

HIV INFECTION AND MENTAL HEALTH OF “MONEY BOYS”: A PILOT STUDY IN SHANDONG PROVINCE, CHINA

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Abstract. A pilot study was conducted in eight cities of Shandong Province, China to examine the seroprevalence of HIV and syphilis infection, and the mental health of “money boys” who were recruited by respondent-driven sampling and interviewed using a semi-structured questionnaire. The prevalence of the HIV-positive among money boys was 5.1%. Factors associated with the infection were having sex with women in the past 6 months ($p < 0.05$) and suffering STD-like symptoms ($p < 0.01$). The prevalence of syphilis was 10.2%. There were 77.2% participants engaged in such an occupation for economic survival. The prevalence of anxiety and depression among money boys was 46.6% and 68.1%, respectively. Heterosexual money boys were more likely to suffer from such mental symptoms. This study revealed the urgent need for interventions for HIV/AIDS control, together with mental counseling, targeting this vulnerable population.

Key words: HIV, syphilis, mental health, seroprevalence, China

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