

Stigma in Motherhood Among Haitian Female Sex Workers Living in The Dominican Republic

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Abstract

Haitian women living in the Dominican Republic are among the most marginalized populations, facing immense anti-Haitian sentiments, economic precarity, and limited social capital. For some, sex work becomes a means of survival, yet it carries risks, including client violence, sexually transmitted infections, and mental health consequences. This paper explores how Haitian female sex workers (FSWs) navigate motherhood within the nuanced stigma surrounding nationality, gender, and labor opportunities. Through a thematic analysis of 100 hours of transcripts (in Spanish or transcribed from Haitian Creole to Spanish) using NVivo15, we examine how stigma shapes self-perception of motherhood and their access to social, emotional, and economic support. Our findings will highlight a critical gap in existing research, as past literature has primarily focused on HIV-related concerns while overlooking socio-cultural dimensions that impact motherhood and identity within this population.

Keywords: gender norms; mothers; self-image; sex work; social support