BACKGROUND
A number of studies describing HIV risk behaviors among female commercial sex workers in Asian countries reported low rates of condom use with customers. However, there is no information about HIV-related behaviors among Asian massage parlor workers (masseuses) in the U.S.

OBJECTIVES
To describe HIV risk and protective behaviors in relation to socioeconomic context among the targeted Asian masseuses in San Francisco.

METHODS
Instrument Development
Conducted qualitative interviews with 7 Vietnamese and 2 Thai masseuses.
Based on the qualitative interviews and our previous studies, developed a structured questionnaire
Measures: drug use and sexual behaviors, demographics, AIDS knowledge, positive norms toward condom use, fatalism, and resilience on subjective evaluation of customers
Questionnaire: Translated into Vietnamese
Recruitment and Interview
During off-peak hours, after verbally obtaining informed consent, conducted in-person interviews with masseuses at cafés, restaurants, or massage parlors by a Vietnamese outreach worker.
On average, one hour interview per participant.
$40 being paid for her time.
A total of 107 interviews: 98 in English and 9 in Vietnamese (7 were discarded from analysis).

FINDINGS
Working Conditions
On average, masseuses work 16.5 houraday for 5.3 days a week, 135% work 10 hours or more per day, 43% work 8 days or 7 days a week.
Masseuses have 26.6 customers a week on average.
Almost all masseuses have to pay the house a portion of their earnings to owners.
Sexual Activities
With customers:
Masseuses’ condom use with customers: 77% for oral sex, 10% for vaginal sex.
Condom breakage: 32% ever, 20% in the past 6 months.
Condom slip-off: 10% ever, 7% in the past 6 months
Condom supply: 100% from the house without charge.
Sex while menstruating: 10%.
Douching after sex: 79% always.
With private partners:
Sex with a private partner in the past 6 months: 23%
Using a condom: 17% always use.

Health
• 77% have had pregnancies and 34% have had abortions
• 24% have children
• 75% have used birth control pills

Sociocultural context
Masseuses with higher AIDS knowledge were more likely to have higher positive norms toward condom use and sexual behaviors and violence among the target group.

RECOMMENDATIONS
Further encourage 100% condom use with customers for all sexual services.
Produce information about how to handle the accident (e.g., breakage and slip-off).
Produce skill-training on how to avoid violence.
Conduct community HIV prevention interventions targeting masseuses as well as massage parlor owners and customers.

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