

Sexual Transmission of HIV between IDUs and FSWs in Bandung, Indonesia: Policy Implications



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Introduction

- Injecting drug users (IDUs) made up 52.4 % of HIV population in Indonesia.¹
- Bandung is the city with the highest number of HIV cases in Indonesia and its epidemic is driven by IDUs.²
- HIV transmission from IDUs to general population due to high rate of unprotected sexual practices of IDUs and their partners which involved regular, casual, or female sex workers (FSW).³
- Condom uses as a means of HIV prevention among most-at-risk groups and general population has not reached satisfactory result.

Policies Affecting HIV Prevention

National laws and local regulations seem to be interfering the existing HIV prevention efforts.

- **Law 10/1992 on Population Expansion and Prosperous Family**
Only married couples are eligible for sexual reproductive health (SRH) & family planning services. This public policy potentially hampers the development of a non-discriminatory and universal access for adolescents and unmarried couples.
- **Bandung Local Regulation 3/2005 on Implementing Orderliness, Cleanliness, and Beauty**
The regulation criminalizes street children, beggars, and FSWs; puts fines on their practices and their facilitating establishments. The policy is leading to the closure of Bandung red light district, *Saritem* District.



A local government officer is putting a sticker saying "Sealed" on one of the brothel's doors in Saritem.



The civil police unit (*Satpol PP*) is watching over the district closure. "Saritem Prostitution is closed and under supervision"

Impact of closing down the Saritem red light district

The majority of FSWs in *Saritem* district ends up working on the street, making outreach and case management more difficult.

Decreasing FSWs' regular visits to nearby SRH clinic is almost 90%, which may increase the prevalence of sexual transmitted diseases (STD) among the population.

Employers of FSWs refuse to display SRH related material or condom dispenser at their establishment (massage parlors, karaoke bars, etc.) due to risk of violating the regulation.

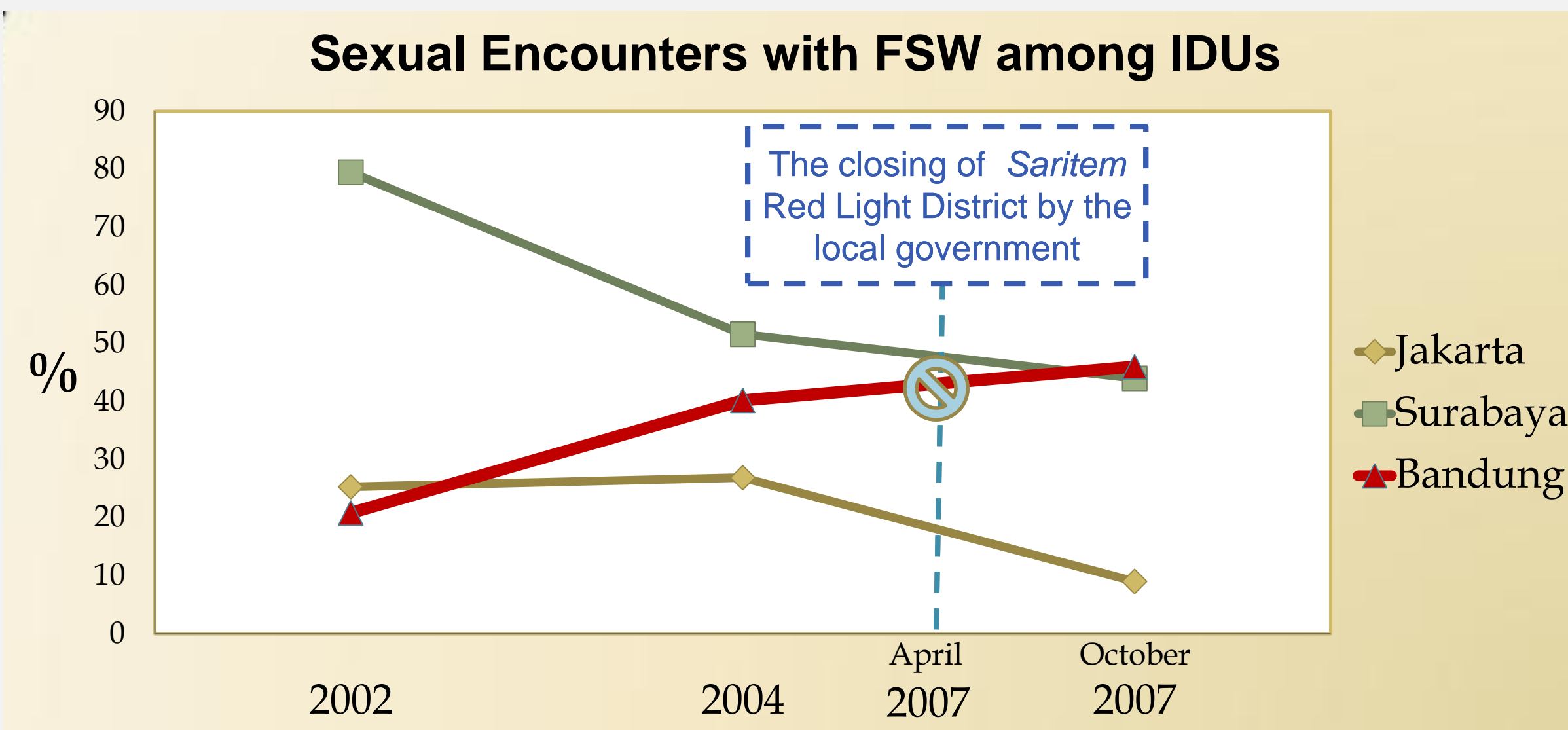
Almost impossible to reach the FSWs in their working establishment since their employers are very protective.

Characteristics of IDUs

Many IDUs are sexually active yet unmarried. They committed unsafe injection practice and unsafe sex regardless their wide range of HIV/AIDS knowledge.⁴

Profile of IDUs in Bandung (n=210) ⁴	
Median age	28 years (17-42)
% male	92 %
Never married	57 %
Unprotected sex with any partner (during last month)	41 %
Sexual behavior committed (during last year) ⁵	
Inconsistent condom use with female sex workers	45 %
Inconsistent condom use with casual partner	72 %
Inconsistent condom use with steady partner	82 %

Against the national trend, in Bandung sex between IDU and FSW increased 21% in 2002³, 41% in 2004⁶, and 46% in 2007⁵.



Conclusion & Recommendation

After almost a decade of HIV prevention program in Bandung, Indonesia, the level of unprotected sex between IDUs and FSWs is still high. Closing the red light district does not reduce the IDU-FSW sexual encounters. Recommendations are as follows:

- Sanction local regulation on HIV which is **evidence-based** and support the adjustment and integration of HIV/SRH policies.
- Access to STD/SRH services for adolescents and unmarried couples must be enforced when the abstinence approach fails.
- Improvement of the condom reputation must be built in concordance with the social norms and expectation.

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