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Working Conditions for Erotic Dancers: A Review of Health and Safety Concerns from a
Minneapolis Based Needs Assessment

By

Alexander Twohy

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirements for the Degree of

Master of Arts

In

Clinical Psychology

Minnesota State University, Mankato

Mankato, MN

May 2019

April 25th, 2019

Working Conditions for Erotic Dancers: A Review of Health and Safety Concerns from a
Minneapolis Based Needs Assessment

Alexander Twohy

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Abstract

The present studies utilizes data from a needs assessment for dancers in Minneapolis-based strip clubs focusing on structural and in-club safety concerns as well as levels of cleanliness within the club. Research was conducted utilizing Participatory Action Research with help from the Sex Workers Outreach Project: Minneapolis. The assessment consisted of an online survey utilizing both quantitative and qualitative questions ($n = 62$) with follow-up surveys for willing participants ($n = 33$). Questions regarding personal safety, structural safety, cleanliness levels, and exposure to diseases were reported using descriptive statistics, and qualitative responses were examined with thematic analysis. Data indicated that primary concerns among dancers were damaged club structures (stages, stairs, etc.), poor security measures within clubs, and frequency and quality of club cleaning practices. Potential interventions are discussed.

Acknowledgements

First and foremost, I would like to thank the dancers that took the time and energy to complete the surveys and interviews for our project. I am honored to be trusted with reading and telling their stories, and I have done my best to give them the dedication and attention they deserve. I also thank the SWOP-Minneapolis members who collaborated with us as co-researchers. Community research is best done not on the community, but with the community, and this would not have been possible without their commitment and enthusiasm.

Special recognition goes to my co-researcher, Machensey Shelgren, for hours of intelligent conversation, critical discourse, and jovial banter. I am incredibly thankful for your patience, perseverance, and friendship.

I am particularly thankful for the grant funding we have received through the Urgent Response Fund, Third Wave Fund, and Minnesota State University, which enabled us to properly compensate participants for their valuable time as well as hire professional transcription services for hours of recorded interviews.

To my advisor, committee chair, and mentor, Dr. Eric Sprankle, I express my sincere appreciation and gratitude. Without your wisdom, patience, and direction, this project would not have been possible. In addition, I thank my additional committee members Dr. Shannon Miller and Dr. Jeffery Buchanan for their sage and diverse insight throughout the project.

Finally, and most importantly, I am eternally grateful to my wife, Nicole. Only through her love and support am I able to pursue and achieve my dreams

Introduction

Dancers in strip clubs are an oft forgotten group of workers who are subject to financially abusive employment relationships (Sanders & Hardy, 2012) and harsh stigma from the community at large (Wahab, Baker, Smith, Cooper, & Lerum, 2011). On top of that, academia's attempt to study and understand this population has often been through a perspective of deviancy: conducting research in the hopes of alleviating the conditions that forced individuals to work in strip clubs in the first place (Frank, 2007). To counter that mindset, a needs assessment was performed in Minneapolis, Minnesota to give workers the opportunity to voice their industry concerns to both academia and law makers. This paper focuses on the health and safety needs revealed in said assessment.

Sex Work

To understand the climate erotic dancing¹ exists in, it is important to look at the research history of sex work overall. Sex work research experienced an uptick in interest in the 1960s. The first perspective researchers used in studying erotic dancing was one of deviancy. Vanwesenbeeck (2001) conducted an extensive review of erotic dance literature from the 1960s through the 1990s. Early research focused on prostitution as pathological illness and sought psychoanalytic explanations for women selling sex. However, this line of inquiry failed to produce any concrete evidence of pathology explaining sex work. Vanwesenbeeck continues that later research, started in the 1970s, focused on connections between sex workers, trauma, and

¹ The terms erotic dancing and dancers are used to refer to participants of the study. "Stripper" and "Strip club" are terms that carry stigma and implies the only function of the occupation is the removal of clothes. While the paper utilizes a lens of dancers as workers, the term "worker" is not used to avoid confusion with other workers in clubs (bouncers, bartenders, wait staff, etc.)

psychological disorders. Researchers interpreted these connections as sexual trauma being an explanatory variable for entry into sex work. Later work focused on childhood sexual abuse and the high rate of abuse victims entering into the profession. Evidence for high rates of prostitution among childhood sex abuse victims, as well as childhood sex abuse history among prostitutes was found. The explanatory factors for these associations were either psychodynamic, or resultant from sex abuse stigmatization; the stigma itself forcing prostitutes into situations of low earning potential, financial need, and drug use. However, the samples for studies showing evidence for these related factors consisted mainly of incarcerated sex workers and street workers; biasing the sample and making generalizability difficult to establish. This created a notably dark and abysmal view of sex work, which guided research towards factors contributing to sex work entry instead of the experiences and needs of sex workers themselves.

Vanwesenbeeck explains that in the 1980s, research was focused on the spread of HIV.

Epidemiological studies focused on the selling of sex as a potential vector for the virus.

However, by the decade's close, the evidence suggested sex work did not contribute to the proliferation of HIV (at least in the western world). Nonetheless, Vanwesenbeeck notes that more than half of sex work research in the 1990s still focused on the HIV/STI subject matter. Research investigating reasons for entry and continuance in sex work still occurred as well, but explanatory rationale moved away from pathology, and moved towards economic choice. We also see the dawn of inquiry into working conditions of sex workers during this decade, as well as stigma management and coping strategies for stressors based on sex work.

Modern sex work research has begun to move away from a quantitative, focused approach, and instead adopted a more complex, qualitative nature. While many studies in the global south still focus on the links between sex workers, drug use, and sexually transmitted

infections (Karamouzain et al., 2016; Nelson, 2012; Odinokova, Rusakova, Urada, Silverman, & Raj, 2014; Truong et al., 2004), researchers in the western world have begun exploring more nuanced and practical aspects of sex work. For example, researchers have been exploring the processes and factors impacting exiting the sex trade in large Canadian cities (Bowen, 2015). Other research focuses on the impacts sex work has on the romantic relationships of sex workers (Bellhouse, Crebbin, Fairley, & Bilardi, 2015). Still other research focuses on how housing access impacts risk negotiation with clients (Krusi et al., 2012). Stigma is also a heavy area of research, including how stigma impacts access to resources (Lazarus, 2012), promulgation of coercive government policies (Platt et al., 2018) and victim blaming (Sprankle, Bloomquist, Butcher, Gleason, & Schaefer, 2017). Interest in male sex work has increased in the last two decades as well (Kumar, Minichiello, Scott, & Harrington, 2017; Leary & Minichiello, 2007; Logan, 2010; MacPhail, Scott, & Minichiello, 2015; Niccolai, King, Eritsy, Safiullina, & Rusakova, 2013). This pattern shows an increase in interest beyond a simple paradigm of desperate victims, but instead as workers who, while dealing with increased risk and discrimination, are capable of informed choices to better their fiscal standing.

Of the various theoretical models through which sex work has been studied, feminist theory is perhaps the most visible. Feminism's theoretical understanding of sex work is best understood through its approach to the portrayal of women in media. In the 1970s, scholars began looking at the roles women played in print magazines (Courtney & Lockeretz, 1971), print advertisements in general (Belkaoui & Belkaoui, 1976), and advertising (Komisar, 1971). Bronstein (2011), in summarizing this research, notes that women were portrayed in one of two ways: either a busy and working house wife or as a "sexual object whose primary function was that of the male plaything" (p. 1). As the decade continued, Bronstein notes that radical feminism

began pushing back against violent portrayals of women in the media. They argued that the depiction of women that “conflated violence and sexuality” (p. 2) led to young men being taught that women were objects to be treated as they wish. This depiction was argued to be contributing to rape, battery, and the overall aggression against women in society. Several groups emerged that began protesting the endorsement of violence against women in the media: Women Against Violence Against Women (WAVAW), Women Against Violence in Pornography and Media (WAVPM), and Women Against Pornography (WAP). These organizations not only held protests against violent media, but also sought legal action against its use. WAVPM and WAP added the fight against pornography to their ideological agenda. They believed that pornography taught men that women’s bodies were for their sexual pleasure and promulgated a culture of aggression and rape.

These organizations created some backlash among other feminists, however. As Abrams (1995) notes, critics acknowledged that violent media was problematic, but that the anti-pornography movement was creating its own problems. In the process of fighting violence, the idea of women’s sexual pleasure was being lost and even argued against. Additionally, the anti-pornography movement resulted in backlash against “deviant” sexual practices of the time (such as S&M and butch/femme lesbianism). Finally, the movement was criticized for its stance on consensual sex during the fight against violence in media and pornography. Since the media was filled with violent sexual content that established oppressive men’s sexual desires, should all sex be abandoned? These critics became a vocal proponent of sexual expression, and became known as sex radicals (Abrams, 1995). The primary method of combating the anti-pornography movement was in upholding the legal standing of pornography itself. The Feminism Anti-Censorship Task Force (FACT) was a coalition of feminist scholars and artists who banded

together to fight legal challenges to pornography. Again, Abrams (1995) notes that FACT used legal arguments such as First Amendment protections to argue against the legal regulation of pornography.

Minneapolis itself became entangled in the “sex wars” in the early 1980s. In a summary of the surrounding events, Brest and Vandenberg (1987) summarized the attempt of Catharine McKinnon and Andrea Dworkin to draft city ordinance to, among other things, allow individuals who had been harmed directly by pornography to seek legal damages against the content creators and distributors. The strongest point of contention with the proposed law, however, was the final clause of their ordinance, which described “trafficking in pornography” as an act of discrimination against women, via the “production, sale, exhibition, or distribution of pornography” (pp. 121-122). In addition, any woman “...acting against the subordination of women” could seek damages against those in the pornography industry. Essentially, the law stated that pornography injures women by its very existence, and thus could be held accountable in a court of law. The ordinance passed city council, but was vetoed due to concerns about constitutionality.

Thus, the numerous schools of thought within feminism were divided over the position of sex work. Sex work is either the confluence of sexual exploitation and violence by the patriarchy, and thus must be exterminated at any opportunity, or it is a method of reclaiming sexual power and thus must be protected and decriminalized (Comte, 2014). These two warring sides miss the nuance that sex workers exist in, however. Sex work does have power struggles and in some cases workers do suffer from patriarchal exploitation. However, workers are often fighting against this oppression within their profession and choose to remain despite its risks or

stigma. Joining lockstep in either viewpoint negates the nuanced, complex experiences of sex work, and does little to help serve the population (Vanwesenbeeck, 2017).

Legal entities have only made modern sex work more complicated. Cities and countries around the world have either taken a stance of outright criminalization of sex work (as is the case with prostitution) or have attempted to control the industry through regulation. However, recent research shows regulation does not help or protect the community. Vanwesenbeeck (2017) notes that regulation, or the criminalization of work outside that as defined by the government, drives workers underground rather than protecting them. This causes reduced access to health care, increases the stress placed on workers, may lead to high fines from being caught resulting in restricted social mobility, and overall leaves workers with less agency and influence their own working conditions (Respect Inc., 2017). Criminalization also results in the maintenance of stigma; branding sex workers as deviants and rule breakers rather than workers (Vanwesenbeeck 2017).

Erotic Dancing

Erotic dance, or stripping, is one sector of sex work with several unique characteristics. Unlike many other aspects of the sex industry, erotic dance is legal in most locations. Similar to other sectors of the sex industry, laws widely vary in the US regarding specific policies concerning erotic dance. The gambit ranges from restrictions of alcohol sales and levels of nudity, to restrictions on which parts of the body can be shown publicly, to full decriminalization. For example, the city of Minneapolis, Minnesota specifically restricts alcohol sales to strip clubs that have fully nude entertainment, leading to alcohol free venues that are fully nude and venues that serve alcohol and require some form of clothing during dancing.

Beyond legal complications, dancers have faced harsh stigma for being sex workers. Studies reveal that workers face social oppression from lawmakers who are often attempting to shut down clubs through direct or indirect means (Sanders & Hardy, 2012; Colosi, 2012). This stigma is often thought to prevent dancers seeking the help for a variety of concerns ranging from health to financial to employment needs (Reilly, German, Serio-Chapman, & Sherman, 2015; Sherman et al., 2017).

Worsening this issue is that academic research in strip clubs (and sex work in general) has historically been conducted with the assumption that workers sell sex because they have no other choice. Frank (2007), in a review of strip club research, revealed that researchers had mostly focused on dancing as deviancy, exploring power differentials in erotic dancing between primarily female dancers and male customers, the conditions under which individuals are forced into dancing as a means of last resort, and stigma associated with dancing. Likewise, Wahab, Baker, Smith, Cooper, and Lerum (2011) conducted a literature review of strip club research over 40 years. They found that erotic dance research has moved beyond studies of individual dancers, and progressed into broader studies of clubs and even impacts on policy and culture. They do give hope that research beginning in the 21st century has begun to shed the focus on deviancy and instead endorse a more nuanced view of dancers and their work. This view combines the exploitative environments dancers' experience, as well as the agency and power of dancers influencing and shaping their own experiences.

Given this climate, we turn to the city of Minneapolis, Minnesota. In 2017, the Minneapolis Department of Health began an investigation into strip clubs based on "community complaints" (Minneapolis Department of Health, 2017). The investigation tested for semen at 17 adult entertainment establishments, finding semen in 11 of them. Since there were no

enforceable statutes by which to correct this apparent problem, they recommended strengthening and updating existing law. From here, the Urban Research and Outreach-Engagement Center (UROC) conducted a needs assessment at the behest of city government (Martin, Melander, Taber, & Syvertson, 2017). This assessment attempted to gauge working conditions in Minneapolis strip clubs and ascertain whether safe working conditions existed or not.

However, the study had several methodological flaws brought to light by members of the Minneapolis sex work community. To begin, the needs assessment research team had no current dancers from the Minneapolis strip club community. Without community involvement, especially when working with a marginalized population, the assessment was likely to be viewed skeptically by those it was investigating. The sample that was obtained by Martin et al. (2017) consisted of 24 individuals, only 9 of which were current dancers (defined as having danced in a club within the past 2 years). The rest of the sample consisted of managers, bartenders, city officials, and other non-dancers affiliated with the club. In addition to a limited participant pool, the medium under which the survey was conducted, online surveys, needed to be ended early due to fraudulent responders taking advantage of the monetary reward system. The report itself offered little evidence for claims other than bolded quotes from survey respondents. No empirical analysis was offered to give evidence to the report's recommendations, such as the regulation or elimination of VIP spaces (a high-income source for dancers). Those recommendations, if implemented, would greatly diminish workers' earning potential in an already financially abusive environment, as seen when stringent regulation is implemented elsewhere (Colosi, 2013; Respect Inc., 2017).

Current Study

The current project is intended to correct the problems of Martin et al. (2017) by bringing together primary stakeholders, along with researchers, to design a more informed and more representative picture of the needs of erotic dancers in the Minneapolis strip club industry. This thesis specifically focuses on the working conditions of dancers experienced in clubs with regard to health and safety needs. The research questions for this project are:

1. What are the states of cleanliness, sanitation, and health risks as perceived by dancers?
2. What are the states of safety and security in the club as perceived by dancers?

To analyze these inquiries, a series of questions in survey and interview form were asked to ascertain dancers' perspective on these topics. A mixed methods approach to obtain both quantitative and qualitative data was utilized. This allowed researchers to obtain both a quantification of dancers' perceptions, as well as capture the nuanced stories, opinions, and experiences of stakeholders.

Method

Participatory Action Research

One of the primary problems identified in Martin et al. (2017) was the lack of stakeholder involvement in not only the study itself, but the planning and implementation of the project. To correct this, the current project implemented a Participatory Action Research (PAR) design, as utilized by McIntyre (2008). This model deviates from traditional academic research in that it not only includes stakeholders (in our case, dancers) as participants, informants, or consultants, but as full and coequal members of the research team. PAR emphasizes collaborative research at all levels of the research process, and emphasizes that the research be gauged at informing and

creating change in the stakeholder community. Thus, this project utilized PAR to allow primary stakeholders to participate, guide, and benefit from the current project.

Researchers

During the planning stages of the current project, members of the Sex Workers Outreach Project of Minneapolis (SWOP-MPLS) were approached with the offer of collaborating for a community based needs assessment. SWOP-MPLS was favorable to the idea, and began collaborating with the academic research team. Members were briefed on the purpose and processes of PAR. Three members of SWOP-MPLS volunteered to join the research team, as well as one member agreeing to consultation. Each member identified as currently dancing within the Minneapolis strip club community. Traditionally, PAR seeks to include as many stakeholder members as possible in the research team. However, given the stigmatized consequences of being outed as a dancer, the hidden nature of the dancing population, and the large number of dancers within Minneapolis, it was decided to limit research involvement to a small number of stakeholders who were already public with their dancing identities and could represent the interests of the community. Ultimately, the research team consisted of two distinct groups: the academic research team (consisting of the PI and two graduate students) and the community research team (three SWOP members), as well as one community consultant.

Participants

A purposeful sampling method was used to recruit participants who were identified as dancers currently working in the Minneapolis erotic dancing industry. To ensure data was gathered on current experiences, participation was limited to those who had worked in a strip club in the last two months (in addition to being 18 or older). At the conclusion of the study, 80 surveys had been initiated online. Of these, 62 participants met criteria for inclusion. Criteria for

inclusion in this paper's analysis was completion of 90% or more of the quantitative questions (of the 18 surveys eliminated, 17 completed 0% of the quantitative questions, and one completed roughly 10%). Of these participants, a majority identified as white (56.5%), with 17.7% identifying as black, 16.1% as mixed race, 6.5% as Hispanic, 1.6% Middle Eastern, and 1.6% as other. Ages ranged from 20-47 ($M = 27.3$, $SD = 4.9$). For gender, 91.9% identified themselves as female, and 8.1% identified themselves as non-binary. A full report of demographic statistics can be found in Table 1 in Appendix A. Of these, 33 participants expressed interest in and completed an interview. However, due to the anonymous nature of the interview, we do not have any demographic information on who participated in the interview itself. We also asked participants to identify which Minneapolis club was their primary club. These results are summarized in Table 2 in Appendix A.

Procedure

After the community research team gave approval for the survey, it was made available to potential participants over a three-month period (early February to mid May 2018). All responses were anonymous, and contact information for compensation was handled through a separate survey to maintain responses anonymity. Potential participants were recruited by research team members belonging to SWOP-MPLS. Utilizing personal contacts through their employment and activism, recruiters inquired as to whether current and former dancers would be willing to complete an online survey. If the potential participant showed interest, the recruiter obtained their email address, and subsequently emailed them a direct link to the online survey (see Appendix B for recruitment scripts). Recruitment also took place on social media (e.g., Facebook, Twitter) from the PI and recruiters' accounts using the following post: "If you have worked in a Minneapolis strip club within the past two months and would like to participate in

research asking your opinions on workplace conditions, please DM [Direct Message] for the survey link.” Again, notification resulted in a direct link being sent to the participant.

Once the link was opened, participants were directed to the Qualtrics hosted survey. Qualtrics is an online survey hosting website that is approved for use with human subjects through the Minnesota State University-Mankato institutional review board. Participants were then asked to read and confirm that they gave informed consent to the study (see Appendix C for informed consent document). The survey took approximately 15-20 minutes to complete. Upon completion, participants were given the option to continue onto a second survey, where they could give their email address for a \$20.00 Amazon gift card as compensation for their participation in the survey. The second survey also asked if the participant would be willing to participate in a longer interview. If they expressed interest, they were contacted by the PI with instructions on how to complete the interview. Interviews were conducted via Zoom, an online video conferencing website that is HIPAA compliant and protects the identity of those being interviewed while creating an audio recording of the interview, or were conducted in person. Once consent was given, a member of the community research team arranged a meeting time via email. For Zoom interviews, the participant was then sent a link to the online Zoom site, where the interview was held. For in person interviews, recordings were taken on an interviewer’s iPhone. Recording commenced only once the participant had given consent for recording. Interviews lasted approximately 30-60 minutes and were compensated with a \$100.00 Amazon gift card.

Measures

The current study utilized a survey design with voluntary follow-up interviews for some participants. While the greater needs assessment focused on diverse aspects of the dancing

experience, this paper focuses on the health and safety aspects of both the survey and the interview responses.

Online Survey. The survey was written specifically for this needs assessment to gauge diverse aspects of working and related conditions pertinent to erotic dancing. The online survey was initially developed by the academic research team, and then sent to the SWOP-MPLS research team for comment and review. After scrutiny by the community-based team, changes were made to clarify ambiguous wording and rephrase questions with a worker-centered approach. Again, while the entire project was geared towards a comprehensive understanding of erotic dancer working conditions, this paper specifically focuses on responses related to the health and safety of dancers. Question topics included safety concerns such as structural safety, bouncer responsiveness to club threats, the influence of management in safety concerns, and police presence. Health topics included the cleanliness levels of different club areas such as the stage, VIP rooms, and dressing/locker rooms, as well as cleaning procedures, responsibilities, and consequences of unclean spaces. Items were structured with a five-point Likert-style scaling with a variety of anchors reflective of the question. Question examples include: “If you report a safety concern, what is the likelihood that something will be done about it?” and “How exposed are you to communicable diseases are you at your most frequented club?”. Free response items allowed dancers to share any concerns beyond those covered in the Likert-style responses. Examples include: “Have you ever been hurt by poorly maintained physical structures (i.e., stage, floor, etc.) at your most frequented club? If yes please explain:”, and “What do you think would be fair policies regarding cleanliness?”. A copy of survey questions analyzed in this paper is available in Appendix D. All questions were optional excluding inclusion criteria.

Interviews. The interviews were semi-structured, with survey proctors able to ask follow-up questions to obtain pertinent information. Interviews were conversational in nature, and participants agreed to audio recording of the interview. The interview script is available in Appendix E.

Analysis and Coding

Quantitative analysis. Quantitative responses to the survey were analyzed using descriptive statistics.

Qualitative analysis. VerbalInk, a commercial transcription service, performed transcription of interview audio. Qualitative responses from both the survey and interviews were analyzed using a thematic analysis method. Two members of the academic research team utilized interactive thematic analysis to collaboratively analyze and categorize statements and develop them into cohesive themes. This process involved initially reading all qualitative statements, developing a code system to categorize qualitative responses, applying the code system to responses on a second pass through all qualitative data, and deriving coherent themes from the coded responses. Analysis was facilitated through the qualitative analysis program MAXQDA.

Results

Quantitative

The number of participants was not enough to conclude statistical differences between the different clubs. The means and standard deviations for each question are reported in Table 3 in Appendix A. Questions were coded 1-5 with Likert-style responses. Answers with 5 and 4 generally represented strong and mild disagreement with the item, 3 represented a neutral or non-opinion response to the item, and 2 and 1 represented general mild to strong agreement with the item. Full Likert results can be found in Appendix F. One question asked respondents who was

responsible for cleanliness of various areas of the club (responders were free to choose as many options as they liked). Responses are listed in Table 4 in Appendix A. Responses under “other” included bar backs, DJ, waitresses, and lack of knowledge regarding who was responsible for cleaning.

In the safety section, participants were asked if they “...felt safe from violence, harassment, and stalking at their most frequented club”. Roughly 20% reported they felt safe half of the time or less frequently. Another question asked was if participants “...think security does their job in protecting dancers from violence, harassment, and stalking...”. For this question, roughly 30% of participants indicated that security did their job half the time or less frequently. In regards to questioning the likelihood of voiced safety concerns being acted upon, about 21% stated that it was somewhat unlikely (or less likely than that), with 67% percent only responding only “somewhat likely” or less (that includes all participants except those that responded “extremely likely” (33%). Similarly, 43% of participants responded that they had been “...hurt by poorly maintained structures...” in the club.

For cleanliness, about 60% responded they were “...concerned with the cleanliness at [their] most frequented club”. Those 60% were then asked about their level of concern regarding cleanliness of VIP areas, stage areas, and dressing areas. Of those participants, 71% expressed at least being somewhat concerned with VIP spaces, 83% at least being somewhat concerned about stage areas, and 82% at least somewhat concerned with dressing areas (with 51% being very concerned).

Qualitative

The qualitative data from both the surveys and the interviews were combined to create one comprehensive data set. Thematic analysis was used to identify salient themes expressed in qualitative responses. For safety, five themes emerged: structural safety (n = 41², 43%), vetting (n = 21, 22%), security pay off (n = 11, 12%), cell phone recording (n = 2, 2%), and walk outs (n = 33, 35%). For cleanliness, four main themes were identified: responsibility (n = 21, 22%), frequency (n = 46, 48%), locations (n = 40, 42%), and kinds of diseases (n = 19, 20%). It is important to note that these percentages were calculated from which percentage of documents contained these themes. Because interviews were obtained from those who had already taken the survey, it is likely that some themes were double counted. However, since the interviews were not linked to surveys to protect the identity of participants, it is impossible to account for themes mentioned twice. It was decided to calculate percentages this way since it is possible themes were present in a participant interview that they did not share in their survey.

Safety.

Structural safety. The safety of structures (stages, poles, carpets, stairs, and other physical structures of the club) is of particular concern to dancers. The primary complaint is lack of upkeep, or when club management allows structures to fall into poor maintenance or disrepair. The highest area of concern is the stage. Lack of veneer or varnish (exposed wood), glass shards, holes and divots, and unswept/unwiped stages make up the majority of these comments. Additionally, floors and stairs in the club are often in a state of disrepair. Comments refer to holes in the floor, patchy carpets, and stairs in states of disrepair. Dancers report that this is compounded by their high heel apparel, which more frequently becomes caught in uneven walking surfaces. Injuries are reported when encountering these structural deficiencies. Dancers report cuts, twisted ankles, broken ribs, and splinters as a result of unsafe structures. Finally,

some dancers report a lack of available health insurance, compounding the problem of injuries received on the job. Again, not every dancer reports poorly maintained clubs. Some clubs are meeting dancers' standards for upkeep, but several are also failing to provide safe work spaces.

"And actually once I was, like, coming off the stage and I twisted my ankle pretty bad and, like, I still have that injury actually, like, years later. It sucks."

"I've had my legs get cut by glass and I'm bleeding on stage because whatever spilled didn't get cleaned up right."

"The carpeted floor at DTC can be uneven in weird spots where I've tripped and stumbled. It has happened to everyone and it is just accepted that the carpet has little 'sniper nest' spots"

Vetting. Another safety theme is the vetting process by management and security. Some dancers report skillful enforcement of club rules and timely removal of disruptive customers. Other dancers report security being ineffective or disinterested in removing unruly customers. Some dancers report having to enforce policies such as no touching rules by themselves. However, this disrupts the roles of different workers in the club.

"At any club that you work at in Minneapolis and anywhere else, they will tell you that it's your job. They will say, 'You need to keep these guys in line, you need to keep their hands off of you, you need to police them.' No because we are fantasies. We are providing a fantasy. That is our service. It is up to the bouncers and it is up to the managers to be policing these men because that breaks the fantasy, you know?"

VIP rooms are of special concern. Dancers would like more regulation of VIP spaces by security and management. Dancers are usually alone with clients in this area and feel particularly

vulnerable to unruly customers. Beyond rates of responding, dancers are particularly concerned that security and management listen to their requests for removal. Dancers want a policy of quick customer removal should they report a concern. Dancers want to feel safe in their work spaces, and this comes from timely removal of problematic customers.

"Not necessarily all the time. Sometimes there are certain managers who I prefer to work in the VIP rooms, like when a certain manager is patrolling the VIP rooms, I feel safer when they're up there because I see them walking along and kind of peeking in, like making sure everything is kosher. But then there are certain managers who literally just sit on their phone, and you could run out of the room crying and they're like, 'Whatever.' For the most part, I feel safe. Sometimes when that manager, like when that specific manager who doesn't care is up in the VIP room, I'll avoid talking to customers about going to VIP because I don't want any – we can't screen our customers. You just kind of have to take their word for it, because I've definitely had some customers who get angry or forceful, and sometimes certain managers help, sometimes certain managers don't. So my safety, it really depends on who is managing that night is how comfortable I feel in the club."

Security pay off. The data infrequently, but consistently show a pattern of customers paying off security to break club rules. Dancers note a process by which management or security is payed a high sum of money to ignore rule violations that may occur within the VIP space. Consequences suffered by dancers in this situation included verbal harassment, physical assault, and sexual assault.

"The management will or will not take action depending on how they feel. If they know they customer, if he has a lot of money, that type of thing and it's bullshit. I had a football

player from the Vikings or whatever get in my face. This is back at ... years ago. I was really about to fight this dude. His name was ... or something. He actually got suspended from the team for beating his wife. No surprise. He started a fight with me for no reason and was acting like he was going to put hands on me. I was like, "He needs to leave." There was only like a half hour left in the night. The managers literally would not kick him out. They were trying to play nice with me and being like, "Oh, yeah. We're going to kick him out. We're kicking him out right now," but they really didn't. That's because of his name and his money and stuff."

"He's thrown chairs. This guy has a history and when my friend told management, they, yeah, acted like they were gonna do something but they didn't because when the guy comes in he always tips management \$500.00."

Cell phone recording. There is also a pattern of customers using cell phones to record or live-stream dancers. When this topic arises, dancers usually note a no-phone policy in the club, and that the customer's phone is confiscated with pictures and videos being deleted. However, dancers express frustration with live streaming apps such as Periscope, for which no content removal can be achieved. Dancers experiencing this situation would like to see stricter cell phone rules in clubs and harsher punishments for those violating these rules.

"Like, 99 percent of the time, if somebody's caught on their phone, it's because another dancer caught somebody recording. Like, I have snatched so many fucking phones."

Walk outs. The final salient theme is walk outs. Since dancers are paid in cash at the end of each shift (and frequently leave the club at night), they are high theft targets; especially clubs operating in the downtown area. Bouncers are supposed to prevent this by either walking dancers

out to their cars or providing valet service. However, the frequency of this behavior is mixed. Some dancers report clubs providing adequate walk out service with low fear of theft. Other dancers report walk outs being withheld without tips (some amounts reaching high enough that dancers feel they are exorbitant). Regardless of how well clubs are doing walk outs, dancers report this is a high priority for them, with 35% of respondents mentioning this subject.

"It should be mandatory to be walked out to your car."

"Fair policies regarding safety. I feel like the club I'm at is pretty good about that. They always walk us to our cars. Even if it's just valet, they open the door for us and make sure we get in."

"These bouncers just do whatever. They don't watch us. Anything can happen. We walk our self out."

Cleanliness.

Responsibility. One of the most salient themes was who was responsible for maintaining clean environments for the club. There was a mixed response for how the club was currently being cleaned. Some dancers noted that employees such as bartenders, barbacks, and waitresses were the ones cleaning spaces. Others noted that cleaning crews would come in and perform tasks, but many expressed hesitancies with this idea: stating that they thought this was how the club was cleaned or it that was assumed how the club was cleaned. However, the most frequent response was that the no individual cleaned the club. This was often followed by a lack of clear and apparent cleaning policy. With regard to whom cleaning responsibilities should fall, dancers expressed that cleaning responsibilities should not be performed by dancers themselves, but rather other employees of the club. The only cleaning responsibilities dancers endorsed for

themselves were the sanitation of performance spaces after use (poles, stages, etc.). However, the supplies for this should be provided by club management, and the quality of these supplies should be enough to sanitize equipment from bodily fluid contact (most frequently requested was alcohol).

"I definitely think every strip club should invest in a group of cleaners that comes in and cleans every single night."

"They're not clean; they do not take the responsibility of cleaning the clubs. They don't"

"Everything should be cleaned daily (or multiple times a day) by the employees of the club"

Frequency. How often the club should be cleaned was another consistent area of concern. While the frequency of cleaning varied from dancer to dancer (some suggested weekly, most suggested daily, and some called for two to three times a day), it was consistently reported that the current frequency was not high enough at most clubs. There was a subset of dancers reporting acceptable levels of cleanliness, however.

"I think the club needs to be cleaned every night and sanitized with bleach every night."

"Just probably have somebody clean the club once or twice a week, and – that's about it."

"Oh, my God [specific club mentioned] should be shut down. That club is so disgusting. I'm pretty sure it's also in our contract that they are supposed to provide a safe environment for us to work. I don't think that ... meets those requirements. I guess just keeping up to code with – I don't know who regulates it, like state or city, whoever"

regulates food and stuff like that, like food inspectors or whatever they're called – restaurant inspectors. I feel like as long as they're meeting requirements it should be fine. That being said, I don't really think that ... is."

Locations. Dancers expressed concern for a variety of spaces within the club. The most consistent areas reported as being dirty were the stage (37%), dressing rooms (24%), and the floors and couches (16%). One of the main stage complaints were issues resulting from a lack of cleaning following performance (bodily fluids, oils, and lotions left on poles and stages as a result of skin contact). The other main complaint was general cleanliness of the stage itself, including dust, glasses, spilled drinks, and other debris left unattended. Dressing rooms were the next most frequent complaint, with issues consisting of trash being left out and carpets going unvacuumed. Several dancers noted refusing to walk in the dressing rooms without shoes. Public, non-stage areas (floors and couches) had similar complaints to stages: performances result in body fluid discharge (sweat, vaginal fluid) as well as lotions and body oil transfers, and these areas become dirty through use. This is compounded by customer use as well.

"The dressing room is just really, really, really disgusting."

"Even if you go by everyone's following the rules, we still have bare coochies on shit and that needs to be literally cleaned like disinfected."

"The little – So the cleanliness part, I would say the one thing that really irritates me the most, though is that nobody cleans the stages. Ever. You have to beg them. And it's not even just wiping lotion off, or anything like that. It's literally like they don't even sweep it in between shifts. They don't have any of that shit. So then it's like, "Okay– " There's girls in here that are fucking clicking their rhinestone heels together, and then I go and knee

down on stage, and my knee gets cut open because nobody's swept in three days. And then I ask you to sweep, and you don't. Or you just sweep one corner. I've seen girls' fucking nails that are broken off sitting in the corner of the stage for three days straight."

VIP spaces, bathrooms, and bars were other areas of concerns, though to a lesser extent to the areas listed previously (15%, 12%, and 2% respectively). Since VIP rooms are poorly lit and isolated from the rest of the club, dancer's state they are cleaned less often (and less often than they should be). Bathrooms are also cited for not being clean enough. Again, it should be noted that some dancers note adequate levels of cleaning in each of these areas, though these comments are in the minority.

"They just don't care. The bathrooms, the toilets are fucking gross. They just don't give a fuck. They really don't. Probably 'cause nobody told 'em to."

"I think so. I guess like rooms I feel like just don't get as much attention as they should just because they're a lot darker and not put on – what's the word – like a pedestal kind of. But I don't know about rooms. It's really dark in there and, obviously, not all people are going in there. So, I feel like they might be as clean as they probably should. They probably slack on it a little bit but nothing I've realized."

Diseases. Becoming sick is a strong concern of dancers. While STI exposure is a primary concern of previous researchers, dancers are primarily concerned with communicable diseases such as colds and the flu. Of the 15 responses in the survey elaborating on getting sick from work, no participant listed sexually transmitted infection (most responses were colds or the flu; one response was a rash, which it is possible could have been an STI). The sources of these diseases are fellow dancers and other staff members (no dancer mentioned being concerned with

contracting any diseases from customers). Some dancers noticed a lack of supportive sick leave within the club, which led to increased exposure.

"I've had to call in sick, they tell me, either to bring a doctor's note or, "You're gonna have to pay." Even if it's something where I have a cold, or the flu, or I know I don't want to be sneezing all over people while I'm giving lap dances. They just don't care. There have been nights where I have been sick at work, throwing up. I also have Crohn's Disease."

Discussion

The current study analyzed both quantitative and qualitative data regarding safety and cleanliness issues from a needs assessment performed with erotic dancers.

Beginning with safety, it is clear that safety procedures are not meeting dancer's needs and expectations. As we can see in Table 5, over 20% of respondents felt safe from violence, harassment, and stalking half the time or less. Table 6 indicates roughly 30% of dancer's believe security is inconsistently keeping them safe. If these same numbers were applied to non-sex work jobs such as office work or teachers, these rates of safety would be quickly addressed. We also see qualitative themes of security not performing consistently; including taking bribes that put dancers in danger. Structural safety is another prominent concern. Table 8 shows over 40% of dancers have been hurt from structural disrepair. Qualitative data notes that the kinds of injuries that can be sustained could be quite serious, leading to serious infection or long recovery times from broken bones. Finally, walk outs remain a major area of concern. Dancers are expressing desire for consistent, mandatory walk out policies to keep them safe from theft.

Without these, dancers remain high profile targets for theft, and risk their livelihoods on whether they will make it to their car safely.

Cleanliness levels are also not meeting dancer's satisfaction. Table 11 indicated over 50% of dancers are concerned with cleanliness at their most frequented clubs. Likewise, qualitative shows dancers are consistently concerned with the upkeep and cleaning schedules of their clubs. While some clubs are being consistent, many clubs need to increase their cleanliness levels to meet the needs of their workers. Dancers are also firm in that management and employees are the ones responsible for cleanliness in the club. Dancers must pay fees to use the space, and they believe club management has an obligation to provide them with clean work environments, or at the very least proper tools (alcohol) to clean facilities themselves. One consistent finding is that the diseases dancers are being exposed to are not STIs, but rather common communicable diseases such as the cold and flu. This contradicts both Martin et al. (2017) and other contemporary research that STI risk is of primary concern for those in the dancing industry. Likewise, the least clean areas in the club are the stages, dressing rooms and floors. These cleanliness issues arise not from sexual contact, but from lack of basic cleaning such as vacuuming, sweeping, and trash collection. VIP spaces, while of concern to dancers, are considered a lesser area of concern than the areas previously highlighted (again, in contradiction to Martin et al., 2017).

Potential Interventions

Recommending interventions to correct these health concerns is complex. A simple solution would be to have clubs held to the same standards as other workplaces and restaurants (indeed, many dancers call for this in their free responses). However, this kind of intervention would likely come in the form of city evaluation and regulation. As Colosi (2013) and

Vanwesenbeeck (2017) note, city regulation of sex workers usually leads to coercive policy, punitive regulations, and workers being driven underground. Regulation legislation gives government the power by which to put increasing pressure on sex workers, eventually driving them away from the protections the law is supposed to provide (either through exiting the profession or unregulated sex work). There could be potential avenues for setting up resources for dancers. Passing intentionally non-punitive legislation, such as health safety checks without the threat of closure could be useful. Setting up pathways for dancers to obtain health insurance could also be useful from a government standpoint.

Interventions aimed at the level of club management, however, are less straightforward. Ideally, several interventions could be implemented by clubs' managers including more frequent and thorough cleaning policies, dancers having greater access to cleaning materials such as alcohol wipes, and increased maintenance efforts put forth to structural repairs of stages, floors, and other safety hazards within the clubs. Likewise, management could make walkouts mandatory for all dancers, or at least mandate that dancers have the option should they so choose. Management could also enforce no-bribe policies, and set standards in the club ensuring dancer safety regardless of the cash flow being received from customers. Management is unlikely to implement these practices, however. Any implementation of these suggestions would likely come, at least in the short term, as an increased cost to clubs. Current exploitive policies sacrificing or ignoring dancers safety are profitable, and dancers have little recourse to enact consequences for gross health and safety violations.

The non-government side of intervention looks similar. Through outreach groups such as SWOP-MPLS, programs and resources could be made available to dancers. Workshops on how to advocate for clean and safe spaces could be designed and provided to empower workers to

make better change in their environment. Providing dancers with OSHA training regarding workplace safety minimums might help individuals identify illegal safety violations and how to report them might improve conditions in clubs. Finally, providing classes and workshops to teach dancers how to apply for health insurance in the Minnesota open market could facilitate treatment for injuries sustained on the job.

Limitations

Although this study provided valuable insight into the needs and experience of dancers, it is not without its limitations. To begin, only dancers from the Minneapolis area were included in the study. Thus, the results are hard to generalize to wider populations such as the greater Twin Cities metro area, greater Minnesota, or national/global perspectives. The sample size was also somewhat small considering the large numbers of individuals currently dancing.

The sample size for this study also had limited demographic diversity. Over half the sample identified as white (while this is representative of the Minneapolis area, it is unknown if the same can be said for the dancer population). Likewise, our sample included mostly cis-female dancers. This sample creates difficulty in generalizing to more diverse populations such as male dancers, LGBTQ dancers, and dancers with diverse ethnic backgrounds.

While participatory action research allowed us to come closer to the lived experiences of dancers, it also created some methodological lapses. Even though the community research team enabled us to access dancers more quickly and gain their trust, community research members did not generally have academic research training (one member was working on a doctorate in women's studies). While procedures were reviewed for survey and interview protocols, they were not always followed with 100% adherence. Evidence was found of leading questions in

interview responses, bias being present when questions were being asked of participants, and surveys being taken with members of the community research team observing survey completion. This raises questions of whether experimenter expectations crept into quantitative and qualitative responses, or if opinions differing from those of the community research team may have been repressed. Likewise, since community members directly contacted all participants, conscious or unconscious bias may have crept into the sample that was recruited.

Future Research

Future research should broaden the scope of the needs assessment to broader populations. Individual locations should be studied to address needs of specific communities as well as broader research to identify shared needs among dancers. Additionally, more diverse populations should be studied such as male dancers, more ethnically diverse communities, and communities with stronger LGBTQ representation.

Another study could be done on the profitability of increased health and safety policies. According to Shoaf, Genaidy, Karwowski, and Huang (2004), organizational health is best thought of as both profitability and worker satisfaction. It is possible that increased health and safety measures could lead to outcomes such as increased retention, increased worker satisfaction (which could lead to increased worker productivity), and even increased profits themselves.

Conclusion

Overall safety and cleanliness are both areas of concern for dancers in clubs, but the areas of concern espoused in typical research (STIs, VIP rooms) was found to be a lower priority to more basic needs such as structural upkeep, security concerns, and basic cleanliness.

Interventions to these problems should be based on providing resources to dancers while avoiding punitive legislation.

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Appendix A

Demographic and Brief Quantitative Data

Table 1

Demographic information for survey respondents

| Demographic | <i>n</i> | % |
|--|----------|-------|
| Age* | | |
| 20-22 | 7 | 11.2% |
| 23-25 | 20 | 32.3% |
| 26-30 | 22 | 35.5% |
| 30+ | 16 | 25.8% |
| Race | | |
| White | 35 | 56.5% |
| Black | 11 | 17.7% |
| Hispanic | 4 | 6.5% |
| Mixed | 10 | 16.1% |
| Middle Eastern | 1 | 1.6% |
| Other | 1 | 1.6% |
| Gender | | |
| Female | 57 | 91.9% |
| Non-binary | 5 | 8.1% |
| Sexual Orientation | | |
| Bisexual | 9 | 14.5% |
| Female | 1 | 1.6% |
| Fluid/Open/Pansexual/Queer | 16 | 25.8% |
| Gay/Lesbian | 2 | 3.2% |
| Heterosexual | 33 | 53.2% |
| Did not answer | 1 | 1.6% |
| Relationship Status | | |
| Single and not Dating | 10 | 16.1% |
| Casually Dating (no committed partner) | 16 | 25.8% |
| Partnered (boyfriend, girlfriend, significant other, fiancé) | 33 | 53.2% |
| Legal Partnership (married) | 3 | 4.8% |

* $M = 27.26$, $SD = 4.87$

Table 2

Participant primary club affiliation

| Club | <i>n</i> | % |
|------------------|----------|-------|
| Augie's | 8 | 12.9% |
| BJ's | 2 | 3.2% |
| Choice | 2 | 3.2% |
| déjà vu | 1 | 1.6% |
| Downtown Cabaret | 16 | 25.8% |
| Dreamgirls | 7 | 11.3% |
| PYRMD | 2 | 3.2% |
| Rick's | 5 | 8.1% |
| Seville | 7 | 11.3% |
| Spearmint Rhino | 10 | 16.1% |
| Did not answer | 2 | 3.2% |

Table 3

Means and Standard Deviations of Quantitative Responses

| Question | <i>M</i> | <i>SD</i> |
|--|----------|-----------|
| Safety Questions | | |
| Do you feel safe from violence, harassment, and stalking at your most frequented club? | 2.38 | 1.52 |
| Do you think security does their job in protecting dancers from violence, harassment, and stalking at your most frequented club? | 2.41 | 1.14 |
| If you report a safety concern, what is the likelihood that something will be done about it? | 2.31 | 1.34 |
| Have you ever been hurt by poorly maintained physical structures (stage, floor, etc.) at your most frequented club?* | 1.57 | 0.50 |
| Have you seen posters raising awareness about sex trafficking in your most frequented club?* | 1.48 | 0.50 |
| Do you feel like your profession is under the spotlight for sex trafficking? | 2.21 | 1.21 |
| Cleanliness Questions | | |
| Are you concerned with cleanliness in your most frequented club? | 1.4 | .493 |
| How concerned are you with cleanliness of the VIP areas in your most frequented club?* | 2.14 | 1.11 |
| How concerned are you with cleanliness of the stage areas in your most frequented club?* | 1.91 | 1.10 |
| How concerned are you with cleanliness of the dressing areas in your most frequented club?* | 1.77 | 1.03 |
| Have you ever gotten sick from work?* | 1.7 | 0.46 |
| How exposed to communicable diseases are you at your most frequented club? | 3.47 | 1.40 |

Note: * denotes yes/no questions (1 = “Yes”, 2 = “No”). ** denotes questions asked if first cleanliness questions was responded to with “yes”.

Table 4

Responses to “Who is responsible for maintaining the cleanliness of the VIP areas, stage areas, and dressing areas at your most frequented club?”

| Person Responsible | N | Percentage |
|--------------------|----|------------|
| Dancers | 18 | 29% |
| Bartender | 18 | 29% |
| Hosts | 9 | 14.5% |
| Bouncers | 10 | 16.1% |
| Managers | 12 | 19.4% |
| Cleaning Crew | 41 | 66.1% |
| Other | 14 | 22.6% |

Note: Respondents were free to select more than one option.

Appendix B

Recruitment Scripts

Step 1: Social Media Recruitment

If you have worked in a Minneapolis strip club within the past two months and would like to participate in research asking your opinions on workplace conditions for a study conducted by SWOP-Mpls & Minnesota State University, please DM for the survey link!

MSU IRBNet ID# 1178138

Step 2: Email for Survey Recruitment

**Once the person direct messages the researchers, they will be sent the following email:*

You are invited to participate in a survey-based research study conducted by the Sex Workers Outreach Project of Minneapolis and Minnesota State University, Mankato. The purpose of the study is to facilitate participatory action research with workers in the strip club industry in Minneapolis, and to examine the various workplace, health, legal, and social needs of current workers employed in Minneapolis strip clubs. Participation is voluntary, and lasts approximately 15-20 minutes.

If you are interested, please click on the following link to be taken to the survey and its informed consent form: https://mnsu.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_bxvBxdPwbdHomxL

If you have any questions or concerns about participating, please contact the study's principal investigator, Dr. Eric Sprankle at 507-389-5825 or eric.sprankle@mnsu.edu

If you have any questions about participants' rights and for research-related injuries, please contact the Administrator of the Institutional Review Board at (507) 389-1242 and reference the project number: MSU IRBNet ID# 1178138

Thanks!

Step 3: Email for Survey Compensation

Thank you for completing the survey!

If you also indicated you are interested in being interviewed for this project, a member of the research team may contact you toward the end of February or early March to schedule a time for the interview.

If you have any questions or concerns about participating, please contact the study's principal investigator, Dr. Eric Sprankle at 507-389-5825 or eric.sprankle@mnsu.edu

If you have any questions about participants' rights and for research-related injuries, please contact the Administrator of the Institutional Review Board at (507) 389-1242 and reference the project number: MSU IRBNet ID# 1178138

Again, thank you for your participation!

Step 4: Email for Interview Recruitment, Part 1

**If a participant is randomly selected to be interviewed, they will receive the following email:*

Thank you for completing the needs assessment survey, and for your expressed interest in being interviewed for the project. The interview is an opportunity to expand upon your answers you provided in the survey about the working conditions in Minneapolis strip clubs.

Participation is voluntary, and the interview will last approximately 30-60 minutes (or longer if desired). The interview will take place on Zoom, which is a web conferencing and video chat platform similar to Skype, but is HIPAA-compliant for confidentiality. The interview will be audio and video recorded, but you will have the option to not have the video portion recorded by telling your interviewer of your preference. The audio needs to be recorded for your responses to be transcribed. You can also use a pseudonym or alias instead of a legal or stage name. Your interviewer will ask you for your preferred name before beginning the recording of the interview.

Please select from the following dates and times that you would be available for an interview. If none of these times works well for your schedule, please let me know and provide me your general availability:

[insert list of dates/times the interviewer is available]

If you have any questions about participants' rights and for research-related injuries, please contact the Administrator of the Institutional Review Board at (507) 389-1242 and reference the project number: MSU IRBNet ID# 1178138

Again, thank you for your participation in the survey and for your interest in being interviewed!

Step 5: Email for Interview Recruitment, Part 2

**Once the participant selects a date/time, they will receive the following email. If no date/time works for the participant, the interviewer will send alternative dates/times until one works for the participant:*

Thank you for selecting a time to be interviewed. Before being interviewed, please see the attached informed consent document. Please print the form, read it, initial on the first page, sign on the second page, and email it back to me (either by scanning it or taking a photo of each page on your phone).

Here is the link to the Zoom meeting space [insert Zoom link]. Please click on the link on [insert date/time of interview].

If you need to reschedule or cancel the meeting, please email me.

If you have any questions or concerns about participating, please contact the study's principal investigator, Dr. Eric Sprankle at 507-389-5825 or eric.sprankle@mnsu.edu

If you have any questions about participants' rights and for research-related injuries, please contact the Administrator of the Institutional Review Board at (507) 389-1242 and reference the project number: MSU IRBNet ID# 1178138

Thanks again, and I look forward to our interview!

Step 6: Email for Interview Compensation

**After completing the interview, all participants will be sent this email:*

Thank you for completing the interview! Here is the link to claim your \$100 Amazon gift card: [insert link here].

Again, if you have any questions or concerns about the study, please contact the project's principal investigator, Dr. Eric Sprankle at 507-389-5825 or eric.sprankle@mnsu.edu

If you have any questions about participants' rights and for research-related injuries, please contact the Administrator of the Institutional Review Board at (507) 389-1242 and reference the project number: MSU IRBNet ID# 1178138

Thanks again!

Appendix C

Informed Consent Documents

Interview Consent Form

You are invited to participate in an interview-based research study conducted by members of the Sex Workers Outreach Project of Minneapolis (Andi “Betty” Seymour, Jayne Swift, Ramona Falls, and Katie Bloomquist), two graduate students from Minnesota State University, Mankato (Alexander Twohy and Machensey Shelgren), and supervised by the principal investigator, Dr. Eric Sprankle from Minnesota State University, Mankato. The purpose of the study is to facilitate participatory action research with workers in the strip club industry in Minneapolis, and to examine the various workplace, health, legal, and social needs of Minneapolis strip club workers.

Procedures

If you consent to participate, you will be interviewed by a member of the Sex Workers Outreach Project of Minneapolis. The interview will take place in-person or on Zoom, which is a web-conferencing platform similar to Skype or G-Chat, but is more secure and is HIPAA-compliant. The interview will be audio recorded via Zoom. Participation should last approximately 30-60 minutes, but may go longer if desired.

Voluntary Nature of Study

Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relationships with Minnesota State University, Mankato. If you decide to participate, you are free to stop at any time without penalty. You may stop the interview at any time by verbalizing your desire to discontinue.

Confidentiality

Before the interview begins, you will be asked by the researcher for a preferred name to be used in order to protect your legal and stage names. Additionally, this study involves the audio recording of your interview with the researcher. Only the aforementioned research team will be able to listen to the recordings. The recording will be transcribed and destroyed once the transcriptions are checked for accuracy. Transcripts of your interview may be reproduced in whole or in part for use in presentations or written products that result from this study. Neither your name nor any other identifying information (such as your voice or picture) will be used in presentations or in written products resulting from the study.

Although responses will only be listened to by the research team, whenever one works with online technology there is always the risk of compromising privacy, confidentiality, and/or anonymity. If you would like more information about the specific privacy and anonymity risks posed by online interviews, please contact the information security manager at 507-389-6654, ITSecurity@MNSU.edu.

The recording and transcripts will be stored on a password-protected computer. Once the recording is transcribed, the recording will be destroyed (approximate date of destroying the recording is early to mid-summer 2018). The transcripts will be destroyed after 3 years by the researchers.

Please initial here that you understand and consent to the information on this page _____

Survey Consent Form

You are invited to participate in a survey-based research study conducted by members of the Sex Workers Outreach Project of Minneapolis (Andi “Betty” Seymour, Jayne Swift, and Katie Bloomquist), two graduate students from Minnesota State University, Mankato (Alexander Twohy and Machensey Shelgren), and supervised by the principal investigator, Dr. Eric Sprankle from Minnesota State University, Mankato. The purpose of the study is to facilitate participatory action research with workers in the strip club industry in Minneapolis, and to examine the various workplace, health, legal, and social needs of current workers employed in Minneapolis strip clubs.

Procedures

If you consent to participate, you will complete an online survey. Participation should last approximately 15 to 20 minutes.

Voluntary Nature of Study

Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relationships with Minnesota State University, Mankato. If you decide to participate, **you are free to skip questions**, and you are free to stop at any time without penalty. You may stop the survey at any time by exiting the page.

Confidentiality

This study involves an online survey, and your name will not be associated with the survey. You may choose to provide your email address as contact information if you are interested in being compensated for your participation and/or if you are interested in participating in a follow-up interview. However, your email address will not be exported with your survey responses when the responses are analyzed.

Only the aforementioned research team will be able to see the survey responses. Responses to your survey may be reproduced in whole or in part for use in presentations or written products that result from this study. Neither your name nor any other identifying information will be used in presentations or in written products resulting from the study.

Although responses will only be viewed by the research team, whenever one works with online technology there is always the risk of compromising privacy, confidentiality, and/or anonymity. If you would like more information about the specific privacy and anonymity risks posed by online research, please contact the information security manager at 507-389-6654, ITSecurity@MNSU.edu.

The survey responses will be stored on a password-protected computer, and will be erased after 3 years by the researchers.

Risks and Benefits

The risks of participating are no more than those experienced in daily life. There are no direct benefits for participating.

Compensation

You will be compensated a \$20 Amazon gift card for participating in the survey. The gift card will be emailed by one of the researchers to the email address you provide.

Contacts and Questions

If you have any questions about this research, you are encouraged to contact Dr. Eric Sprankle (the principal investigator), 507-389-5825 or eric.sprankle@mnsu.edu.

If you have any questions about participants' rights and for research-related injuries, please contact the Administrator of the Institutional Review Board at (507) 389-1242.

Consent

Clicking on the link provided to begin the survey will indicate your informed consent to participate and indicate your assurance that you are at least 18 years of age.

You are welcome to print a copy of this page for your personal records.

MSU IRBNet ID# 1178138

Risks and Benefits

While precautions are being taken to de-identify all information (use of pseudonyms, destroying the recordings after transcription, not having email addresses attached to your responses, etc.), there are potential risks if identifying information were obtained, including but not limited to involuntary outing as a strip club worker, and lost wages and employment opportunities from being banned by specific clubs.

There are no direct benefits for participating.

Compensation

You will be compensated a \$100 Amazon gift card for participating in the interview. The gift card will be emailed by one of the researchers to the email address you provide.

Contacts and Questions

If you have any questions, you are encouraged to contact Dr. Eric Sprankle (the principal investigator) at Minnesota State University, Armstrong Hall 103, 507-389-5825 or by email at eric.sprankle@mnsu.edu.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher, or if you have questions/concerns about the treatment of human subjects, you are encouraged to contact the Dean of Graduate Studies and Research at Minnesota State University, Mankato, Dr. Barry Ries at 507-389-1424 via phone or at barry.ries@mnsu.edu via email.

Consent

If interested in being interviewed, initialing and signing this document will indicate your consent.

By signing this document, you are consenting to participate and indicate your assurance that you are at least 18 years of age.

Please keep a copy of this page for your future reference.

Please Print Your Name

Date

Please Sign Your Name

MSU IRBNet ID# 1178138

Appendix D

Survey Questions

Start of Block: Safety

Do you feel safe from violence, harassment, and stalking at your most frequented club?

- ☐ Always
 - ☐ Most of the time
 - ☐ About half the time
 - ☐ Sometimes
 - ☐ Never
-

Do you think security does their job in protecting dancers from violence, harassment, and stalking at your most frequented club?

- ☐ Always
 - ☐ Most of the time
 - ☐ About half the time
 - ☐ Sometimes
 - ☐ Never
-

If you report a safety concern, what is the likelihood that something will be done about it?

- ☐ Extremely likely
 - ☐ Somewhat likely
 - ☐ Neither likely nor unlikely
 - ☐ Somewhat unlikely
 - ☐ Extremely unlikely
-

Have you ever been hurt by poorly maintained physical structures (stage, floor, etc.) at your most frequented club?

- ☐ If yes, please explain: _____
 - ☐ No
-

Have you seen posters raising awareness about sex trafficking in your most frequented club?

- ☐ Yes
 - ☐ No
-

Do you feel like your profession is under the spotlight for sex trafficking?

- ☐ Definitely yes
 - ☐ Probably yes
 - ☐ Might or might not
 - ☐ Probably not
 - ☐ Definitely not
-

What do you think would be fair policies regarding safety?

End of Block: Safety

Start of Block: Cleanliness

Are you concerned with cleanliness in your most frequented club?

- ☐ Yes
 - ☐ No
-

How concerned are you with cleanliness of the VIP areas in your most frequented club?

- ☐ Very concerned
 - ☐ Somewhat concerned
 - ☐ Neither concerned nor unconcerned
 - ☐ Somewhat unconcerned
 - ☐ Very unconcerned
-

How concerned are you with cleanliness of the stage areas in your most frequented club?

- ☐ Very concerned
 - ☐ Somewhat concerned
 - ☐ Neither concerned nor unconcerned
 - ☐ Somewhat unconcerned
 - ☐ Very unconcerned
-

How concerned are you with cleanliness of the dressing areas in your most frequented club?

- ☐ Very concerned
- ☐ Somewhat concerned
- ☐ Neither concerned nor unconcerned
- ☐ Somewhat unconcerned
- ☐ Very unconcerned

Who is responsible for maintaining the cleanliness of the VIP areas, stage areas, and dressing areas at your most frequented club? (check all that apply)

☐ Dancers

☐ Bartenders

☐ Hosts

☐ Bouncers

☐ Managers

☐ Cleaning crew

☐ Other _____

Have you ever gotten sick from work?

☐ If yes, please explain: _____

☐ No

How exposed to communicable diseases are you at your most frequented club?

- ☐ A great deal
 - ☐ A lot
 - ☐ A moderate amount
 - ☐ A little
 - ☐ None at all
-

What do you think would be fair policies regarding cleanliness?

End of Block: Cleanliness

Appendix E

Interview Script

You'll be asking questions they answered from the survey, but allowing them the opportunity to expand upon their answers. Feel free to ask follow-up questions to clarify their comments. Here are the questions:

1. What do you think would be a fair pay structure?
2. What do you think would be a fair tipping policy?
3. What do you think should be included or not included in a fair contract?
4. What do you think would be fair treatment by management?
5. What do you think would be fair policies regarding cleanliness?
6. What do you think would be fair policies regarding safety?
7. What do you think would be fair policies regarding working in other sectors of the sex industry?
8. Do you have any other comments relating to stigma about your job or how stigma has affected you?
9. What do you think would be fair policies regarding coworker relationships?
10. How does police presence at your most frequented club affect your work?
11. Is there anything else you would like to share with me and the other researchers?

Appendix F

Quantitative Data Responses**Safety**

Table 5

Did you feel safe from violence, harassment, and stalking at your most frequented club?

| Response | N | Percent |
|---------------------|----|---------|
| Always | 8 | 12.9% |
| Most of the time | 37 | 59.7% |
| About half the time | 2 | 3.2% |
| Sometimes | 5 | 8.1% |
| Never | 6 | 9.7% |
| Did not respond | 4 | 6.5% |
| Total | 62 | 100% |

Table 6

Do you think security does their job in protecting dancers from violence, harassment, and stalking at your most frequented club?

| Response | N | Percent |
|---------------------|----|---------|
| Always | 11 | 17.7% |
| Most of the time | 29 | 46.8% |
| About half the time | 3 | 4.8% |
| Sometimes | 13 | 21.0% |
| Never | 2 | 3.2% |
| Did not respond | 4 | 6.5% |
| Total | 62 | 100% |

Table 7

If you report a safety concern, what is the likelihood that something will be done about it?

| Response | N | Percent |
|-----------------------------|----|---------|
| Extremely likely | 19 | 32.8% |
| Somewhat likely | 21 | 33.9% |
| Neither likely nor unlikely | 6 | 9.7% |
| Somewhat unlikely | 5 | 8.1% |
| Extremely unlikely | 7 | 11.3% |

| Response | N | Percent |
|-----------------|----|---------|
| Did not respond | 4 | 6.5% |
| Total | 62 | 100% |

Table 8

Have you ever been hurt by poorly maintained physical structures (stage, floor, etc.) at your most frequented club?

| Response | N | Percent |
|-----------------|----|---------|
| Yes | 25 | 40.3% |
| No | 33 | 53.2% |
| Did not respond | 4 | 6.5% |
| Total | 62 | 100% |

Table 9

Have you seen posters raising awareness about sex trafficking in your most frequented club?

| Response | N | Percent |
|-----------------|----|---------|
| Yes | 30 | 48.4% |
| No | 28 | 45.2% |
| Did not respond | 4 | 6.5% |
| Total | 62 | 100% |

Table 10

Do you feel like your profession is under the spotlight for sex trafficking?

| Response | N | Percent |
|--------------------|----|---------|
| Definitely yes | 21 | 33.9% |
| Probably yes | 16 | 25.8% |
| Might or might not | 13 | 21.0% |
| Probably not | 4 | 6.5% |
| Definitely not | 4 | 6.5% |
| Did not respond | 4 | 6.5% |
| Total | 62 | 100% |

Cleanliness

Table 11

Are you concerned with cleanliness in your most frequented club?

| Response | N | Percent |
|-----------------|----|---------|
| Yes | 35 | 56.5% |
| No | 23 | 37.1% |
| Did not respond | 4 | 6.5% |
| Total | 62 | 100% |

Table 12

How concerned are you with the cleanliness of the VIP areas in your most frequented club?

| Response | N | Percent |
|-----------------------------------|----|---------|
| Very concerned | 12 | 34.3% |
| Somewhat concerned | 13 | 37.1% |
| Neither concerned nor unconcerned | 3 | 8.6% |
| Somewhat unconcerned | 7 | 20.0% |
| Very Unconcerned | 0 | 0% |
| Total | 35 | 100% |

Note: Only those who responded “Yes” to “Are you concerned with cleanliness in your most frequented club?” were shown this question. Percentages calculated from those who responded.

Table 13

How concerned are you with the cleanliness of the stage areas in your most frequented club?

| Response | N | Percent |
|-----------------------------------|----|---------|
| Very concerned | 15 | 42.9% |
| Somewhat concerned | 14 | 40.0% |
| Neither concerned nor unconcerned | 1 | 2.9% |
| Somewhat unconcerned | 4 | 11.4% |
| Very Unconcerned | 1 | 2.9% |
| Total | 35 | 100% |

Note: Only those who responded “Yes” to “Are you concerned with cleanliness in your most frequented club?” were shown this question. Percentages calculated from those who responded.

Table 14

How concerned are you with the cleanliness of the dressing areas in your most frequented club?

| Response | N | Percent |
|-----------------------------------|----|---------|
| Very concerned | 18 | 51.4% |
| Somewhat concerned | 11 | 31.4% |
| Neither concerned nor unconcerned | 3 | 8.6% |
| Somewhat unconcerned | 2 | 5.7% |
| Very Unconcerned | 1 | 2.9% |
| Total | 35 | 100% |

Note: Only those who responded “Yes” to “Are you concerned with cleanliness in your most frequented club?” were shown this question. Percentages calculated from those who responded.

Table 15

Have you ever gotten sick from work?

| Response | N | Percent |
|-----------------------------|----|---------|
| Yes: if yes, please explain | 17 | 27.4% |
| No | 39 | 62.9% |
| Did not respond | 6 | 9.7% |
| Total | 62 | 100% |

Note: Of those who gave further explanation (n =15), none indicated sexually transmitted infections

Table 16

How exposed to communicable diseases are you at your most frequented club?

| Response | N | Percent |
|-------------------|----|---------|
| A great deal | 7 | 11.3% |
| A lot | 9 | 14.5% |
| A moderate amount | 11 | 17.7% |
| A little | 12 | 19.4% |
| None at all | 19 | 30.6% |
| Did not respond | 4 | 6.5% |
| Total | 62 | 100% |