

# PROGRAM ABSTRACT

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*TITLE* *Mujer Segura, Healthy Woman*  
*An HIV prevention Program for Female Sex Workers*

*SUMMARY* In large Mexican cities bordering the U.S., where sex work is tolerated and HIV prevalence is rising, there is a clear need to ensure that condoms are consistently used during commercial sex transactions to prevent outbreaks of sexually transmitted infections (including HIV) in both countries. In the cities of Tijuana and Ciudad Juarez, the prevalence of HIV among female sex workers is estimated at around 6%. Because the prevalence of HIV is concentrated among female sex workers in these areas, these cities were chosen as sites in which to implement an HIV prevention program called *Mujer Segura, Healthy Woman*. This brief behavioral intervention aims to increase knowledge of HIV and HIV prevention strategies, self-efficacy related to safer sexual behavior, and condom use negotiation skills among Mexican female sex workers.

The *Mujer Segura* program is composed of one session, lasting approximately 35-minutes, delivered one-on-one to a female sex worker by a counselor. The program uses motivational interviewing techniques to increase the female sex worker's motivation and ability to negotiate for the use of condoms during all commercial sex exchanges. The counseling session addresses safer sex practices, challenges to using condoms, techniques for negotiating safer sex, and the importance of social support. The session also includes role-play exercises, identification and review of the advantages and disadvantages of negotiating/practicing safer sex, and finally, the creation of an action plan to increase condom use with guidance from the counselor. Counselors, in addition, meet weekly with supervisors to discuss program implementation and problem solve any issues that arise during the program.

A longitudinal study compared the effectiveness of the *Mujer Segura* program to a didactic, time-equivalent presentation of STI and HIV prevention information from the Centers for Disease Control and Mexico's National Center for AIDS Studies (control condition). A total of 709 female sex workers in

Tijuana and Ciudad Juarez completed the study with 341 women in the *Mujer Segura* condition and 368 women in the control condition.

Baseline and follow-up (6-months post-program) interviews assessed changes in sexual risk behaviors. To determine changes in sexual activity outcomes from baseline to follow-up, repeated measures analysis of covariance were conducted with the intervention condition as the primary independent variable. Cohen *d* effect sizes were also calculated. A second set of analyses examined the effects of the program on reducing incident STIs (syphilis, gonorrhea, chlamydia, and HIV).  $\chi^2$  tests compared participants who had negative tests for each STI at baseline by study condition. Group incidence densities (number of at-risk women with incident infections per 100 at-risk person years) were also compared with Poisson regression.

The *Mujer Segura* program created statistically significant improvements in the risk behaviors of participants. Women who completed the program demonstrated statistically significant increases in the total number of protected sex acts and the ratio of condom-use sex acts to unprotected sex acts. They also decreased their total number of unprotected sex acts compared to women in the control condition, and this difference was statistically significant.

The *Mujer Segura* program participants also decreased their overall STI incidence at the 6-month follow-up by 40% compared to the control condition, and statistically they were significantly less likely to contract any STI at six months than the control condition. At the 6-month follow-up, HIV incidence density was significantly lower among the *Mujer Segura* participants (0 per 100 person-years) than those in the control group (2.01 per 100 person-years).

*GLOBAL HIV  
ARCHIVE  
CATEGORY*

- |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sexual risk reduction (secondary) | <input type="checkbox"/> Community mobilization | <input type="checkbox"/> Antiretroviral adherence                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> HIV testing and education                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Reproductive health    | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> High-risk populations (primary) |

Primary content categories reflect the main focus of the program, while secondary content categories may be addressed in other aspects of the program.

*IMPLEMENTATION  
LEVEL*

- Individual (implemented one-on-one)
- Couple/ family (implemented with a couple or family)
- Group (implemented in small groups)
  
- Structural (implemented on social, economic, political, or environmental levels)

*IMPLEMENTATION  
SETTING*

- Community (implemented through community-based organizations)
- School (implemented in schools)
- Clinic (implemented in clinics)

Although this program was designed to be integrated into the operations of a clinic offering STI/HIV testing, it may be possible for community-based organizations to conduct the counseling sessions while referring participants to a separate clinic for testing.

*ORIGINAL  
TARGET  
POPULATION*

The original *Mujer Segura* program was conducted with female sex workers in Tijuana and Ciudad Juarez, Mexico. The sex workers were at least 18 years old and had traded sex for drugs, money, or gifts within the previous two months. In addition, these women had engaged in unprotected vaginal sex with at least one client in the previous two months.

Although this program was specifically designed to increase condom use during commercial sex exchanges, it may be suitable for use with other at-risk groups who engage in risky sexual behaviors.

*PROGRAM  
COMPONENTS*

- Booster sessions for participants
- Community outreach/ mobilization
- Condom demonstration
- Continual assessment of progress
- Formalized curriculum
- Medication adherence and routine clinic visits
- Motivational interviewing
- Multi-year program
- Needs assessment
- Peer education/ counseling
- Presentations

- Educational materials (e.g., leaflets, posters, comics, magazines)
- Role Plays
- Stakeholder investment
- STI/HIV testing
- Electronic media (e.g., radio, cell phones, internet, videos)

*PROGRAM  
LENGTH*

This one-session program is delivered in 35 minutes.

*STAFFING  
REQUIREMENTS/  
TRAINING*

There is no specific training required for the counselor(s) of the *Mujer Segura* program; however, it is beneficial for counselors to have previous experience in motivational interviewing or other types of behavior change counseling. If the counselor has not had previous experience conducting motivational interviewing sessions, it is recommended that they seek out additional training (see the Counselor Training Manual for recommendations).

Counselors must read through the Counselor Training Manual several times to learn the theory, objectives, format, and content of the *Mujer Segura* program. Counselors should familiarize themselves with the worksheets and the Counselor Handbook, a step-by-step guide for each counseling session. Familiarity with this handbook and its accompanying worksheets will enable the counselor to effectively conduct the program session. The counselor should also read through the Counselor Scripts booklet, to see some examples of how a counselor may lead a participant through the *Mujer Segura* program. These scripts should be used for counselor training only – they are not meant to be read aloud to participants completing the program.

If possible, counselors for the *Mujer Segura* program should meet weekly with the program supervisor. During these meetings, the supervisor and counselor can discuss counseling strategies and any issues about *Mujer Segura* program implementation. The counselors and supervisor will have the opportunity to problem solve specific situations that may arise.

*PROGRAM  
MATERIALS*

The *Mujer Segura* program package contains all of the materials needed to implement the program except for the penis model, condoms, and lubricant used for demonstration during the knowledge and skill building exercise of the

counseling session, and the male and female condoms and lubrication distributed to participants at the end of the counseling session.

*A NOTE ABOUT  
ADAPTATION*

The Global HIV Archive program package includes a Customized Adaptation Handbook to help program staff successfully adapt the *Mujer Segura* program for new settings and target populations. The Adaptation Handbook details a set of pragmatic, easy-to-follow steps to facilitate making changes to the program, while preserving the components that made – or are believed to have made – it effective in the first place.

*A NOTE ABOUT  
EVALUATION*

Each Global HIV Archive program package contains the original evaluation instruments used to evaluate the program. In the original evaluation of *Mujer Segura*, trained female counselors administered baseline and follow-up interview questionnaires (in Spanish) in private clinic rooms or outreach offices. These two interviews (baseline and 6-month follow-up) are provided in the Original Evaluation Instruments booklet. This booklet also contains fidelity monitoring checklists for the counselor, participant, and independent rater.

The program package also includes an Evaluation Resource Guide, containing select questions to assess relevant HIV outcomes such as risk from sexual behaviors, condom self efficacy, and condom use.

If you would like to conduct an evaluation with your population, it is important to assess the applicability of survey questions to your context/setting. For instance, some questions contain region-specific language and terminology that you might need to adapt to be relevant to your population.

*PROGRAM  
ACQUISITION  
AND  
IMPLEMENTATION  
COSTS*

Global HIV Archive program packages are available in boxed, flash-drive, and downloadable formats. This Global HIV Archive program package includes:

- *Quick Guide to Your Program Package* – a roadmap to get oriented to the *Mujer Segura* program and tips for how to get started
- *User's Guide* – an overview of the *Mujer Segura* program including information about implementation and evaluation

- *Counselor Training Manual* – a training guide for counselors implementing the *Mujer Segura* program
- *Counselor Handbook* – a step-by-step guide for implementing the *Mujer Segura* program session
- *Worksheets* – handouts for the participant and counselor to fill out during the counseling session
- *Counselor Scripts* – sample scenarios for the counselor to prepare for the *Mujer Segura* program
- *Flipbook of Common Sexually Transmitted Infections* – a visual aid for the counselor to use during the *Mujer Segura* program
- *Customized Adaptation Handbook* – a guide to customize adaptations to the *Mujer Segura* program
- *Original Evaluation Instruments* – all surveys used to measure the effectiveness of the original implementation of the *Mujer Segura* program including:
  - Participant Baseline Questionnaire
  - Participant Follow-up Questionnaire
  - Counselor Fidelity Checklist
  - Participant Fidelity Checklist
  - Rater Fidelity Checklist
- *Evaluation Resource Guide* – a set of scales to consider using when evaluating HIV prevention program effectiveness
- *English Program Documents: Overview of Changes* – documentation of changes made to the English translated documents that are not found in the Spanish versions

The following *Mujer Segura* program package materials are also available in Spanish:

- *Checklist of Spanish Program Materials* – a one-page guide of what Spanish documents are included in the program package
- *Counselor Training Manual* (Manual de Capacitación para Consejeros)
- *Counselor Handbook* (Guía De La Consejera)
- *Worksheets* (Hojas de Trabajo)
- *Counselor Scripts* (Guias de Asesoramiento)

- *Original Evaluation Instruments* (Materiales Originales de Evaluación)
  - Participant Baseline Questionnaire (Primera Entrevista)
  - Participant Follow-up Questionnaire (Entrevista de Seguimiento)
  - Counselor Fidelity Checklist (Lista de Control de la Intervención – Consejera/o)
  - Participant Fidelity Checklist (Lista de Control de la Intervención – Participante)
  - Rater Fidelity Checklist (Lista de Control de la Intervención – Evaluador)

Any changes made to the English versions only are noted in the English Program Documents: Overview of Changes document.

The cost of the package also includes free technical support for program implementation and evaluation (see Contact Information below).

#### *CONTACT INFORMATION*

Carmela G. Lomonaco, Ph.D.  
Practitioner Support Group  
Sociometrics Corporation  
201 Main Street, Suite 100  
Los Altos, CA 94022-2933  
E-mail: lomonaco@socio.com  
Skype: carmela.lomonaco

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