to subsidize costs and promote access of condoms to commercial sex workers.