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**Report of the Preliminary Findings for Johns' Voice:  
A Study of Adult Canadian Sex Buyers**

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## Research Background and Purpose

In 2003, directors and service workers from the Asian Society for the Intervention of AIDS (ASIA) and researchers from the University of British Columbia (UBC) conducted a community consultation with various health service providers, researchers, and individuals working within the commercial sex work community to assess the resource and outreach needs as well as the knowledge base of the community working in and with Vancouver's indoor sex trade. Based on the needs identified in this consultation, the Outreach and Research in Community Health Initiatives and Development (ORCHID) project was founded. The initial goal of ORCHID was to prevent the acquisition and spread of HIV/AIDS among indoor female sex workers<sup>1</sup> in Vancouver by developing an evidence-based HIV/AIDS prevention and healthcare referral and liaison service.

Since its inception, the ORCHID project has grown through two distinct phases; the objectives of Phase 1, which ran from March 2004 - October 2006, were: (1) to develop the mechanism for gaining access to the often hidden indoor sex work community; (2) to establish a community-academic partnership model; (3) to determine the feasibility of conducting research within the population; and (4) to conduct preliminary social network research to begin exploration of the social context of HIV/AIDS risk. The results of this phase of the project indicated that Vancouver's indoor sex industry comprises a large and densely interconnected network of individuals who evince great variance in assorted risk behaviours. The findings generated concerns among health service providers, researchers, and individuals working within the commercial sex work community regarding the social and cultural context of sex work, specifically regarding the decision-making processes related to the risk and protective behaviours of women working within the indoor sex industry. Furthermore, the nature of the relationships that develop between sex workers and their clients, and the sexual attitudes and behaviours they display, appear to be determined principally by the sex-buying venue and the relational context in which the sexual exchange occurs. The findings underscored the need to conduct a more thorough inquiry into the processes of the commercial sexual relationship between the sex worker and her clients as they relate to a variety of risk-related aspects of commercial sexual relations.

Phase 2 of the ORCHID project, which ran from October 2006 - October 2009, sought to go beyond the level of individual risk factors of sex workers and their clients most commonly observed by health researchers, to examine the social context and structural factors that contribute to risk in general and HIV/AIDS risk in particular. Of specific interest was the development of a deeper understanding of the process of the commercial sexual relationship as it relates to HIV/AIDS risk, including sex workers' and clients' perspectives on this risk, their risk and protective behaviours, and the decision-making processes involved in adopting these behaviours.

While the Johns' Voice Project was included as a distinct and complementary component of Phase 2 of the ORCHID project, it also builds quite heavily on the foundations of Canadian research on sex buyers which were laid in the 1996-1997 British Columbia studies by Atchison, Lowman and Fraser (Atchison,

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<sup>1</sup> In the context of this paper we use the terms "sex worker" or "sex seller" interchangeably to refer to someone who provides physical-contact sexual services for remuneration (usually money). The sellers include: street prostitutes; escorts who sell sexual services; masseuses who regularly provide paid sexual services; persons who sell sexual services in club, hotels, bars, and other venues; persons working in brothels or micro-brothels; call girls; and persons who sell sexual services through online forums and listserves, newspaper advertisements or special interest magazines and other publications. We use the terms "sex buyers," "johns," "tricks," or "clients" interchangeably to refer to the people who buy sex from "sex sellers."

1996;, Atchison et al., 1997; Lowman and Atchison, 2006; Lowman et al., 1996). Accordingly, the research sought to balance the stated objectives of understanding sex buyers' perspectives on risk and protective behaviours, and the decision-making processes involved in adopting these behaviours as they related to HIV/AIDS. As such the research follows along previous Canadian research on sex buyers in order to:

1. Develop an understanding of the manner in which power relationships between buyers and sellers of sex are determined and negotiated;
2. Establish whether there is an empirical basis for the calculation of risk that has been attributed to the attitudes and behaviours of sex buyers;
3. Understand and explain the connection between individual acts of violence and the specific commercial settings in which these acts occur;
4. Understand the need for, and effectiveness of, socio-legal interventions directed at consumers of sexual services;
5. Develop effective policy, education and intervention strategies that are informed by the experiences and insights of members of the sex buying community; and
6. Provide a space for the inclusion of the voices of sex buyers within current political, social and academic discussions pertaining to prostitution in Canada.

The primary objective of the Johns' Voice project was to examine differences and similarities that exist between diverse sub-samples of sex buyers in order to facilitate a better understanding of both the uniqueness and diversity of the sex-buying population. Decisions about what kinds of information to collect were based on methodological and empirical insights gained from previous research with this population, identifiable gaps in the theoretical and empirical literature in relation to sex buyers, and specific research questions pertaining to risk and decision making that guided the larger ORCHID project.

## Methodology

The nested mixed method strategy<sup>2</sup> of data collection we employed unfolded simultaneously in two phases. The first phase involved the implementation of a structured self-administered questionnaire, while the second phase involved a series of in-depth conversational interviews with participants who were sampled in order to ensure theoretical diversity. Relying on this research strategy facilitated a more fluid integration of a phenomenological investigation of individual attitudes, beliefs and experiences, with a broader investigation of the aggregate patterns of experience and behaviour among members of the larger Canadian sex buying population. The combination of methods provided greater depth and breadth of information than would have been available through a single method approach, and enhances our ability to posit a wider range of answers to address our multifaceted research objectives.

## Recruitment Strategies

The data collected in this study were solicited from a diverse sample of sex buyers who were over the age of 19, had paid money for sexual services on one or more occasions during their lifetime, and who resided in Canada at the time of participation. It is not currently possible to obtain a random sample of the population of Canadian sex buyers. In light of this fact, every effort was made to secure samples that were maximally diverse to facilitate the acquisition of the richest qualitative and quantitative comparative understanding of the population

The mixed methods design that guided this research allowed for slight variations in the recruitment procedures for the self administered questionnaire and in-depth conversational interview samples. The principal techniques used to generate the sample for the questionnaire portion of the project were a combination of purposive and viral sampling, while targeted or theoretical sampling was used to secure the interview participants.

Respondents were contacted through a series of advertisements posted in newspapers, magazines, adult newspapers, clubs, novelty shops and various publicly accessible online discussion boards. These advertisements requested the voluntary participation of Canadian sex buyers, over the age of 19, who were interested in the topic of sex and sexuality and had visited a sex seller at least once in their lifetime. These contact methods expanded the size of the target area and ensured that the responses included would generate a sample diverse enough to facilitate comparisons between different groups of sex buyers. Concentrating advertisements in venues that cater to adult entertainment increased the chances of drawing the attention of people who actively frequent physical environments where certain sexual services may be bought and sold free from legal or social intervention.

We enlisted the assistance of several active sex trade workers who agreed to help recruit selected clients by distributing the same business cards and postcard advertisements that we used in the bars, nightclubs, triple-X video and adult novelty stores. Each of the sex workers who graciously passed along

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<sup>2</sup> Generally speaking, a nested mixed methods design involves allowing one method (qualitative or quantitative) to guide the project. Given less priority, the second method is embedded or nested, within the predominant method. The nesting is generally done in order to address a different set of research questions than the dominant method or in order to acquire information from different levels of participant experience. The data collected from the two methods can either be used to help focus the data collection or it can be mixed during analysis (Creswell et al., 2003).

referrals to clients were well informed about the nature and scope of the project so that they were capable of addressing any immediate questions or concerns about the project that interested parties might have. They were also instructed to encourage people who were interested in the research to take the opportunity to call the principal researcher directly.

## **Data Collection Methods**

So as to take advantage of one of the principal strengths of the mixed methods design, data was collected using a variety of different techniques, including: 1) computer assisted self-administered questionnaires (CASQ) filled out on the World Wide Web and returned electronically; 2) self-administered electronic paper (e-paper) versions of the questionnaire that could be obtained through the project web site or via email and returned either via email or through conventional mail; 3) in-depth in-person interviews; 4) in-depth telephone interviews; and 5) in-depth online interviews.

The survey research instrument used in the first phase of the study was a revised and improved version of the instrument developed by Atchison, Fraser, and Lowman (Atchison, 1996; Lowman et. al. 1996). The 210 question survey, which translates into 33 pages in printed form, is composed of a series of open-ended and pre-coded answer format questions. In addition, several rating and Likert-type scales are included to measure the relative strength or weakness of sex buyer's attitudes, beliefs and experiences. The objective of the questionnaire was not to formally test a specific theory or set of theories. Rather it was to integrate the foci of several theoretical and empirical investigations into one instrument for the purposes of generating knowledge that could be used to contribute to a better understanding of the attitudes, beliefs and experiences of Canadian sex buyers.

The questionnaire was organized into the following ten topical sections:

- **General commercial sex buying background**
- **Victimization, safety and conflict issues**
- **Legal experiences when buying sex**
- **Sharing of information involving sex sellers**
- **Health knowledge and behaviour**
- **Purchasing during the previous 12 months**
- **Most recent commercial sex encounter**
- **Relationship with current spouse or regular sexual partner**
- **Personal information**
- **About this survey**

To foster a more open and natural discussion and to ensure that participants had the opportunity to define and discuss their experiences, concerns, and insights pertaining to prostitution in Canada in their own words and in a manner that had meaning and importance to them, we opted to borrow from the literature on social geography and cultural anthropology by using Plummer's (1995) framework of sexual storytelling and Herdt and Stoller's (1990) concept of intimate communications to frame the interview approach. Doing this allowed us to observe, understand and contextualize the meanings and related socio-cultural processes associated with the beliefs, decisions and activities of sex buyers in our sample. Respondents were encouraged to provide their personal narratives relating to their experiences of



paying for sex. By using this more open format to the conversation, we hoped to avoid being overly constrained by previous research, and avoid preconceived -- perhaps even stereotypical -- images of sex buyers.

In order to allow for maximum flexibility and unrestricted communication the interviews were loosely informed by the following topical categories:

- **General experiential background:** general experience with buying sex; relationships with sex workers; typical encounters; best and worst experiences buying sex
- **Law/legislative/police policy and practice:** impact of the law, legislation and policing on sex buying in Canada; the appropriate role of law, legislation and policing
- **Health care policy and practice:** impact of health care policy and practice on sex industry; experiences with health issues; potential role of health care policy and procedure
- **Business and economic models and policies:** thoughts on the current business and structural organization of the industry and the impact this has had on buying experiences; thoughts on how the industry could be organized
- **Social organization:** experiences and thoughts about different prostitution venues
- **Public and social attitudes:** experience with and impacts of the current public and social attitudes to prostitution in general and sex buying in particular; thoughts about how changes to public and social attitudes could impact prostitution in general and sex buying in particular
- **Industry organization:** General thoughts on how to regulate the commercial sex industry in Canada
- **Communication and information sharing:** Thoughts on the need for improved communication among and between sex buyers and other concerned parties and how this need could be better met or how communication could be facilitated
- **Needs identification:** Thoughts on particular needs of sex buyers that should be met by health care providers, politicians, law enforcement, communities, and sex workers

## Response Validation

Before analyzing the results of the self-administered questionnaire data it was necessary to carefully check the responses to each of the completed questionnaires to ensure that there were no duplicate responses, that the participants were in fact sex buyers, and that each participant had provided answers to enough of the questions to allow for meaningful comparisons between sub-groups to be made during subsequent analyses. The first step in this process involved the identification of duplicate submissions (duplication could occur when a respondent depressed the "send" button twice). Fortunately, we anticipated potential problems with duplicate submissions while we were designing the research instrument and included a client-side script to prevent the submit button from being depressed twice. Since we knew that some respondents would be completing the survey using non-standard-compliant browsers and anticipated the possibility that some people might want to intentionally sabotage the research, we also implemented a non-identifying server-side tracking script that automatically generated an anonymous unique identifier for each visitor that was based on a combination of their Internet Protocol (IP) address, their operating system and their browser. This process helped to identify 42 (3.12%) questionnaires that were subsequently removed from the database, resulting in a working initial sample of 1305 participants.

Almost three-quarters (72.88% or n=951) of respondents answered nearly all the questions germane to their experience. Since such a large portion of participants provided complete responses to the questions asked, we decided to exclude any respondent who answered less than 70% of the relevant questions. This resulted in the exclusion of 342 (26.21%) of respondents (55 dropped out after the first page and 287 dropped out at varying stages of completion thereafter).<sup>3</sup> A further 90 respondents (6.68%) who did not report having purchased sex in their lifetime were excluded because we could not assume that these people were in fact sex buyers. Their failure to provide a valid response to the question asking how many times they had purchased sex resulted in the adaptive question module automatically skipping them through to the personal information portion of the survey.

Once it was determined that the returned surveys were reasonably complete and that no multiple submissions had occurred, each respondent's answers were screened to ensure that they were internally consistent. Three questionnaires (0.20%) were rejected on this basis because the respondents obviously were not taking the questionnaire seriously. For example, when asked why they had participated in the research one respondent stated "because I want to get my cock sucked by hottest girls, fuck ya" while another said "[t]o tell people and lingerie models everywhere that sex shud [sic] never be paid. It is always free." An additional respondent was excluded because she indicated that she was a sex worker and wanted to contribute to the project.

In sum, 486 questionnaires (36.01%) were excluded because they were incomplete, duplicated, internally inconsistent, or submitted by persons who did not indicate that they had purchased sex during their lifetime. The final self-administered questionnaire sample amounted to 861 respondents, which is, to the best of our knowledge, the largest sample of sex buyers ever collected in a single Canadian study, and one of the largest non-captive<sup>4</sup> samples of sex buyers ever collected internationally.<sup>5</sup>

The sample of interview participants was considerably smaller (n=25) and did not require the same rigorous process of validity confirmation. Interview participants were purposively selected (targeted) based on their theoretical appropriateness. When a prospective participant contacted the research team to inquire about the research, the principal researcher engaged the participant in conversation, often lasting between 20 minutes and one hour, in order to get a sense of: 1) their history of involvement with sex buying; their knowledge of issues surrounding prostitution in Canada; 2) their ability and willingness to articulate their thoughts, beliefs and experiences regarding sex buying; and, 3) their ability to speak to specific theoretically important dimensions of the sex buying experience. Participants who fit these criteria were scheduled for an in-person, telephone or Internet interview;

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<sup>3</sup> A statistical comparative analysis of all participants who completed the full questionnaire (n=861) and those who either failed to confirm that they had in fact purchased sex or dropped out at various stages of completion (n=377) revealed several statistically significant differences in responses to 67 different questions pertaining to their general commercial sex buying experiences. The mean age that the drop-outs reported first paying for sex was significantly lower (M=23.16; SD=6.84) than those who completed the survey (M=27.08; SD=9.43; t=-5.315, p<.05). Drop-outs were less likely to report that they sought companionship when with a sex seller ( $\chi^2=4.76$ ; df=1; p<.05). Drop-outs were more likely to report using illegal drugs on an occasional basis when with sex sellers ( $\chi^2=12.82$ ; df=3; p<.01). Drop-outs were less likely to have purchased sex in multiple Canadian cities ( $\chi^2=9.10$ ; df=1; p<.005) and less likely to have purchased sex outside of Canada ( $\chi^2=8.21$ ; df=1; p<.005). On all other areas of general purchasing behaviour there were no statistically significant differences between those participants who were excluded from the final sample and those who were included.

<sup>4</sup> A captive or coerced sample is comprised of men that have been arrested and/or who are 'participating' in the research as part of involvement in a prostitution offender diversion program (a.k.a., "john school").

<sup>5</sup> It should also be noted that for the present analysis we have excluded an additional 61 participants from the total sample of 922 because we could not confirm that they were Canadian sex buyers. Of these, 14 participants acknowledged that they had not purchased sex in Canada and they were not Canadian citizens.

those who did not were encouraged to take the time to complete the more general self-administered questionnaire.<sup>6</sup> One completed interview was discarded because it was clear that the participant was either 'mentally unbalanced' or simply lonely and wanting to talk to someone. The resulting sample of interview participants was 24.

### **Methodological Caveats and Considerations**

The methods used to sample and solicit responses for the research and the accompanying data collection techniques have several significant strengths, but they also have limitations that must be considered prior to describing the results.

### **Recruitment Strategies**

The greatest strength of our recruitment techniques lies in the option for participants to preserve anonymity. Because online discussion forums, virtual bulletin board advertising sites and print media advertisements may be viewed in relative privacy, those individuals who may not normally participate in research due to feelings of stigmatization created by public contact were given a unique opportunity to anonymously have their voices heard on issues relating to sex and sex-buying. Much of the feedback we received from sex-buyers during this research confirms that anonymity is of the utmost importance to the sex-buying population.

Furthermore, by advertising the research in online discussion forums and one of the most popular virtual bulletin board advertising sites currently in operation it was possible to inform thousands of potential participants about the research without having to spend much on advertising. Also we were able to have a relatively high degree of control over the location of the ads, the times at which they were placed, and their wording. In contrast, the advertisements we placed in the more conventional publications were often quite expensive and subject to temporal, spatial, and content restrictions.

Although our online discussion forums and virtual bulletin board advertisements were likely seen by several thousand perspective respondents, only those with an active involvement in online communities for sex buyers or those who used the Internet to research and contact sex workers would have been drawn to these venues. This is likely to have had a substantial effect on the range of sex buyers who responded and may have increased the level of volunteer bias in our sample. We attempted to reduce the effects of this bias by extending our advertising into print media and adult clubs, bars, and businesses and by enlisting the support of active members of the sex work community. Despite our efforts, the results presented should not be interpreted as representative of the Canadian sex-buying population as a whole.

Finally, we need to acknowledge that the sampling procedures used to secure participants for both the self-administered questionnaire and interview samples are based entirely on purposive sampling and/or self-selection. However, since this research is primarily concerned with developing a richer descriptive and relational understanding of the population, generalization lies beyond our immediate mandate. The problem of self-selection bias is not unique to this research, as nearly all existing prostitution research -- and, indeed, much social science survey research -- is based on non-probabilistic sampling.

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<sup>6</sup> A total of 26 of the 51 individuals who contacted the research team to inquire about participating in the research were encouraged to participate in the self-administered questionnaire because this mode of participation was deemed to be more suitable given the respondents' sex buying history and willingness to fully articulate their thoughts and experiences.

## Data Collection Techniques

The questionnaire was developed and adapted into Extensible Hypertext Mark-up Language (XHTML) and Adobe® PDF e-paper formats to enable completion and return in the manner that best suited the participant. The XHTML version of the survey was designed to allow participants to complete the questionnaire using a traditional web-browser such as Mozilla® Firefox, Microsoft® Internet Explorer, Google® Chrome, Apple® Safari or Opera. The primary advantage of using the XHTML scripting language was that the extensible mark-up language (XML) component of XHTML language structure makes it relatively easy to ensure that the survey displays uniformly in a wide range of browser-based network interfaces including personal and portable computers, mobile devices and media center systems. In addition, strict adherence to the language protocol ensured that the resulting survey was fully compliant with version 2.0 of the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) content accessibility guidelines, meaning that individuals with visual or auditory impairment were able to complete the survey using non-standard devices and browsers.

One of the many strengths of using a computer assisted data collection technique is that it is possible to use client and server-side scripting in order to exercise strict control over the way that the survey looks and functions. In the current study JavaScript was used to control the appearance and functioning of questions in the client's browser. PHP was used to control information-based elements of the survey experience. At the most basic level, client and server-side scripting was used to reduce participant attrition by providing respondents with a constant visual indication of the percentage of the survey that they had completed in the form of a progress bar located at the bottom of each page of the survey. The overall validity and reliability of the responses were enhanced by the inclusion of definitional context boxes that appeared when a participant rolled their mouse over highlighted words or phrases that were identified as being potentially confusing or contentious. Additionally, a data checking mechanism was integrated into the questionnaire to ensure that participants' responses to particular questions were expressed in a uniform fashion (e.g., a four digit numeric value was entered when asked to provide year of birth) and to check that there were no inconsistencies or missing responses in a participant's answers before they were allowed to submit them.

While the addition of basic visual cues and data checking scripts were helpful in reducing attrition and confusion among respondents and for ensuring that responses provided were consistent and formatted properly, the principal advantage that implementing client and server-side scripting into the questionnaire was the ability to make it truly adaptive. While adaptive questioning is commonplace in semi-structured interview research, it has traditionally been impossible to implement this technique in self-administered surveys. With adaptive questioning, answers provided to initial questions are used to help determine which subsequent questions will be asked and to restrict the available response options provided (Palys and Atchison, 2008). In the present study, adaptive features were built into the questionnaire completion process even before the participant had the opportunity to answer the first question asked of them.

The clear advantage of implementing adaptive questioning in the present study was that it allowed for the inclusion of a wider array of open-ended questions, and provided respondents with ample opportunity to elaborate on their responses to the more structured questions, thereby improving the overall survey experience and improving the quality of the data collected. Furthermore, since individual respondents were presented only with questions that were relevant to them and potentially confusing or complicated skip patterns were automated into the survey process, participants did not become

overwhelmed by a lengthy and confusing questionnaire. This reduced the mean time to completion ( $\bar{x}$ =27 minutes 35 seconds; SD=20 minutes 14 seconds) and probably reduced participant attrition.

Concerns have been expressed that responses to questions about particularly sensitive issues such as violent behaviour are often subject to high levels of social desirability bias where people are either unwilling or unable to accurately report their attitudes, beliefs or behaviours and instead systematically bias their responses toward what they feel to be the 'correct' or socially acceptable response (Crowne and Marlowe, 1964; Ganster et al., 1983; Maccoby and Maccoby, 1954; Nunnally, 1978). The clear implication is that, in certain populations, social desirability can dramatically impact the validity of research findings (Fisher, 1993). We took some comfort knowing that since social desirability bias can be less pronounced in anonymous self-administered surveys in general (Fuller, 1974) and network administered surveys in particular (Duffy and Smith, 2005; Kreuter et al., 2008; Tourangeau et al., 2000), our sampling and general data collection strategy would partially reduce the potentially biasing impact of the sensitive questions we asked. We also believed that a carefully crafted adaptive question format would further alleviate this problem. We employed both direct and indirect questioning on topics that we knew to be particularly sensitive (e.g., questions pertaining to violence, victimization, drug use, and sexual safety knowledge and behaviour). We also used benign language and followed-up direct questions with a series of questions requiring less structured responses. As a result, we were able to acquire detailed responses that allowed us to measure behaviours of participants in a manner that made it more difficult for them to camouflage their behaviours. Despite these advantages of the method we employed, since we do not have validation data there is no way to know the exact impact that social desirability may have had on responses to particularly sensitive questions.

Despite the numerous advantages gained by modifying the traditional self-administered questionnaire design using computer and network technology, it is generally recognized that an over-reliance on structured survey research data limits the depth of potential knowledge and understanding that may be obtained (Palys and Atchison, 2008). The structured nature of questionnaires can produce a static or over-simplified image of a social world since the very structure of the questions and the way they are asked may represent the conscious or unconscious biases of the people asking the questions instead of the culture and values of the participants. The clear-cut answers that are demanded by structured questions within a questionnaire may not provide participants with an adequate opportunity to express the underlying rationale for their beliefs, decisions or behaviours. Because of these limitations and our desire to obtain richer and more nuanced accounts of sex buyers' attitudes, beliefs and experiences, we augmented the quantitative data with qualitative information from in-depth conversational interviews. The loosely structured interviews allowed participants to more fully and completely express and explain their beliefs, behaviours, decision making practices and actions in a way that respected the meanings that were most important to them. The interview style and technology that we employed -- using digital recorders along with lapel microphones and wireless transmitters -- allowed the interviews to be conducted in true conversational style, with interviews often taking place in pool halls, moderately busy lounges or cafes, while walking about the busy city streets, or over the phone. The familiar and informal settings put the participants at ease, which made it much easier to establish trust and rapport. The typical interview lasted between 2 and 7 hours. Participants often commented at the end of the interview session how enjoyable the conversation was and how much they appreciated being able to talk openly, honestly and freely.

## **Summary of Key Findings**

Our intent in the summary below is to provide only a brief description of the general characteristics of the interview and self-administered questionnaire samples and to highlight some of the main trends in responses that appear in the quantitative portion of the project. No attempt will be made at this time to engage in any relational or comparative analysis highlighting the similarities and differences among sub-samples of sex buyers, and nor will there be any attempt to elaborate on the content of the in-depth interviews.

## The Interview Sample

The background characteristics of the participants in the interview sample are outlined in **Table 1** below.

<b>Table 1: Demographic Background of Interview Participants</b>	
<b>Demographic Feature</b>	<b>Distribution in the Sample (n=24)</b>
<b>Age</b>	Range: 24-64 years Mean (statistical average): 47 years Median (mid-point): 52 Mode (most common): 55
<b>Marital Status</b>	Married/Common-law: 5 Single: 12 Separated or Divorced: 6 Other: 1
<b>Ethnicity</b>	Asian: 2 Caucasian: 20 Latin: 1 Other (unspecified): 1
<b>Geographic Region</b>	British Columbia: 11 Prairies: 2 Ontario: 9 Quebec: 2
<b>Education Completed</b>	High school: 1 Some trade or technical: 1 Some University: 2 Diploma from Trade/Technical/College: 1 Bachelor's or Undergraduate degree: 7 Masters (MA, M.Sc., M.Ed.): 3 Law (LL.B): 1 Doctorate (Ph.D., D.Sc., D.Ed.): 1 Not Stated: 7
<b>Occupation</b>	Employed full or part time: 15 Self-employed: 5 Retired: 2 Disability/Unemployed: 2
<b>Sexual preference</b>	Heterosexual: 19 Homosexual: 3 Bisexual: 2
<b>Age first paid for sex</b>	Range: 18-61 years Mean (statistical average): 30 years Median (mid-point): 25 years Mode (most common): 18 years
<b>Years buying sex</b>	Range: 1-37 years Mean (statistical average): 15.62 years Median (mid-point): 13 years Mode (most common): 3 years
<b>Number of times paid for sex in life</b>	Range: 4-512 times Mean (statistical average): 148 times Median (mid-point): 70 times Mode (most common): 300 times
<b>Venue Experience</b>	Street only: 1 Off-street only: 20 Mixed (street and off-street): 3

## **Demographic Background**

All the participants who consented to participate in the interviews were male. Overall, the interview participants tended to be slightly older than the average self-administered survey participant. Interview participants ranged in age from 24 to 64 years with the average age being 47 years. The majority of respondents (n=19 or 79%) indicated that they were heterosexual, 3 (12.5%) were homosexual and 2 (8.3%) were bisexual. Half of the men (n=12) indicated that they were single, 5 (21%) were in a married or common-law relationship, 6 (25%) were separated or divorced and one indicated he was in a polyamorous relationship.

## **Ethnicity and Geography**

While all of the participants identified themselves as Canadian, the vast majority of the interview sample (n=20 or 83%) indicated that they were Caucasian, while two men indicated they were Asian, one Latin and one wished to remain "unspecified." When it comes to regional geography, 11 (46%) of participants resided in British Columbia, 9 (37.5%) lived in Ontario, two (8%) lived on the Prairies and two lived in Quebec.

## **Educational and Employment Background**

The majority of participants who indicated the highest level of education that they had attained (n=17) maintained that they had obtained an undergraduate university degree (n=7 or 41%) while three participants had completed graduate studies, one had completed a law degree, one had a college/trade/technical diploma, one had completed some college or university and only one had not gone beyond high school. Fifteen (62%) participants were employed full or part time, 5 (21%) were self-employed, two (8%) were retired and two (8%) were unemployed or on disability.

## **Sex Buying Background**

On average, interview participants indicated that they had purchased sex 148 times during their lifetime, with the frequency of sex buying among respondents ranging from 4 times to 512 times. The age at which interview participants first purchased sex ranged from 18 to 61 years; the average age for first buying sex was 30 years. When asked about their experience buying in different commercial venues, the majority of interviewed men (n=20 or 83%) indicated that they had purchased sex only in off-street venues, three (12.5%) had paid for sex in both street and off-street venues and one (4%) had only bought sex on the street.



## The Self-Administered Questionnaire Sample

### Demographic Background

The background characteristics of the participants in the questionnaire sample are outlined in Table 2 below. From the self-administered questionnaire sample (n=861) of Canadian sex buyers, virtually all respondents who indicated their sex or gender (n=771) indicated that they were male (99.4%) while 0.6% were female. Respondents ranged in age from 19 to 85 years with a mean of 41.6 (sd=11.25). A sizable portion of respondents who answered questions about their marital status (n=781) were married or living in a common-law relationship (47.5%), 39.3% were single, while 11.9% were separated or divorced. Of those respondents who were not in a marital or common-law relationship (n=415), 24.6% indicated that they had a current regular non-commercial sex partner. Slightly over one-quarter of respondents in the sample (26.5% or n=198) indicated that prostitution was their only source of sex during the previous 12 months. The bulk of the respondents were born in Canada (83.1% or n=640) and self-identified as "Canadian" (97.3%). Of the 444 participants who provided information about their ethnic or cultural identity, 69.1% were Caucasian, 8.3% were Asian, 2.7% Indian, 1.4% African, 1.8% Latin, 1.6% Aboriginal and 1.1% Middle Eastern.

Age		
	Mean	41.6
	Median	40.0
	Mode	38.0
	Min	19
	Max	85
	SD	11.25
Sex or Gender	n	%
Female	5	0.6
Male	766	99.4
Total	771	100.0
Marital Status	n	%
Married or common-law	371	47.5
Single	307	39.3
Widowed	6	0.8
Separated or Divorced	93	11.9
Other	4	0.5
Total	781	100.0
Currently have a regular sex partner	n	%
Yes	102	24.6
No	313	75.4
Total	415	100.0

Born in Canada	n	%
Yes	640	83.1
No	130	16.9
Total	770	100.0
Consider self Canadian	n	%
Yes	747	97.3
No	21	2.7
Total	768	100.0
Ethnic or cultural group see self belonging to	n	%
Caucasian	307	69.1
Asian	37	8.3
African	6	1.5
Aboriginal	7	1.6
Indian	12	2.7
Latin	8	1.8
Middle Eastern	5	1.1
"Canadian"	49	11.0
Other	13	2.9
Total	444	100.0

## Educational Background

The educational background of the participants is outlined in Table 3 below. Of the respondents who had schooling beyond high school (n=720), 29.4% had a bachelor's or teaching degree, 29.7% some university, college, trade or technical education, 18.8% had a diploma or certificate from a trade, technical, vocational, business or community college, 14% had a masters degree, 3.8% a doctorate, 1.8% a law degree and 1.1% medical, dental or veterinary degree.

<b>Table 3: Educational Background</b>		
<b>Graduated from high-school</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>
Yes	719	94.5
No	42	5.5
Total	761	100.0
<b>Highest level of education completed</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>
Some trade, technical or vocational schooling or business college	92	12.8
Some university, community college, CEGEP or nursing school	122	16.9
Diploma or certificate from trade, technical, or vocational school, or business college	87	12.1
Diploma or certificate from community college, CEGEP or nursing school	48	6.7
Law - LL.B	13	1.8
Bachelor or Undergraduate degree or teachers college	212	29.4
Degree in Medicine, Dentistry, Veterinary Medicine, or Optometry	9	1.1
Masters - MA, M.Sc., M.Ed.	101	14.0
Doctorate - Ph.D., D.Sc., D.Ed.	27	3.8
Other	10	1.4
Total	720	100.0

## Occupation and Income

The employment background of the participants is outlined in Table 4 below. The majority of sex buyers stated that they were employed full-time (65.1%) and 19.7% were self employed. Of the 623 respondents who indicated their occupation, 17.0% were employed in business, finance and administration, 12.5% in trades or transport, 11.6% in the natural sciences, 10.8% in management occupations, 10.6% in sales or service, 9.6% in education, social science or government service, 5.6% in health occupations, and 1.1% in processing, manufacturing and primary industry. The median personal income for the sample is relatively high, with 56% of participants indicating their annual personal income (n=713) stating they earned over \$60,000, 30.3% earned between \$30,000-\$59,999, 6.0% between \$20,000-\$29,999 and 7.5% under \$20,000.

<b>Table 4: Occupational Status and Income</b>		
<b>Occupational status</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>
Employed full-time	499	65.1
Employed part-time	16	2.1
Self-employed	151	19.7
Student	36	4.8
Retired	40	5.2
On disability pension	7	0.9
On unemployment benefits	4	0.5
Unemployed with no state support	10	1.3
Other	3	0.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>766</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Occupational Classification</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>
Management	67	10.8
Business, Finance and Administrative	106	17.0
Natural or Applied Sciences	72	11.6
Health	35	5.6
Social Science, Education, Government or Religion	60	9.6
Art, Culture, Recreation or Sport	27	4.3
Sales and Service	66	10.6
Trades and Transport	78	12.5
Processing, Manufacturing and Primary Industry	7	1.1
Student, Retired, Disability or Unemployed	97	15.6
Other	8	1.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>623</b>	<b>100.0</b>

<b>Personal Income in 2007</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>
No income or loss	7	1.0
Less than \$5000	4	0.6
\$5000-\$9,999	11	1.5
\$10,000-\$14,999	14	2.0
\$15,000-\$19,999	17	2.4
\$20,000-\$29,999	43	6.0
\$30,000-\$39,999	50	7.0
\$40,000-\$49,999	76	10.7
\$50,000-\$59,999	90	12.6
\$60,000-\$79,999	127	17.8
\$80,000-\$99,999	96	13.5
\$100,000 or higher	1778	25.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>713</b>	<b>100.0</b>

## Sexual Identity, Sexual Partners and Commercial Sexual Activity

Slightly over three-quarters of respondents who answered questions about their sexual identity (n=772) identified as "heterosexual" (78.8%), 13.0% were "bisexual", 8.0% were "gay" (see Table 5 below). The commercial sexual activity background of participants is outlined in table 6 below. On average, sex buyers indicated that they had 12.46 sex partners (both commercial and non-commercial) during the previous 12 months. Most of the sex buyers in the sample could be classified as 'experienced' buyers<sup>7</sup> (94.9%). The lifetime frequency of sex buying among respondents ranged from 1 time to 5000 times, with the mean number of lifetime sexual purchases being 108.76 (sd=328.47). Since relatively few buyers (n=42 or 4.9%) in the sample reported having purchased sex over 300 times in their lifetime, these few participants inflate the average lifetime sex buying numbers; the modal value of lifetime sex purchases for the sample is much lower, with an average of 100 times.

**Table 5: Sexual Identity**

Sexual Identity	n	%
Heterosexual	608	78.8
Gay	62	8.0
Bisexual	100	13.0
Other	2	0.3
Total	772	100.0

While the age at which respondents first purchased sex ranges from 12 to 69 years, the average age that respondents reported first buying sex is 27 years.

**Table 6: Commercial Sexual Activity**

Times paid money for sex in lifetime		
	Mean	108.76
	Median	30
	Mode	100
	Range	1-5000
	SD	328.47
Age first purchased sex		
	Mean	27.08
	Median	25.0
	Mode	25.0
	Range	12-69
	SD	9.43
Number of sexual partners in the previous 12 months		
	Mean	12.46
	Median	6
	Mode	5
	Range	1-250
	SD	21.21
Number of different indoor sex establishments or locations frequented during previous 12 months		
	Mean	4.8
	Median	3
	Mode	1
	Range	1-50
	SD	5.64
Buyer Type		
Inexperienced Buyer (One or Two Times in Life)	n	%
	44	5.1
Experienced Buyer (Three or More Times in Life)	817	94.9
Total	861	100.0

<sup>7</sup> An experienced buyer is someone who has purchased sex on three or more occasions in their lifetime.

## Buyer Preferences - Gender, Age and Ethnicity of Sex Worker

Of the buyers who answered questions about their preferences (n=841), 86.1% stated that they generally prefer to be with a female sex seller, 10.5% male, 1.3% transgender or other, and the remaining 2.1% had no preference (see Table 8 below). Accordingly, of the 785 respondents who answered the question, 87.6% reported that their most recent commercial sex partner was female, 10.8% male, and 1.4% transgender (see Table 8 below). When it comes to age and ethnicity (see Table 7 below) It would appear that many of sex

**Table 8: Sex or Gender Preferences**

Sex or gender of sex seller preferred	n	%
No preference	18	2.1
Female	724	86.1
Male	88	10.5
Transgender	10	1.2
Other	1	0.1
Total	841	100.0
Sex or gender of most recent sex seller	n	%
Female	688	87.6
Male	85	10.8
Transgender	11	1.4
Unknown	1	0.1
Total	785	100.0

buyers in the sample (32.7%) prefer visiting sex sellers that are between 21-25 years of age, 22.0% prefer between 26-30, 12.4% between 18-20, 9.4% 31-35 years of age, 5.3% between 36-40, 1.8% prefer 41 years or older, 1.2% indicate a preference for sex workers 18 years of age or younger. On their most recent visit to a sex seller, 34.9% of the 777 respondents who answered the question indicated that the sex seller they visited was between 21-25 years of age, 27.2% were between 26-30, 15.8% were 31-35, 13.3% were over 35, and 0.8% were 18 years of age or younger. Given the concerns often expressed about the demand for prostitution being fuelled by the excessive demand for racialized bodies (Razack, 2000), it is important to note that 70.0% of the 784 respondents who answered the question indicated that the most recent sex seller they visited did not belong to a visible minority group.

**Table 7: Age and Ethnicity Preferences**

Age range prefer for sex sellers	n	%
Under 18	10	1.2
18-20	104	12.4
21-25	274	32.7
26-30	184	22.0
31-35	79	9.4
36-40	44	5.3
41-45	11	1.3
46-Older	4	0.5
No Preference	128	15.3
Total	838	100.0
Age of most recent sex seller	n	%
Under 18	6	0.8
18-20	63	8.1
21-25	271	34.9
26-30	211	27.2
31-35	123	15.8
36-40	58	7.5
41-45	31	4.0
46-Older	14	1.8
Total	777	100.0
Most recent sex seller visible minority	n	%
Yes	235	30.0
No	549	70.0
Total	784	100.0

## General Characteristics of Lifetime Sex Buying

Sex buyers were asked a variety of questions about the types of venues they generally frequented when buying sex (see Table 9 below). While 61.3% of clients who responded to the question (n = 759) indicated that they had no preference for street or off-street venues, 35.4% indicated that they only purchased sex in off-street venues and 3.3% indicated that they only purchased sex on the street. When asked what venue they prefer, many (32.8%) of the 839 participants who responded stated they prefer to use in-call services, 26.9% prefer escort services, 16.2% massage parlours, and 10.6% street. Thirty-six percent of respondents went on to state that they only visit sex sellers they meet through their preferred venue and 35.5% met most or all of their commercial sex partners through the same location or establishment.

<b>Table 9: Venue or Location Preference</b>		
<b>Venue Preference</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>
Exclusively Street	25	3.3
Exclusively Off Street	269	35.4
No Preference or Varied Venue	465	61.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>759</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Types of sex sellers most often visited</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>
No preference	17	2.0
Street	89	10.6
Escort	226	26.9
Ad - In-call	275	32.8
Ad - Out-call	48	5.7
Massage Parlour	136	16.2
Brothel or Micro-brothel	19	2.3
Club or Bar	15	1.8
Online	13	1.5
Other	1	0.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>839</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Specific venues or locations or establishments where met most or all of the sex sellers visited</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>
Yes	298	35.5
No	542	64.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>840</b>	<b>100.0</b>

When it comes to the details of the typical encounter (Table 10 below), 53.9% (n=452) of respondents indicated that they tend to spend between 31 minutes and an hour on each visit to a sex seller, 19.7% spend between 1 and 2 hours, 18.2% between 16 and 30 minutes, 2.9% over 2 hours, and 1.9% under 15 minutes. When asked about the main service generally paid for, many clients (24.5% or n=200) indicated they pay for multiple acts, 16.9% generally paid for half oral and half vaginal sex, 14.7% only vaginal sex, 10.0% only oral sex, and 16.6% paid for the "girlfriend experience" or "GFE"<sup>8</sup>. Nineteen percent (n=157) of respondents specifically mentioned that "companionship" was an important element of what they pay for when visiting a sex seller.

<b>Table 10: General Length of Time and Main Activity</b>		
<b>Length of time generally spent during visit with sex seller</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>
6-15 Minutes	16	1.9
16-30 Minutes	153	18.2
31 Minutes - 1 Hour	452	53.9
1.01 hours - 2 hours	165	19.7
Over 2 hours	24	2.9
It depends	29	3.5
Total	839	100.0
<b>Main activity generally paid for when with sex seller</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>
Companionship ONLY	13	1.6
Oral Sex	82	10.0
Give Oral Sex	2	0.2
Vaginal Sex	120	14.7
Anal Sex	6	0.7
Receive Anal Sex	0	0
Masturbation	25	3.1
Sex Toys	2	0.2
Multiple Partners	3	0.4
Fetish	10	1.2
50/50 - Half Oral and Half Vaginal	138	16.9
Multiple Acts	200	24.5
50/50 - Half Oral and Half Anal	14	1.7
Massage with Hand job or Oral	44	5.4
GFE	136	16.6
Oral and Hand-job	13	1.6
Other	9	1.1
Total	817	100.0
<b>Specifically mentioned companionship as important</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>
No	660	80.8
Yes	157	19.2
Total	817	100.0

<sup>8</sup> A "GFE" is a full service experience that generally involves providing aspects of social and physical interaction beyond sure sexual contact.

## General Characteristics of Most Recent Commercial Encounter

A series of questions were asked to determine the venue, activity and time spent with a sex seller during their most recent visit (Table 11 below). A total of 793 people responded to venue specific questions; 29.6% of stated they had met their most recent commercial partner through in-call advertisements, 18.7% through an escort agency, 15.6% a massage parlour, 10.3% online, 10.5% on the street, and 6.1% through an out-call advertisement.

**Table 11: Venue of Most Recent Encounter**

Venue where most recent sex seller visited	n	%
Street	83	10.5
Escort	148	18.7
Club or Bar	9	1.1
Hotel	23	2.9
Massage Parlour	124	15.6
Ad Out-call	48	6.1
Ad In-call	235	29.6
Brothel or Micro-brothel	16	2.0
Exotic dance or strip club or show lounge	14	1.8
Online	82	10.3
Long time Regular Customer	6	0.8
Other	5	0.7
Total	793	100.0



When asked about the time they spent during their most recent visit with a sex seller (Table 12 below), of the 783 people who answered the question, 47.8% indicated that they spent between 31 minutes and an hour with a sex seller, 21.2% spent between 1 and 2 hours, 18.5% between 16 and 30 minutes, 5.1% under 15 minutes, and 7.4% over 2 hours. Slightly more than one-quarter (27.7%) of the 746 people who provided responses to the question indicated that they had purchased a combination of vaginal and oral sex, 24.8% paid for multiple acts, 11.7% oral sex, and 11.1% purchased massage with masturbation as the main activity during their most recent visit with a sex seller. Slightly over one-quarter of respondents in the sample (26.5% or n=198) indicated that prostitution was their only source of sex during the previous 12 months and 66.0% (n=502) indicated that they have had sex with the same sex seller more than once during this time.

<b>Table 12: Time Spent and Activities Paid for During Most Recent Visit</b>		
<b>Time spent with sex seller during most recent visit</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>
Less than 5 minutes	3	0.4
6-15 Minutes	37	4.7
16-30 Minutes	145	18.5
31 Minutes - 1 Hour	174	47.8
1 - 2 hours	166	21.2
Over 2 hours	58	7.4
Total	783	100.0
<b>Type of sexual activity or activities engaged in during most recent paid sexual encounter</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>
Massage/Masturbation/Hand Job	83	11.1
Hand Job/Oral	60	8.0
Oral Sex - Receive	87	11.7
Oral Sex - Give	3	0.4
Vaginal sex	39	5.2
50/50 - Oral/Vaginal	207	27.7
Anal Sex - Give	5	0.7
50/50 - Oral/Anal	22	2.9
Multiple Partners	9	1.2
Fetish	17	2.3
Multiple Acts	185	24.8
Mutual Oral/69	4	0.5
GFE	3	0.4
Hand/Massage/Vaginal	8	1.1
Other	14	1.9
Total	746	100.0

## Area Where Sex Purchased

In order to better understand the geography of sexual purchasing among the sample, a series of questions were asked about experiences buying within Canadian borders and beyond. Roughly two-thirds (69.5% or n=567) of respondents indicated that they had purchased sex in multiple Canadian cities while 30.5% had only purchased in one Canadian city. Of the 855 people who responded to the question, 47.5% of participants indicated that they had purchased sex outside of Canada. Of the 449 clients who indicated where they had purchased sex outside of Canada, 63.5% stated they had purchased in Western nations, 16.5% in non-Western nations and 20.1% in both Western and non-Western nations.

## Sexual Safety Behaviour

Of those respondents who were married, common-law or had a regular non-commercial sex partner, 65.7% (n=501) stated that they never use a condom during intercourse with their spouse or regular sex partner, 11.2% did so only occasionally, and 13.8% always did and 9.4% often did (see Table 13 below). When asked about what sexual activity during which they were **least likely** to use a condom when with their spouse or regular partner, 47.0% (n=165) stated all activities, 13.1% only oral sex, 11.4% vaginal, oral and masturbation, and 5.7% only vaginal sex.

<b>Table 13: Non-Commercial Sexual Safety Behaviour</b>		
<b>How often use condom when with spouse or regular sex partner</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>
Always	69	13.8
Often	47	9.4
Occasionally	56	11.2
Never	329	65.7
Total	501	100.0
<b>Activities NOT LIKELY to use a condom when with spouse or regular sex partner</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>
All	165	47.0
Masturbation	13	3.7
Oral Sex	46	13.1
Vaginal Sex	20	5.7
All Except During Menstruation	2	0.6
All Except Anal	3	0.9
All Except Vaginal and Oral/Masturbation	40	11.4
All Except Anal and Oral/Masturbation	5	1.4
All Except Oral/Manual	34	9.7
All Except Vaginal and Anal	6	1.7
None	8	2.3
Other	9	2.6
Total	351	100.0

When asked how they protect themselves from HIV/AIDS, sexually transmitted infections (STIs) or sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) as a result of their visits with sex sellers, 48.9% (n=326) indicated they use condoms only, 28.8% employed condoms, other "safe sex practices", "observation" and "partner selection", 5.7% used safe sex practices, 4.8% used multiple protection strategies, 4.2% used condoms and hygiene, 0.7% used only "observation" and "common sense", 0.6% used familiar partners or "research", and 2.7% did not protect themselves. Of the 779 clients who responded to the question, 68.8% indicated that they used a condom during their most recent paid sexual encounter. Despite this, during the previous 12 months 65.1% (n=479) of buyers indicated that they had received oral sex from a sex seller without a condom, 11.7% (n=84) had vaginal sex without a condom, 6.8% (n=48) had anal sex without a condom, 75.9% (n=562) masturbated without a condom, and 2.7% (n=19) had group sex without a condom.

## Sexual Safety and Knowledge

In order to better understand some of the individual context to sexual safety practices, respondents were asked a series of questions about their attitudes and understandings of sexual safety (Table 14 and Table 15 below). Slightly over half (54.5%) of the 815 sex buyers who answered the question felt that there are definite disadvantages to using a condom during sex. When asked what these disadvantages were, 73.0% (n=309) of respondents felt that condoms reduced sensation, 15.4% cited

Table 14: Disadvantages of Condom Use			Table 15: Advantages of Condom Use		
Felt there were disadvantages to using condoms	n	%	Felt there were advantages to using condoms	n	%
Yes	443	54.4	Yes	804	98.7
No	372	45.6	No	11	1.3
Total	815	100.0	Total	815	100.0
Disadvantages of condom use	n	%	Advantages of condom use	n	%
No Disadvantages	372	46.8	Prevent Disease Transmission/Death	432	57.6
Reduce Sensation	309	38.9	Birth Control	2	0.3
Decrease in Intimacy	20	2.5	General Safety	140	18.7
Loss of Spontaneity/Mood Killer	6	0.8	Enhance Sex/Peace of Mind	6	0.8
Cost/Availability	1	0.1	Birth and Disease Control	124	16.5
Messy/Awkward	3	0.4	Multiple Reasons	34	4.5
Breakage/Fit	7	0.9	Other	12	1.6
Multiple Disadvantages	65	8.2	Total	750	100.0
Other	12	1.5			
Total	423	100.0			

multiple disadvantages, 4.7% felt they decreased intimacy or killed the mood, while the remaining 6.9% cited issues of cost, availability, messiness, breakage or fit. Despite the fact that many respondents felt there are disadvantages to condom use, 98.6% (n=815) maintained that there are also advantages to using condoms. Of these advantages, the most cited (57.6% or n=432) was the prevention of disease or death, followed by 18.7% general safety, while 16.5% cited both birth and disease control.

Participants were asked a variety of questions about HIV/AIDS knowledge and testing (see Table 16 below). Ninety-eight percent (n=794) of respondents indicated that they were aware of HIV/AIDS. Of the 782 sex buyers who responded to the question, 67.5% maintained that they had been tested for HIV/AIDS in their lifetime. Despite this, 26.9% had only been tested once in their lifetime, 21.5% get tested yearly, 19.2% every 2-5 years, 13.4% less than every five years, 13.1% every six months, and 6.0% every 1 to 5 months. When asked what motivated them to get tested (see Table 16 below), of the 152 people who responded, 27.6% cited risky sex, sex accident or a risky partner as the motivating factor, 22.4% cited general curiosity or common sense, 21.1% an annual check-up or early detection, 14.5% a request of a sex partner or being in a new relationship, 4.6% for work or insurance reasons, 2.0% showed symptoms, 2.6% wanted to donate blood, and 2.0% were tested at a doctor's request. Of the respondents who indicated that they had been tested, 1.4% (n=8) indicated that they had tested positive for HIV.

<b>Table 16: HIV/AIDS Knowledge and Testing</b>		
<b>Heard of HIV/AIDS</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>
Yes	794	98.1
No	15	1.9
Total	809	100.0
<b>Been tested for HIV or AIDS</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>
Yes	528	67.5
No	254	32.5
Total	782	100.0
<b>How often tested for HIV or AIDS</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>
Every 1-5 months	31	6.0
Every 6 months	68	13.1
Every year	112	21.5
Every 2-5 years	100	19.2
Less than every 5yrs	70	13.4
Only once in my life	140	26.9
Total	521	100.0

<b>Reasons for HIV/AIDS testing</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>
Risky Sex/Sex Accident/Risky Partner	42	27.6
Request of Sex Partner/New Partner/Relationship	22	14.5
Showed Symptoms	3	2.0
General Curiosity/Common Sense	34	22.4
Annual Check-up/Early Detection	32	21.1
Blood Donation	4	2.6
Doctor's Request	3	2.0
Work/Insurance Reasons	7	4.6
Other	2	1.3
Don't Know	3	2.0
Total	152	100.0

Participants were asked a variety of questions about STD/STI knowledge and testing (see Table 17 below). Similarly to HIV/AIDS, 95.9% (n=768) respondents indicated that they were aware of STDs and STIs. Only 67.1% (n=508) had been tested for an STD or STI in their lifetime. Of the people who had been tested and who responded to the question (n=464), 24.6% had only been tested once in their lifetime, 23.7% indicated that they get tested for STDs/STIs every year, 16.8% every 2 to 5 years, 16.6% less than every five years, 12.3% every six months, and 6.0% every 1 to 5 months. Of the respondents who indicated that they had been tested, 5.4% (n=24) indicated that they had a positive STI/STD test during the previous six months. Eight percent (n=37) had been treated for an STD/STI in the previous six months.

<b>Table 17: STD and STI Knowledge and Testing</b>		
<b>Heard of STDs or STIs</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>
Yes	768	95.9
No	33	4.1
Total	801	100.0
<b>Been tested for an STI or STD</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>
Yes	508	67.1
No	249	32.9
Total	757	100.0
<b>How often get tested for STDs or STIs</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>
Every 1-5 months	28	6.0
Every 6 months	57	12.3
Every year	110	23.7
Every 2-5 years	78	16.8
Less than every 5yrs	77	16.6
Only once in my life	114	24.6
Total	464	100.0
<b>Tested positive for STD or STI test during previous 6 months</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>
Yes	24	5.4
No	420	94.6
Total	444	100.0
<b>Treated for any STDs or STIs during previous 6 months</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>
Yes	37	8.1
No	418	91.9
Total	455	100.0

## Substance Use When Buying Sex

We asked sex-buyers a variety of questions about how often they use specific substances during their commercial sex encounters (see Table 18 below). Three percent (n=27) of respondents said they always used alcohol just prior to or during their visits, 5.0% often used alcohol, and 18.3% occasionally did so. When asked about their use of illegal drugs, 1.4% (n=12) indicated they always used illegal drugs, 3.5% often did, and 10.4% occasionally did. Overall, substance use prior to or during the commercial encounter is not very common among the sample.

<b>Table 18: Substance Use When Buying Sex</b>		
<b>Frequency drink more than three alcoholic beverages prior to buying sex</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>
Always	27	3.2
Often	42	5.0
Occasionally	153	18.3
Never	616	73.5
Total	838	100.0
<b>Frequency of illegal drug use prior to buying sex</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>
Always	12	1.4
Often	29	3.5
Occasionally	87	10.4
Never	709	84.7
Total	837	100.0

## **Victimization By and Offenses against Sex Sellers**

### ***Client Experiences of Victimization by Sex Sellers***

Many of the 855 clients in the sample who responded to a series of questions about their experiences of being victimized by a sex seller responded that they had very few such experiences. When victimization was experienced it most often (42.9% or n=365) took the form of not receiving services paid for, with 39.2% of the sex buyers who had experienced this form of victimization reporting that this had occurred once, 40.4% said that it had occurred on two or three occasions, and 21.4% indicating that this had happened on more than three occasions. Almost twenty percent (n=169) of buyers stated they had been robbed by a sex seller (50.3% of these on one occasion, 37.0% two or three times, and 12.7% more than three times). Roughly 18.6% (n=158) of sex buyers in the sample indicated they had been verbally abused by a sex seller, with 36.1% of these individuals indicating this had happened just once, 39.8% experiencing it two or three times, and 24.1% having experienced this on more than three occasions. Close to 14.3% (n=122) indicated that they had money or property stolen from them when with a sex seller, with 59.2% of these respondents reporting that this occurred only once, 24.6% only twice and 16.2% more than twice. Finally, slightly more than 4.5% (n=38) of sex buyers indicated that they had been hit, pushed or physically attacked by a sex seller, with 68.2% of these individuals indicating that this had only happened once, 22.7% twice, and 9.1% more than twice.

### ***Client Experiences of Offending Against a Sex Seller***

The most frequently cited form of "attack" against a sex seller reported by buyers in the sample comes in the form of posting a negative review about a sex seller on an online forum, with 29.4% of respondents (n=250) reporting having done so (30.2% once, 31.7% twice, 12.2% three times, and 26.0% more than three times). Many clients in the sample (20.5% or n=174) also indicate that they have argued with a sex seller over terms of service, with 20.5% of these respondents indicating this has occurred once, 25.9% twice, 14.6% three times and 38.9% on more than three occasions. On a related note, 12.3% (n=104) of respondents indicated that they have refused to pay a seller for services or had to 'renegotiate' terms of service after they had received services, and 13.8% (n=117) have tried to get services for free from a sex seller. Verbal abuse was inflicted on a sex seller by 4.4% (n=37) of clients in the sample, with 33.3% of these respondents claiming to have done so on only one occasion, 30.6% twice, 11.1% three times, and 25.0% on three or more occasions.

A small portion of sex buyers in the sample admitted to having committed 'violent' offenses as defined by the *Criminal Code of Canada* against sex sellers (n=29 or 3.4%). Less than 2% (n=14) of sex buyers said they had robbed a sex seller, 1.9% (n=16) had hit, pushed or physically attacked one and 1.0% (n=8) report having raped or sexually assaulted a sex seller.

## Sharing and Communication about Sex Buying

Participants were asked a range of questions about their sharing and communication about sex buying (see Table 19 below). Almost 50% of sex buyers who responded to questions about how often and to whom they communicated information about their sex buying (n = 831) reported that they had never talked to anyone about their use of commercial sex services. Of those respondents who reported that they have spoken to others about their sex buying, 23.0% had spoken to male friends, 16.8% to other sex sellers, 12.3% a spouse, partner or other sex partner, 9.9% other sex buyers, and 8.9% female friends. Accordingly, only 18.5% (n=77) of sex buyers indicated that they inform others when they are going to buy sex, stating privacy, embarrassment, stigma, shame and fear as the most important reasons for not doing so.

**Table 19: Sharing and Communication about Sex Buying**

<b>Spoken to anyone about visits with sex sellers</b>		<b>n</b>	
Yes		422	50.8
No		409	49.2
Total		831	100.0
<b>Who Spoken to About Sex Buying (multiple response)</b>		<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>
Religious counsellor or Priest or Minister		11	0.8
Stranger		55	3.8
Male friends		333	23.0
Female friends		128	8.9
Mother		14	1.0
Father		18	1.2
Spouse or partner		67	4.6
Other sex partners		111	7.7
Other relatives		33	2.3
Work colleagues		88	6.1
Other sex sellers		243	16.8
Other sex buyers		143	9.9
Doctor or nurse or health clinic staff		94	6.5
Police		14	1.0
Lawyer		9	0.6
Psychiatrist or psychologist or therapist or counsellor		60	4.1
Online friends or acquaintances		3	0.2
Sex addicts anonymous		18	1.2
Other		4	0.3
Total		1446	100.0



When asked which person or group they would trust the most to talk to about their sex buying (Table 20 below), 26.5% of respondents who answered the question (n=626) indicated that they would only trust

Person or group trust the most to talk to about sex buying	n	%
Health care providers	82	13.1
Sex sellers	166	26.5
Male friends	139	22.2
Female friends	12	1.9
Mother	2	0.3
Father	2	0.3
Other relatives	5	0.8
Spouse or partner	16	2.6
Other sex partners	10	1.6
Other sex buyers	53	8.5
Online friends or communities	85	13.6
Co-worker	5	0.8
Religious counsellor or Priest or Minister	4	0.6
Police	2	0.3
Lawyers	2	0.3
Support groups	25	4.0
Perfect strangers	8	1.3
Researchers	1	0.2
Non-Religious Counsellors	4	0.6
Other	3	0.5
Total	626	100.0

sex sellers, 22.2% male friends, 13.6% online friends or communities, 13.1% health care providers and 8.5% other sex buyers. When asked what sources they trusted most to learn about issues relating to prostitution and buying sex, 37.7% of respondents who answered the question (n=626) indicated health care providers, 20.1% online friends or communities, 12.0% sex sellers, 6.7% other sex buyers, 6.2% support groups, and 4.8% male friends.

### Secrecy and "Outing"

Many survey participants reported that they actively attempted to hide their sex buying from others and that they experienced some degree of anxiety or worry at the thought of being "outed" as sex buyers. Of the 469 respondents with spouses or regular partners who answered questions about their spouse or partner's knowledge of their sex buying, 78.7% indicated that they actively hide their sex buying from their partner. Furthermore, 63.0% (n=295) indicated that they worry about their spouse or partner finding out, with 14.0% indicating they were very worried, 16.3% that they were worried and

21.7% were a little bit worried. When asked what they thought would happen if their spouse or regular partner found out about their sex buying, 60.9% of the 238 respondents who answered the question indicated that they thought the news would be met with divorce, 11.3% thought it would cause trouble in the relationship (i.e., a fight, argument or separation), 10.5% felt their partner would be upset, 4.6% thought it would result in 'general disaster', and 1.3% 'violence'.

When it comes to the reactions of family, friends and co-workers, 48.0% of respondents indicated that they worry that their family will find out that they have purchased sex, 47.2% worry their friends will find out and 47.3% worry their co-workers will find out. When asked what they thought might happen if any of these people found out that they purchased sex, 41% of respondents indicated they would suffer shame, embarrassment, stigma or ridicule, 16.6% felt they would lose family or friends or suffer some form of ostracism, 13.2% felt there would be multiple repercussions, while 13.4% either didn't care or felt that there would be no repercussions.

## Law and Policy

In order to speak to current debates surrounding the legality of the buying and selling of sex in Canada, participants were asked a series of questions about their general awareness of and attitudes toward prostitution laws in Canada as well as their opinions on what forms of regulation, if any, need to be adopted (see Table 21 and Table 22 below).

When asked if they were aware of the current Canadian laws relating to prostitution, 61.6% of those who responded to the question (n=831) indicated they were aware of the laws. Of the respondents who

<b>Table 21: Law and Policy Knowledge and Opinions</b>		
<b>Aware of the current Canadian laws relating to prostitution</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>
Yes	512	61.6
No	319	38.4
Total	831	100.0
<b>Level of understanding of Canadian prostitution laws</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>
Incorrect or no knowledge	44	9.4
Partially incorrect knowledge	66	14.2
Partially correct knowledge	227	48.7
Correct or full knowledge	113	24.2
Other	16	3.4
Total	466	100.0

claimed to be aware of the Canadian laws who went on to elaborate on their understanding (n=466), 9.4% had an incorrect knowledge of the laws, 14.8% had a partially incorrect knowledge, 48.7% had a partially correct knowledge and 24.2% had a full knowledge of the laws.

Only 3.8% of our sample who answered questions pertaining to their experience with the law (n=504) indicated that they had been arrested for communicating in a public place for the purpose of buying sex. Despite this fact, 55.1% of 826 respondents indicated that they had worried about being arrested for

communicating for the purposes of buying sex; of these respondents who were worried (n=453), 44.6% indicated they were a little bit worried, 30.9% were worried and 24.5% very worried.

Almost all (98.2%) of the 791 respondents who answered the question felt that prostitution should be legal in Canada and 79.9% felt that this legalization should be accompanied by some form of government regulation (37.4% of these respondents favouring general licensing with multiple restrictions, 19.8% health related regulations, 24.9% a combination of health and venue, revenue, substance, safety and/or age regulations) (see Table 22 below). The majority (81.9%) of the 817 people who answered indicated that they believe that the law should be changed to protect clients of sex workers. Of those who elaborated on how this should be done (see Table 23 below), 34.5% suggested making prostitution legal, 24.9% felt we should legalize or decriminalize prostitution and regulate/tax/control the industry, 11.7% felt the answer lies in decriminalization, 11.5% specifically

<b>Table 22: Recommended Rules or Regulations for Sex Trade</b>		
<b>Specific rules or regulations that should be placed on prostitution if it is made legal in Canada</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>
General Licensing/Regulation - Multiple Restrictions (e.g., age, drug, health, location, safety)	219	37.4
<b>Health Regulations</b>	<b>116</b>	<b>19.8</b>
Health and Age Regulations	8	1.4
Health and Safety Regulations	64	10.9
Health and Venue Regulations	38	6.5
Health and Revenue (Taxation) Regulations	29	4.9
Health and Substance Regulations	7	1.2
Safety Regulations	10	1.7
Age/Consent/Trafficking/Pimping Regulations	23	3.9
Location/Environment Regulations (e.g., not on street)	26	4.4
Employment/Taxation Regulation	20	3.4
Other	16	2.7
Don't Know	10	1.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>586</b>	<b>100.0</b>

mentioned changing the law to protect clients and/or sex sellers so as to provide better accountability, 4.7% wanted the legalization of brothels or bawdy houses and 1.3% favoured the creation of red light districts. Of the 80 respondents

who did not actually feel the law needed to be changed and who elaborated on why they felt this way, 48.7% (n=39) felt that the law is fine the way it is and 23.7% felt that people in violation of the law should accept the consequences of their actions.

<b>Table 23: Recommendations for Legal Change</b>		
<b>How law should be changed</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>
Legalize Prostitution/Make Legal	191	34.5
Decriminalize Prostitution/Get Rid of Laws/Stop Prosecuting	65	11.7
Legalize or Decriminalize and Regulate/Tax/Control Industry	138	24.9
Protect Clients/Provide Accountability	40	7.2
Protect Sex Workers	4	0.7
Protect Both Sex Workers and Clients	20	3.6
Legalize/Allow Brothels/Bawdy House	26	4.7
Legalize/Allow Solicitation	2	0.4
Mandatory Disease Testing	1	0.2
Create Red Light District	7	1.3
Leave People Alone/Butt Out	14	2.5
Other	20	3.6
Don't Know/Uncertain About Law	26	4.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>554</b>	<b>100.0</b>

## Conclusion

In order to place this research within the wider context of similar research conducted on sex buyers we conclude with a brief description of the 'typical' respondent and the major themes to emerge from data described above. The interview sample is composed of males, over the age of 40, predominantly single, heterosexual, Caucasian, and well educated with clear economic security. Because these men were purposively selected according to their commercial sex buying background and experience, most of them have over a decade of experience buying sex in a variety of street and off-street venues. The self-administered questionnaire sample also comprises males who are, on average, slightly younger than the interview participants but well within the range most commonly reported in similar studies of this population (Lowman and Atchison, 2006; Winick and Kinsie, 1971; Freund et al., 1991; McKeganey, 1994; Barnard et al., 1993; de Graff, 1995; Vanwesenbeeck et al., 1994). Over three-quarters of the men are heterosexual and almost half are married or in a common-law relationship. While almost all of the men self-identify as "Canadian," the sample is predominantly Caucasian (although some degree of racial/ethnic diversity is present). The men are well educated, with over one-third indicating that they have completed university education at varying levels. Most of them are gainfully employed in a variety of different occupations and earning, on average, more than \$60,000 per annum. Like their interview counterparts, the majority of the questionnaire respondents could be classified as 'experienced' sex buyers, with most participants indicating that they had paid for sex 100 times in their life. Overall, the demographic background of both the questionnaire and interview sample could best be described as reflective of the class, ethnic, cultural and political majority in Canada (i.e., middle class, Caucasian, heterosexual and male).

In addition to helping better understand the general composition of the Johns' Voice sample, the responses to the self-administered questionnaire reveal several valuable inroads for further inquiry. While it is clear that off-street venues are the most popular for most of the men in the sample (only 3.3% of participants indicated a preference strictly for street prostitution), there is a clear trend when it comes to which off-street venue is most frequently visited by participants. While the majority of buyers stated that they prefer in-call, escort services and massage parlours, a minority of participants indicated a preference for brothels or micro-brothels, clubs, bars or online avenues. At this point it is impossible to draw any firm conclusions about this clustering of preferences. They may be reflective of participants' preference for more organized and regulated commercial environments, their concerns over personal safety, or their desire to engage in a more personal and intimate encounter with the sex worker.

When they are with a commercial sex partner, the majority of sampled men spend between 30 minutes and two hours on each visit. Many indicate that they have seen the same sex seller on multiple occasions (some reporting seeing the same sex seller exclusively for years). While the range of sexual acts that respondents pay for appear to be quite diverse, a large percentage of men specifically indicated that "companionship" was a principal reason that they sought the company of sex workers. One-quarter of the sample indicated that prostitution was their only source of sex during the previous 12 months. It would appear that the majority of the encounters, while manifestly sexual in nature, do not appear to be characterized as hurried or impersonal.

When it comes to sexual safety, almost two-thirds of buyers with a marital, common-law or regular non-commercial sex partner indicated that they never use a condom during intercourse with their non-commercial partners. A portion of these men reported that they had participated in unprotected sex

with a commercial partner during the previous 12 months. While most of the condom-free sexual activities are considered relatively 'low risk,' a small percentage of men in the sample indicated that they engaged in unprotected vaginal or anal sex with their commercial partners. While these findings may be seen as 'troubling' to some, it is important not to jump to conclusions about the 'risk' that this sample of sex buyers poses in terms of disease transmission to other commercial or non-commercial partners, since doing this would be assuming that: 1.) the sex workers are carriers of disease; 2.) the non-commercial sex partners are carriers of disease; 3.) the people engaging in 'higher risk' activities are in fact in married, common-law or have other commercial or non-commercial partners; 4.) these people are in fact having sexual relations with other commercial or non-commercial partners (i.e., just because someone is married or in a common-law relationship or visiting another sex worker doesn't mean they are having sex with them), and 5.) these people are not getting tested for HIV/AIDS/STIs/STDs on a regular basis. Further relational analysis is needed to better understand the underlying patterns associated with the responses that some members of the sample provided pertaining to their engagement in 'high risk' sexual practices with commercial and non-commercial partners.

Perhaps one of the most surprising patterns in responses to emerge from the self-administered questionnaire was the high level of victimization that members of the sample reported experiencing while buying sex. While the most common form of victimization was purely economic (i.e., paying/being charged for services not rendered, being robbed or having money or property stolen), several participants reported experiencing more confrontational forms of victimization such as verbal or physical assault. When we understand these experiences of victimization in light of the fact that many sex buyers purchase sex in relative secrecy for fear of stigmatization, persecution or prosecution, these findings become even more significant. It is important not to diminish these reports of victimization. It is apparent that victimization is a two-way street, and it will likely continue to be as long as we force the people buying and selling sex to do so within the context of an underground economy. There is good reason to believe that understanding these contexts will not only help reduce the victimization experienced by sex buyers, but it will help us understand and reduce the victimization reported by sex workers.

The actual level of self-reported violence committed by members of this sample against sex workers may be higher than what they reported. Having said this, the sampling and data collection approaches implemented are likely to have helped to minimize the effects of this bias. As was the case with the types of victimization that participants reported experiencing at the hands of sex sellers, most of the acts of aggression reported by members of this sample against sex sellers appear to be centred around disagreements about terms or quality of service (e.g., posting a negative review, arguing over terms of service or refusal to pay for services rendered). However, 3.4% of the participants revealed that they have committed violent offences punishable under the *Criminal Code of Canada* against sex sellers, including robbery, physical and sexual assault. If workable suggestions are to be made for bringing an end to the violence reported by some sex workers, it is important that further analysis of the context within which these reported aggressive and violent acts were committed be undertaken. If there is good reason to believe that violence and victimization experienced by sex workers is contextually related to that experienced by sex buyers, the rich qualitative and quantitative data from this study will help us better understand these contexts.

When it comes to the law, the vast majority of respondents indicated that prostitution should be legalized or decriminalized in Canada and that there should be some form of regulation. Although few respondents favoured government intervention, the majority expressed a clear concern for ensuring the

health and safety of both themselves and the sex workers they visit. It is apparent that health and safety (physical and economic) concerns are paramount in the minds of many research participants and that few are satisfied with the current approach to the regulation of prostitution in Canada. A more in-depth analysis of the quantitative and qualitative data from this study promises to reveal a wealth of practical recommendations from a group of people who have been systematically excluded from many of the past and present debates surrounding how to organize and control Canada's sex industry.

To the best of our knowledge this is the largest sample of commercial sex buyers ever created. The results of the more detailed analyses which will follow should help to cast a much needed light on an under-studied and misunderstood component of the commercial sex industry. Despite this, readers should be cautious interpreting, reporting and drawing conclusions about sex buyers in our sample purely on the basis of the information that we have provided here. One cannot generalize the results presented here to the larger population of Canadian sex buyers because, like all surveys of sex buyers and sellers, the sample is not random. In the months to come we will be releasing a series of more complete analyses and policy/legislative recommendations that follow from the research.

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