**Author’s response to reviews**

**Title:** Youth paying for sex: what are the associated factors? Findings from a cross-sectional study in Cambodia

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Brandon Brown (Reviewer 1)

Abstract -use past tense throughout and modify grammar issues (have to had, etc) -define adjustment -good argument in the conclusion

RESPONSE: We have changed the tense in one sentence (line 33) and fixed the grammar in another (line 45).

Intro -define indirect and direct FSWs

RESPONSE: We have defined indirect and direct sex work (lines 91-94)

-was sex work legal in Cambodia? Until when? On the street, just brothels? -are men included in that law, men selling sex?
RESPONSE: We have included more details about the law on page 4, line 109-110.

-how does the prevalence in Cambodia compare to other surrounding countries?
RESPONSE: We have added prevalence estimates from around the world (line 57-59)

-in place of saying 'today' specify a year so the statement is timeless
RESPONSE: We have made this change.

-you might need some additional references to backup your statement about HIV being concentrated in those groups
RESPONSE: We have cited the highest authority in Cambodia on key populations at risk for HIV in the country.

-how does the law prohibiting selling sex make the environment easier to buy sex?
RESPONSE: We have clarified this statement (line 114-116).

-flip your ordering of the paragraphs, from more general, to more specific. You have lots of global data that can be first in the intro -this intro is quite long, is it all necessary?
RESPONSE: We have made this change.

-remove the word 'prostitute'
RESPONSE: We have made this change.

Methods

-why was supervision done by the PI and team for mapping?
RESPONSE: The mapping was done by youth who required supervision.

-how were the times chosen?
RESPONSE: We have clarified why the times were chosen (line 172-173).

-interviewer administered or participant?
RESPONSE: We have clarified this statement (line 182).

-what was the training?
RESPONSE: We have clarified the training procedures (line 184-186).

-how many questions in the survey?
RESPONSE: We have clarified this statement (77 questions) (line 183-184).

-what happened when you had an inconsistency by data enterers in EpiData?
RESPONSE: We have clarified the procedure (line 201-202).

did you include just variables that you collected which were significant in your preliminary model? Not sure why you went to lit review here
RESPONSE: We have clarified this with an additional statement (line 211-212).

-what is 'highest p-value greater than 0.05'?
RESPONSE: We have clarified this statement to state “highest p-value” (line 213).

-Was Touro granted exempt IRB approval? If so just mention that
RESPONSE: We have added this statement (line 221).

Results

-make sure stats in text match tables. In table 2, you have 0.08 and 0.07 in text. Apart from this, no need to replicate all the data. You can say something like slightly younger and give the p-value in text without the values and SD which people can see in the table.

RESPONSE: We have reviewed the tables and text for consistency. We have made a change on line 259.

-maybe title table 2 sexual behavior vs risky. Since having a girlfriend might not be risky.

RESPONSE: We have made a change to the title (line 301-302).

-you can probably combine table 3 with table 2, it just shows 1 column and you can show the other one as well for 'didn’t pay for sex'

RESPONSE: We have combined these tables as suggested.

-I usually don’t see 'theoretical' before logistic regression, so decide if you need that word. Do you mean univariate?

RESPONSE: We have omitted this word having clarified our analysis in the methods section.

Discussion

-paragraph 2, were those in the same area and what was their sample size?

RESPONSE: We have given more information about the other studies (line 330-333)
-in the first few paragraphs, try additional comparisons of what you found with neighboring countries, versus the 2 studies 6,9 which have been done in Cambodia

RESPONSE: We have not been able to locate prevalence of paying for sex among young men for any neighboring country.

-maybe another limitation is you did not collect data from men seeking sex from other men? Maybe that’s something that has high stigma in that setting and you can educate the reader

RESPONSE: WE have added a line to the limitation section to mention this population (line 414-416).

-what are the drawbacks of making sex work illegal vs controlling it in a way with HIV testing/condom use etc. to empower FSWs?

RESPONSE: We have added a line that addresses this comment on page 20, line 430-432.

Donald Morisky (Reviewer 2)

Critique: Youth paying for sex: what are the associated factors? Findings from a 1 cross-sectional study in Cambodia What is meant by the word "compromising" in your sentence "Most recent Central Intelligence 65 Agency estimates show Cambodia has the estimated youngest population in Southeast Asia with 66 19.1% of the population compromising young people between 15 and 24 years of age [5].

RESPONSE: This was a typo – we meant to say comprising and this is now corrected (line 102).

This study is well-conceptualized and addresses an important behavior, namely, high-risk males paying for sex. The background of the study provides sufficient justification for research directed towards this high-risk population. What was the background of your interviewers and did they have previous experience in interviewing this study sample?

RESPONSE: These were Cambodian youth who were trained in this sampling method. We have made this clearer on (line 172).

What was your inclusion criteria for participation in this study?
RESPONSE: We have added a line to address this comment on (line 178-180).

Did you employ a power analysis to assess the resultant number of study participants required to detect small differences in your study hypotheses?

RESPONSE: We have added a line for clarification on page 6, line 157-159.

How many individuals were interviewed in order to reach your number of 405 participants? How many of these individuals were invited to enroll into your study but refused? I note that you address this in line 339 but it is not clear with regard to the issue of sample selection bias.

RESPONSE: Data used for this study were collected as part of the Cambodia’s Most at Risk Young People Survey (MARYP). Of 1,312 youth approached, data were collected from 1,234 participants (response rate of 94.0%). This study included 405 sexually active male youth; of whom, 82.5% (n= 334) reported having paid for sex in the past 12 months. We have added this information on line 159-160 and 235-237.

How did you measure consistent condom use? Did you use a scale in which you have several items that all are highly related in measuring this very difficult construct? Did you use a measure that can rule out any potential social-desirability bias? This is a major issue when sensitive questions are asked and participants often try to please the interviewer with the response they think they should give.

RESPONSE: We measured condom use using a series of questions which appear in table 2 (which is now a combination of table 2 and 3);

How often would you say you used a condom with most recent girlfriend in the past 3 months?

How often would you say you used a condom at last sex with girlfriend?

How often would you say you used a condom in the past 3 months with women that you paid for sex? (always, frequently, sometimes, never)

How many condoms did you use during the last time that you paid to have sex with a woman?

Did you propose using a condom the last time you paid to have sex with a woman?

Editor Comments (Lianne Urada)
1) If prostitution remains illegal in Cambodia, there appears to be a typo in the sentence that says it is legal.

RESPONSE: We have clarified the law on page 4, line 110-111.

2) For the missing data (12%), it is often best practice to compare the missing sample with the included sample in terms of demographic characteristics. Consider noting if there are any significant differences between the samples in the results section.

RESPONSE: Thank you for this comment. There are no significant difference in missing data between the samples.