

Sexual and non-sexual behavior of trafficked women in Mexico: A study on victims of sexual exploitation

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Abstract

Since the adoption of Palermo Protocol, many efforts have implemented at international and national levels to investigate and prosecute trafficking cases, and provide victims with protection and services. Nevertheless, every year in Mexico 10,000 young girls and women trafficked into different cities for the purpose of sexual exploitation every year. Trafficking victims suffer a wide range of sexual exploitation, physical and psychological violence, including their right to dignity, cruel and inhumane treatment, which creates a vulnerability and isolation environment for the victims. To escape from the distress and sorrow, many trafficking victims adopt serious and negative sexual and non-sexual behaviors, which we have tried to analyze in this paper. Results indicate that trafficked women forced into high-risk sexual and non-sexual behaviors. Many of them have been addicted to drugs, alcohol, marihuana and their sexual behaviors indicate that many victims have practiced more than one type of sexual relation with clients.

Keywords: Trafficking of women, sexual behaviors, non-sexual behaviors, addiction and Mexico

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Introduction

Ending modern-day slavery has been on the global agenda since the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948 (Free the Slaves, 2015). After that, several United Nations treaties, protocols and conventions have shaped the international response to human trafficking. Nevertheless, eradicating slavery was not included in the 2000 millennium development goals. However, in the year 2015, the United Nations approved the Sustainable Development Goals 2015-2030, where 180 countries signed and ratified the agenda (United Nations, 2015). The main objectives of sustainable development goals (SDGs) is to set new goals, targets and indicators that United Nations member states will be expected to use to frame their agendas and political policies. During the United Nations general assembly in New York, all world leaders formally adopted 17 objectives that focus on people, prosperity and the planet, with 169 targets listed to accomplish these goals. In the case of human trafficking, the draft has mentioned, in the three goals, immediate and effective measures by all nations to combat all forms of slavery and human trafficking. The 5th objective involves gender equality and empowerment of women, and in target 5.2 it defines the elimination of all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation. Similarly, objectives 8 and 16 emphasized the immediate and effective measures to eradicate forced labor, exploitation, end of modern day slavery and human trafficking as well as all forms of violence and torture against children by 2030 (United Nations, 2015).

In the 15 years since the adoption of the Palermo Protocol, many efforts have been implemented at international and national levels to investigate and prosecute trafficking cases and provide protection and services to victims. Nevertheless, everyday thousands of persons are sold and lured through false promises around the world and forced into different kinds of exploitation. The International Labor Organization (ILO) estimates that nearly 20.9 million people are victims of forced labor globally, trapped in jobs into which they were coerced or deceived and which they cannot leave, and out of these, 22 per cent (4.5 million) are victims of forced sexual exploitation (ILO, 2012). The 2014 Global report on Trafficking in Persons indicates women and girls account for around 70 per cent of

victims of traffic worldwide, among which 53 per cent are used for sexual exploitation and 40 per cent are exploited for forced labor (UNODC, 2014).

There is literature and reports indicating women and children are trafficked for various purposes such as forced prostitution, sexual servitude, domestic labor, marriage, and agricultural labor, begging, and in the case of children for illegal adoptions. Regardless of forms of trafficking, most of these victims suffer sexual exploitation, physical and psychological violence, violation of human rights including their right to dignity, cruel and inhumane treatment, which generates a vulnerability and isolation environment for the victims (UNODC, 2014). The study of Zimmerman et al. (2011), Greenbaum and Crawford-Jakubiak, (2015) stated that girls and women, mainly trafficked for the purpose of sexual exploitation and forced prostitution, often suffer physical, sexual and psychological violence, which directly affects the sexual behaviors of victims. Goldenberg et al. (2012) studied 624 female sex workers in Tijuana and Ciudad Juárez, Mexico and found that 42 per cent were forced into sex work as minors and they experienced a higher prevalence of sexual violence and risk of substance abuse, which are associated to health impacts. The study of Lang et. al (2011) on rape victimization and high risk sexual behaviors among African-American adolescents indicates that adolescent females who report higher rates of physical and sexual violence are more associated with high risk sexual practices including having multiple sexual partners, earlier sexual debut, absence of birth control on their last intercourse, substance abuse, and exchanging sex for money or drugs.

According to Jessor's studies on behavior theory, a person's sexual or non-sexual behavior is directly related to their social ecology. These studies indicate that non-sexual behaviors such as drinking alcohol, smoking, substance abuse, gambling among others and sexual behaviors such as the number of sexual partners, protection during sexual relations etc., are directly related to the health of a person (Jessor, 1991, Jessor and Jessor, 1997).

Martin and Macy (2009) found in their study that women who experienced sexual violence are more likely to engage in various types of high-risk health behaviors than other women, including substance abuse and unsafe sexual behaviors. The research of Farley et al. (2004) conducted in nine countries (Canada, US, Mexico, Colombia, South Africa, Thailand, Zambia, Turkey, and Germany) in which they studied 854 trafficked women,

found that victims suffered different types of sexual and physical violence, which have directly affected their current sexual and non-sexual health even in their post-trafficking situation. Similarly, Maher et.al (2015) studied 80 victims of women trafficking in Phnom Penh, Cambodia and found that sex workers who suffered higher-grade violence are less likely to use condoms, and abuse harmful substances to relieve stress.

As can be observed from the studies above, trafficked women suffer wide ranges of violence around the world and it has become an important international and national agenda due to the growing concern about the violence against women, human rights violations and the spread of sexually transmitted diseases. In the case of Mexico, during the last two decades, women's trafficking has undergone some deep changes; first, it is an origin, destination and transit country for international trafficking (Cacho 2010; Seelke 2013; USDS, 2015). The second point is, there is an exponential growth in tourism and sexual tourism in the country that has created a higher demand of young girls for sexual exploitation (López and Van Broeck, 2013). Every year nearly 15,000-20,000 women and girls are trafficked into the United States from Mexico and other Latin American countries, where sex traffickers (*coyotes*) lure poor women and girls through false promises of jobs in the U.S. (Richard, 2000, Acharya, 2006).

Although there is growing concern on the increase of human trafficking in Mexico, to this date the phenomenon of human trafficking, especially of women, is poorly understood due to the lack of research. Some non-government organizations, for example CATWLAC, Infancia Común, and Colectivo contra la Trata de Personas, among others, are working hard to combat trafficking in Mexico, however the scale and consequences are not well documented. Thus, taking the above into account, I formulated the following research questions: What types of sexual and non-sexual behaviors do trafficked women practice? And taking into consideration this question, the objective of this paper is to explore the sexual and non-sexual behaviors of trafficked women in the city of Monterrey, Mexico.

Research Methodology

Trafficked women are treated as a hidden population, for whom it is extremely difficult to establish a reliable sampling frame. This tends to make randomized sampling strategies unsuitable. Therefore, a snowball sampling technique was used during fieldwork.

Interviews of trafficked women were carried out in two steps: The first step involved establishing contact with key informants, and the second step was to interview women victims of trafficking. According to Zheng (2013,) if the researcher is local and knows people working in the establishment personally, the mutual trust between them could make it far easier for the researcher to access the establishment. Taking this into consideration, in the City of Monterrey, I first reached out to a graduate degree student named “Olaf” from our Universidad Autónoma de Nuevo León [Autonomous University of Nuevo Leon] seeking his collaboration with this project. Olaf was also working as a part time barman in a brothel and had good quality knowledge of the area and business in downtown Monterrey. Once I discussed the project with Olaf, he said he would try to help, but because it is difficult for him to move from one place to another, he might not be able to locate many women victims of trafficking. After a few months, Olaf contacted me over the telephone and gave me information of one woman and the name of the brothel where she was working.

After receiving the information, Francisco Ontiveros, a postgraduate student at the Instituto de Investigaciones Sociales [Social Science Research Institute], for the Universidad Autónoma de Nuevo León [Autonomous University of Nuevo Leon] and myself, visited the designated brothel and contacted the woman. We described to her our study and mentioned that Olaf had given us her name and location. After a few minutes of conversation, we paid the requested amount of \$200 pesos for 30 minutes, and to hide our identity in front of the brothel owner and traffickers, we went to a private room to talk more freely. Only the woman knew we were researchers. After concluding the interview, we asked her to help us find more women victims of trafficking who are working in the same brothel or others nearby. At the beginning, she declined to help, but after a while she agreed to cooperate to locate other victims. We also offered to pay her \$100 pesos per woman in return. Every time she located a woman, she arranged an interview and called us. Therefore, by applying the snowball technique, we were able to gain access and interview trafficking victims in Monterrey.

Before and during the interviews, we followed the World Health Organization (WHO) ethical and safety recommendations for interviewing women victims of trafficking written by Zimmerman and Watts (2003), including the relevant ethical and methodology

procedures such as safeguarding participants' confidentiality, anonymity, and safety. It is also necessary to mention here that, although they agreed to the interview through their friend, we still obtained their consent and always explained to them the sole purpose of our study, the subject to be discussed, its risks as well as its benefits. Moreover, we never asked any questions which could cause an emotional reaction, nor did we question their sentiments or judge their decision or character. There were women who became very emotional and preferred not to continue the interview, so we respected their decision and stopped at that point.

In addition, at the beginning of the interview, we offered the women to come to our house or to any other location of their preference, but they always responded with a "no". They would tell us "... this is our area; it is not possible for us to leave this place, because our *madrina* (pimp) does not allow us to work in other places..." Since women were not allowed to leave the brothel, we acted as "clients" because it was the only way to gain access to the brothel. Interviews lasted around 30 minutes and using the snowball method a total of 70 women were interviewed from 2007 to 2014 with a semi-structured questionnaire, to learn the causes and consequences of trafficking. All interviews followed the same topics in Spanish and were also audiotaped, later they were transcribed verbatim and the authors checked for accuracy.

In this study, the information has been analyzed in two ways; the first was by using SPSS software, which served to systematize the data on both demographic and socio-cultural information of the trafficked women. For example, in each interview we obtained information on age, place of origin, physical characteristics, religion, type of family, age at which they were trafficked, abortions and violence suffered, among other information. About sexual behaviors, condom use, number of clients received every day, type of sexual relations practiced by the women, these were also asked during interviews, and on non-sexual behaviors of trafficked women, the information collected included smoking cigarettes, drug & marihuana abuse and alcohol consumptions. The second analytical strategy, discourse analysis enabled us to understand better how traffickers or madams treat women, how traffickers trapped them, what kind of sexual and non-sexual behaviors persist. The qualitative information was analyzed together with the quantitative information to understand the magnitude and seriousness of the trafficking problem in Mexico.

Trafficking of Women for Sexual Exploitation in Mexico

The 2015 Trafficking in Persons Report provided by the U.S. Department of State indicates that Mexico is a source, transit and destination country for women, children and men subjected to sex trafficking and forced labor. According to this report, Mexican women, children as well as men are exploited in forced labor in agriculture, domestic service, food processing factories, construction, the informal economy, begging, and vending in both the United States and Mexico. The most vulnerable groups to human trafficking in Mexico include women, children, indigenous people, individuals with mental or physical disabilities, migrants and LGBT Mexicans (USDS, 2015).

Human trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation in Mexico has become a public concern in the last few years, especially with respect to the prostitution of children (Esteinou, 2011). Mexico ranks second in the world in terms of prostitution of under-age persons (Monroy, 2010). Available evidence suggests that children are commonly trafficked from poor areas of the country and are often exploited by American tourists (COHA, 2009, Ruíz Torres, 2003). Prostitution has been practiced in the country since the Pre-Hispanic period, and is still commonplace throughout the country (Franco, 1973, Ríos de la Torre, 1991). According to Azaola (1998) the rapid increase in the number of children for commercial sexual exploitation is due to the following factors: (1) The deterioration of living conditions of poor families, (2) the promotion of child prostitution by close family members, (3) the use of sexual activities as a means of survival by street children who escape from an abusive home, (4) the recruitment of children as sex workers by organized crime network and, (5) the illegal transfer of children as sex workers from developing countries to developed countries.

According to the ECPAT report, Mexico has long been regarded as a popular sex tourism location, which has made it a focus for trafficking in children and it is estimated that more than 16,000 Mexican children are trafficked and forced into sex work in the country's popular tourist destinations, such as Acapulco, Cancun, Guadalajara, Puerto Vallarta and the border towns of Juarez and Tijuana (Azaola, 2000).

In the last few years, some significant effort has been made to understand the trafficking in persons issue in the country. It also evidenced that both domestic and international trafficking of persons, especially of women and children has increased (USDS, 2015, Montalvo, 2014, CNDH, 2013). Our previous research indicates that every year approximately 10,000 people are being trafficked within Mexico, particularly to the following six cities: Cancun, Acapulco, Mexico City, Tijuana, Ciudad Juarez and Monterrey, and approximately 5,000 are trafficked into the United States (Acharya and Bryson, 2014). This study also found that in Mexico, 7 out of 10 trafficked women are being trafficked within the country and 3 out of 10 are taken abroad (Acharya, 2010). In addition, every day an estimated 400 women enter into prostitution (this figure includes trafficked and non-trafficked women) in Mexico City, out of which 80 per cent do so against their will (González, 2003). The study of Acharya and Bryson (2014) observed that there are four categories of factors that are responsible for women trafficking in Mexico, such as: (1) Family factors (including domestic violence, physical abuse by step father, etc.), (2) Economic factors (including poverty, unemployment and household economic problems), (3) Social factors (including gender discrimination, sexual abuse, etc.) and, (4) Personal factors (including marriage to boyfriend, to earn more money, etc.).

In 2014, the National Citizen Observatory conducted a four-year analysis (January 2010 through July 2013) on human trafficking in Mexico including 31 States, the Federal District, and the federal government. The present study found persistently high levels of impunity for the crime, demonstrating how incomplete and contradictory official information contributes to bury the true scope of the problem. Over the period of time, 16 states reported a total of 846 victims, while the rest failed to provide information (ONC, 2014). Of these, around 87 per cent were women and approximately the same per cent were victims of sex trafficking, and nearly 90 per cent of victims were single, Mexican citizens and were under 18 years old (ONC, 2014).

Trafficking of women in the case of Mexico is a complex phenomenon as it has many consequences on the health of victims. Women victims of trafficking suffer a wide range of health problems. For example, the study of Silverman (2011), Kempadoo and Doezema (1998) and Binh (2006) have identified that this business is associated with a high health risk primarily due to lack of access to services, isolation, and exploitative

working conditions. Moreover, the nexus between trafficking and HIV is clearly identified (Zimmerman et al. 2011, Greenbaum and Crawford-Jakubiak, 2015, Goldenberg et al., 2012). Currently in Mexico there are 119,200 persons living with HIV/AIDS (Censida, 2015), which was 50,776 in 2001. This rapid increment in the number of HIV/AIDS patients has brought national attention for politicians, academics and for the general public due to its consequences on public health. Therefore, in this sense it is very much essential to study the sexual and non-sexual behaviors of victims of women trafficking as it directly associated with the sexual health of women.

Results

Socio demographic characteristics of trafficked women

As has been shown from earlier research, trafficked women are significantly young. Analysis indicates that the majority of women are under 25 years of age. Out of 70 trafficked women interviewed over the years, 77 per cent (54 women) are below the age of 18. Moreover, when they were asked the age at which they were trafficked, the response from the majority of them (80 per cent) was before the age of 15, and only three girls responded they were trafficked between the ages of 10 to 11. It has been observed that young girls and women fell into the trafficking network due to various reasons. The most important factor is that the majority of these women largely lured through false promises, such as employment in certain companies in Monterrey and migration to the U.S. However, in the case of indigenous women, the trafficker promises them domestic employment with higher remuneration (nearly 30 dollars per day) including food, shelter and two days off per week. Once traffickers trap them with these promises, they never take them to the U.S. and only transfer them to Monterrey and force them to work in prostitution. Many of them became aware of the situation in transit or at their destination.

On the other hand, our previous studies found that women accept offers from traffickers for various reasons. Analysis shows that women and girls cited more than two causes behind the trafficking. However, the majority of them responded with the family's unhealthy environment or disintegration as their first cause. Such is the case of Lucia, a 15-year-old girl currently working in a massage parlor in Monterrey. *I have two brothers and one sister; I was born in the state of Guerrero, Mexico. Guerrero is one of the poorest*

states in the country. My father was working in a construction center in Acapulco. After returning from work, everyday he used to drink two to three bottles of cerveza (beer) and at night, my father and mother would fight over money. There was always the argument that my father was wasting his money on beer. Since my childhood, I have observed their fighting and sometimes my father would beat her also. When I was 8 years old my mother separated from my father, and after that he never came back. My mother got married to another guy, and although my stepfather tried to maintain a good relationship with us, by this time my mother started neglecting us. She even claimed that she needed privacy in the house and asked us to find another place to live. I was totally fed-up with these kinds of problems, so one day I contacted a butler, who usually offered people jobs in the U.S. and in Monterrey. After a few weeks he offered me a job in Monterrey and said it was domestic servant work, where I would earn nearly 30 to 40 dollars per day including food and shelter, and he also gave me 100 dollars in advance. I immediately accepted his offer. Two days later I traveled with him to Monterrey, and once we reached Monterrey he brought me to this place and I was forced to accept this job. However, in the interviews women also cited a wide range of factors such as unemployment, poverty, desertion by a spouse, and ethnic conflict that pushed them toward trafficking.

Sexual behavior of trafficked women

The sexual behavior of trafficked women is very important, as it is closely related with their sexual health. It also encompasses the problems of HIV and STIs/RTIs, unintended pregnancy and abortion, infertility and cancer resulting from STIs, and sexual dysfunction. To get the complete picture on the sexual behaviors of trafficked women, we have included three primary questions: (1) Daily average number of clients they have relations with (sexual and physical), (2) Types of sexual relations performed with clients, and (3) Do they or their clients use any kind of protection during intercourse. Analysis of the results indicates that the majority of women see more than 10 clients per day, although there were some women who saw less than five clients a day (see table 1). So, to find out more on this differential characteristic, I did a bi-variate analysis, which indicated an inverse relationship between the age of the women and the number of clients. As the age of the women and girls

increase, the number of clients per day decreases, according to the clients preferences outlined earlier.

Table 1: Number of clients received by trafficked women in Monterrey

Sexual practices	Percentage	Number (N=70)
Number of clients		
1 to 5 clients per day	12.8	9
5 to 10 clients per day	32.9	23
More than 10 clients per day	54.3	38

Source: *fieldwork*

Similarly, clients avoided the women who had been working in the brothel for many years as clients assumed these women would be more likely to be carriers of various sexually transmitted diseases. In this context Lucy a 14-year-old girl said: *On the day when they brought me to this place, madrina said: You will live here and work for me... after few days she asked me to have sexual relations with two men, when I said no, she beat me and forced to have sexual relations with them.... the next day she asked me to service five clients and days after that she asked to service more than ten clients... when I said, I feel pain in my body, she said she didn't care ...One day I asked her why other girls don't service so many clients, she said: "Clients like you and they want to pay big money for you and are keen to spend more time with you... you are a lucky hen for me..."*. The testimony of Lucy indicates that there is a clear preference from clients for the younger girls and pimps earn more from the younger girls than others. For example, we have observed that for a girl younger than 15, a pimp charges clients nearly 1,000 pesos and for a girl older than 20, a pimp charges clients around 300 to 500 pesos, and sometimes even less.

In addition to the above, in order to get a full picture of the sexual behavior of trafficked women, I asked whether their clients used condoms during their sexual relations, and if so, how frequently. We also asked how many types of physical relations they practiced with their clients. On the basis of these questions, for the majority of women

(nearly 73 per cent) their clients did not use a condom at the time of sex. Similarly 23 per cent women reported that their client used a condom occasionally during their sexual relations and only three women (4 per cent) said they asked their client regularly to use a condom during their relations (see table 2). This information shows how vulnerable this population is to infections via sexual intercourse. When examining the reason for having unsafe sex, we found that it is not the women or girls who do not want to have safe sex, it is the pimp who forces the victims to have sex without a condom with the purpose of earning more money. When a girl has sex without condom, the client pays more money. So, in these cases it is impossible for women and girls to negotiate with the client to have safe sex.

Sex without a condom also increases the probability of pregnancy, and therefore we asked women whether they use any contraceptive pills to avoid pregnancy. Results indicate that thirty-seven (53 per cent) out of seventy women said they take these pills regularly. Twenty-six women (37 per cent) reported that they take it occasionally, and similarly seven (10 per cent) women said they have never used any contraceptive pill (see table 2). In this regard, Fanny, a 16-year-old girl said: *Everyday, madrina gives me instructions to receive as many clients we can... she also instructed us never to say “no” to any client... she used to say clients are money and we have to treat them very well, and also offer them all that we have. All girls my age have sexual relations with at least 10 to 15 clients every day. Most of them pay double and ask us to have sex without a condom... I try to be careful and not get pregnant and also ask clients to be careful... But never trust the client’s intention... so, I prefer to take the pill before having sex. Each day I take three to four pills to be sure I will not get pregnant... Madrina gives us the pills and orders us to be careful when having relations... she also said she will not allow us to get pregnant... and in case any of us gets pregnant, she will ask for an abortion.*

Table 2: Use of contraceptives by trafficked women in Monterrey

		Regularly		Occasionally		Never	
Use	of	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number

contraceptives						
Client uses condom	4.3	3	22.9	16	72.8	51
Contraceptive pill	52.9	37	37.1	26	10.0	7

Source: *fieldwork*

Similarly, to the use of contraceptives and the number of clients serviced by women, their sexual practices is also an important element to assess the sexual behaviors of victims. Results indicate that 54 per cent of trafficked women practiced regularly vaginal, oral and anal sex; nearly 13 per cent said they practice it occasionally. When it comes to anal and vaginal sex, nearly 19 per cent of women said they practice it regularly and only 4.3 per cent said occasionally. In the case of anal sex only seven women said they practice it occasionally and one woman reported she has never done it (see table 3). It can be observed that trafficked women have very complex sexual practices and it tells us that these victims do not have any power to decide their sexual preferences. They are all forced by their pimp to practice any type sexual relation for the sake of money and the women accept because of fear of violence and further inhumane treatment. For example, Lucy, a 14-year-old girl said: *Since the first day, madrina told us that her client's happiness is very much important, and she will never compromise their demands. Every day there are some clients asking for all three, vaginal, anal and oral sex, they also pay three to four times more money, but I cannot say "no" to them because they have negotiated it with madrina. I always ask them not to have oral sex because it disgusts me, but they never listen to me. Many of them go directly to madrina and complain to her that I am not cooperating. Almost every day I practice these types of relations, it's only during my period (mensuration) that madrina asks them to have anal or oral sex. During this time I want to rest, but they never allow me to do so... although I feel lots of pain, madrina forces me to take some painkillers and asks me to go with the client. For the last two years I have no control over my body, they are using me as an object, my feelings, my sentiments are not important to them.*

Table 3: Sexual practices of trafficked women in Monterrey

Sexual practices	Regularly		Occasionally		Never	
	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number
Vaginal, Oral and Anal	54.3	38	12.8	9	0	0
Anal and vaginal	18.6	13	4.3	3	0	0
Only Anal	0	0	8.6	6	1.4	1

Source: *fieldwork*

Non-sexual behaviors of trafficked women

Research on trafficked women indicates that victims abuse different types of non-sexual behaviors, such as alcohol, drugs and smoking cigarettes (WHO, 2012, Silverman et.al; 2007, Fong, 2006, Young et.al; 2000). In this analysis, it was found that trafficked women in Monterrey also had different types of non-sexual behaviors (see table 4). According to Deissa et.al (2012) and Zimmerman et al. (2011), trafficked women victims follow a very hazardous non-sexual behavior. Their study observed that there is a higher dependence of women on different kinds of substances such as drugs, alcohol and smoking. Many women also exchange sex for drugs, though it is relatively less frequent.

During the interviews and analysis, it is observed that trafficked women in Monterrey have a higher dependence on different types of substances. When we asked: *What kinds of substances have you consumed during the last month and how frequently?*

We found that all women responded they have consumed alcohol, smoked cigarettes, synthetic drugs and marihuana. On the consumption of alcohol, during the past month, 49 out of 70 (70 per cent) of trafficked women reported drinking at least once in a day. As Berenice, a 20-year-old woman said: *I cannot sleep without drinking six or seven cups of tequila. Before I go to bed, I drink it because I need to sleep without pain. Everyday the owner asks me to service at least ten to fifteen clients and having sexual relations with these many clients is very painful. I cannot tell others about my pain or desires, so the only way to escape is by drinking alcohol. I feel very relaxed when I drink it. It has been a way of life for me, for the past three years. However, many of my friends call me alcohólica (drunk), but it doesn't matter what they say, I only need to be pain and stress free.* Although there are women who reported drinking less alcohol, as we can observe in the table.

On smoking cigarettes, the results of the study indicate that all women (100 per cent) smoke more than once a day. In this context, *Alicia a 16-year-old girl said, before getting trafficked I was never smoking. But, in this place, clients are used to smoking three to four packets of cigarettes before they leave. Many times, they force us to smoke with them, if I say no, they force me or complain to Padrino for not obeying. Though I don't like smoking, in this place I have to do it, because it is the wish of the clients. The instruction of Padrino is that we have to make all clients happy, so that they will return to the establishment. In the beginning, it was very difficult for me to smoke one cigarette, but now I am smoking twenty to thirty cigarettes per day. I also drink alcohol with my friends and clients, I do not like cerveza (beer) because of its bitter taste, and so I always drink three to four cups of tequila when they invite me.*

Table 4: Non-sexual behaviors of trafficked women in Monterrey

Non-sexual practices	Percentage	Number
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Alcohol (N=70)		
Once a day or more	70.0	49
1 to 3 times a week	25.7	18
Less than weekly	4.3	3
Smoking cigarettes (N=70)		
Once a day or more	100.0	70
1 to 3 times a week	0	0
Less than weekly	0	0

Source: *fieldwork*

On the use of illegal drugs, results indicate that consumption of synthetic drugs is less frequent as compared to other substances. However, 35 per cent of women said they consume synthetic drugs (heroin, crack, cocaine etc.) (see table 5). Looking into the frequencies of drug consumption, it can be concluded that most of the trafficked women are already addicted to it. Therefore, the question is: *Why are trafficked women being forced into drug addiction?* In this regards, Lety, a 23-year-old trafficked woman stated: *“Before coming to this place, I had never tried any of these substances. I have seen that other girls consume everyday, sometimes alone or with clients or with other girls. Many often they offered me, but I said no. I told them it would harm my health. At that time one girl said: Reyna pruébalo, te va a gustar... si no ahora... algún día definitivamente necesitarás...(sweetie try it, you'll like it .. if not now ... someday you will definitely need it....). I resisted one or one and half years, but after that I could not resist, it is not that I like those things, it's the way they are exploiting me every day, I have to work 13 to 14 hours and have sex with at least 8 to 9 clients, my body cannot take it. Sometimes, if I do not fulfill the demand of clients or madrina² they beat me. So, to relieve all these pressures I started consuming first alcohol and cigarettes frequently (daily). However, now also I also do tacha [ecstasy]. I feel very relaxed when I take it and once you take it, there is no need to worry about anything. It is very expensive, but I always ask madrina to give me a little, sometimes I also ask clients to invite me a tacha. If I don't take it, I cannot work or sleep,*

² Pimp

for the last few weeks, I have been taking it three times a day. I know it is going to hurt me... but one has to take it to survive here... otherwise, they will kill me.

On consumption of marihuana, 17 per cent of trafficked women said they smoke it at least once a week, and when asked who paid for this, they said sometimes clients invite them before having sexual relations and sometimes they buy it from madrina. In this context, Nancy, a 21-year-old woman said, *two years ago a client invited me to smoke marihuana, I said no... he insisted and said I would feel relaxed and enjoy the sex... I repeatedly said no, then he complained to madrina. After that, madrina threaten me, saying that if I didn't please the clients my consequences would be fatal. I smoked once and coughed too much... he offered again and I took three or four hits, and fell asleep immediately. When I woke up after two or three hours, I was nude, I do not like to smoke marihuana, but it's the clients or madrina that insist. Nowadays, I am little used to it and when clients invite, I take it.*

Table 5: Consumption of drugs by trafficked women in Monterrey

Non-sexual practices	Percentage	Number
Consumption of synthetic drugs (N=49)		
Once a day or more	18.4	9
1 to 3 times a week	53.0	26
Less than weekly	28.6	14
Smoking marihuana (N=49)		
Once a day or more	6.1	3
1 to 3 times a week	28.6	14
Less than weekly	65.3	32

Source: *fieldwork*

The results of non-sexual behaviors of trafficked women indicate victims are mostly forced into consuming the substance, whether by the clients or their pimps, or the

circumstances of where they live. Women have been addicted to drugs or alcohol, and this definitely leads to future serious physical and mental health issues.

Conclusion

Trafficking in persons is a serious crime and human rights violation. Women and young girls are very much vulnerable to human trafficking and once they are trapped into this network, there is a substantial negative impact on their physical, sexual, emotional and social health. As we have seen from the analysis, trafficking of women is the result of complex interaction among different characteristics and the context in which it operates in the country. Thus, in our research we have affirmed that trafficking of women is a *multicausal* phenomenon in Mexico. Poverty plays an important role in the process of feminization of migration in the country, however when we look at women trafficking along with poverty there are many social and cultural factors that drive women into the trafficking network. For example, Esteinou (2011) and Acharya (2015) indicate that family disintegration as well as separation of parents in Mexico provides for serious isolation and depression issues in children, which later led them into the human trafficking network. Similarly, Zhang et.al (2013) in their study pointed out that in Latin America there are certain cultural factors that contribute to sexual exploitation in the region. For example, the practice of machismo/machista allow men to feel power and control over females, resulting in many men forcing their wives and daughter into prostitution and sex trafficking.

Trafficking of women is deeply embedded in Mexican society, where everyday thousands of young girls and women are forced into sexual exploitation. Victims of trafficking suffer a wide range of violence and are forced to live in inhumane conditions. As our results show, once girls and women are brought into a brothel or establishment, they can hardly escape or leave without the consent of *padrino/madrina*. They also lose control over their body and emotions. It is their pimp who decides what or when to do things. In the analysis on sexual and non-sexual behaviors of trafficked women, it is clear that victims practice a wide range of unhealthy behaviors. Most of them have been, or forced to be, addicted to alcohol and different types of drugs. Our fieldwork experience evidences that it is the strategy of the pimp to trap or keep control over them. Pimps believe that once victims become addicted to any of these substances they will never escape. On sexual

behaviors of trafficked victims, it is clear that women are forced into unhealthy activities. The majority of them practice multiple sexual relations at a time, they are also forced to service clients at any point in time. As shown from the victims' life history, neither the pimp nor their clients respect their body. Their body has been sold, resold, used, and exchanged like an object.

On other hand, the study indicates women hardly ever have safe sex. We can conclude that many of these victims may have been infected with sexually transmitted diseases. This research suggests that trafficking of women in Mexico requires special attention. Nevertheless, during the last few years the government of Mexico has implemented several policies to fight human trafficking, but looking into the gravity of the situation has sent shock waves in Mexican society due to the AIDS pandemic and femicide. Thus, a comprehensive approach is essential to address the economic, social, and political aspects of women trafficking.

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