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# **Replicating the Impact of Police Sensitisation Training on Access to Justice for Female Sex Workers Reporting Violence in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire: A 2014 Case Study**

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## | Abstract

Female sex workers in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, experience high levels of violence and encounter substantial barriers to accessing justice, frequently due to police discrimination and stigma. A prior case study indicated that police sensitisation training could improve access to justice, but its findings required verification in a distinct context. This replication study aimed to assess whether the previously reported positive impact of police sensitisation training on female sex workers' access to justice could be reproduced in Abidjan. The primary objective was to evaluate changes in sex workers' reported experiences when reporting violence to the police following a targeted training intervention. A mixed-methods replication design was employed. A cohort of female sex workers in Abidjan was surveyed before and after a standardised police sensitisation training programme. The training focused on human rights, gender-based violence, and sex worker health. In-depth interviews were conducted with a subset of sex workers and participating police officers to explore qualitative changes in attitudes and procedures. The study found a modest but meaningful improvement in sex workers' reported experiences. The proportion who felt treated with respect by police when reporting violence increased from 22% pre-training to 41% post-training. Qualitative data indicated reduced overt hostility from officers but persistent institutional barriers to formal case registration. This replication partially confirms that

sensitisation training can improve short-term procedural justice for female sex workers by altering frontline officer behaviour. However, the intervention alone is insufficient to overcome deep-seated structural barriers within the justice system. Police sensitisation should be integrated into broader, multi-sectoral strategies that address legal frameworks and institutional accountability. Training must be mandatory, recurrent, and coupled with mechanisms for monitoring officer conduct and case progression. sex workers, gender-based violence, access to justice, police training, replication study, Côte d'Ivoire. This study provides replicated evidence on a specific intervention to improve justice access for a marginalised population, informing policy and programme design for gender-based violence response in similar contexts.

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