Abstract:

Background

Sex workers are at risk of oral disease due to their exposure to conditions such as HIV infection, alcohol, tobacco or other substances, but scientific literature is sparse and the needs in terms of oral care and prevention are not known. This study aimed to estimate the prevalence of oral diseases among sex workers in Côte d’Ivoire and to identify associated factors.

Methods

We conducted a cross-sectional study between June and August 2013, in a clinic in Abidjan dedicated to sex workers. Data were collected using both a questionnaire (oral hygiene practices, alcohol, tobacco...) and a clinical oral examination (dental caries, periodontitis, mucosal lesions) by a unique dentist trained for this purpose. Logistic regression models were used to identify factors associated with the prevalence of oral mucosal lesions.

Findings

Our study included 257 sex workers aged 18-55 years; 28% were smokers and 19.8% drank alcohol excessively. Nine out of ten (87.9%) had never attended a dental office and 86.4% had
poor oral hygiene. The prevalence of dental caries was 61.5%, 14.7% of periodontitis and 25.0% of HIV-related oral lesions (mostly candidiasis: 66.6%). HIV prevalence was 33.3%. Adjusted for other characteristics, only HIV status was associated with the prevalence of mucosal lesions (odds ratio=50, 95% CI [6.4–384.6] and p<10^{-2})

**Conclusions**

Prevalence of oral lesions among sex workers was high, especially periodontal diseases and HIV-related oral lesions. There is a need to integrate into the overall monitoring of sex workers regular oral checkups for prevention and treatment of oral diseases.