

# **Sexual behaviour in Kenya: implications for sexually transmitted disease transmission and control**

## **Abstract:**

Sexual behaviour in Kenya in relation to STD transmission was investigated with a view to forming a basis for the more rational design of STD/HIV control interventions. Questionnaires were administered to a sample of 762 men and women attending eight health facilities in two urban centres. Equal numbers of STD patients (cases) and non-STD related clinic attenders (clinic controls) were selected, matched by gender and clinic. Another sample of 427 men and women was obtained from a random sampling of households in a slum area in Nairobi (community controls). Male STD patients who were unmarried or married but living apart from their wives, reported a higher mean number of sex partners in the previous three months than did male clinic or community controls. Unmarried female STD patients reported a higher mean number of sex partners in the previous three months than did unmarried female clinic or community controls. Both male and female STD patients were more likely to report having been involved in commercial sex transactions in the previous three months than clinic or community controls. Considerable heterogeneity in sexual behaviour was apparent. In multivariate analysis, the most important predictor of STD acquisition for both men and women was the number of reported sex partners in the previous three months. In addition, for men only, marital status (unmarried, or married but living apart from their wives) and purchasing sex were significant predictors of being an STD patient. These data confirm the importance of commercial sex in STD transmission, and suggest that men play a bridging role between female sex workers and the general population of women.