

**FINAL REPORT:  
EROTIC/EXOTIC DANCING: HIV-RELATED RISK FACTORS  
1998**

Dr. Jacqueline Lewis  
Dr. Eleanor Maticka-Tyndale  
Department of Sociology and Anthropology  
University of Windsor  
410 Sunset Avenue  
Windsor, Ontario  
N9B 3P4  
(519) 253-3000

A report to Health Canada  
Grant #6606-5688

© 1998 Lewis, Maticka-Tyndale

## **ABSTRACT**

This research explored whether and how the occupation of exotic dancing and the lives and careers of exotic dancers might make them vulnerable to HIV infection. Observations were conducted in 10 strip clubs. Thirty female exotic dancers and 8 club employees in Southern Ontario participated in in-depth interviews between June 1995 and February 1998.

Findings indicated there are two basic types of dancers: career and goal oriented. Career dancers are most likely to be vulnerable to HIV. These dancers are typically immersed in the strip club culture, often heavy drinkers, and may be involved in drug use and sex with customers. In contrast, goal oriented dancers treat dancing as a temporary job, often do not use alcohol or drugs and usually refrain from sex with customers.

Lap dancing has increased the vulnerability of all dancers. It presents a potential for direct skin to skin, genital to genital, or oral to genital contact in the guise of dancing. It increases the probability that dancers may be sexually coerced or assaulted, and blurs the boundary between entertainment that relies on sexual fantasy and that which involves physical contact. Although many dancers were supportive of regulating lap dancing, regulations introduced to date have not helped in reducing the impact of lap dancing on the lives of dancers. The findings of this study suggest that there is a need for a change in policy regarding the regulation of strip clubs and their patrons.

## PROJECT SUMMARY

### **Rationale:**

This research explored whether and how the occupation of exotic dancing and the lives and careers of exotic dancers might make them vulnerable to HIV infection.

### **Methods:**

Observations were conducted in 10 strip clubs and in-depth interviews were conducted with 30 female exotic dancers and 8 club employees in Southern Ontario between June 1995 and February 1998.

### **Findings:**

There are two different types of dancers: career and goal oriented. Career dancers are most likely to be vulnerable to HIV. They are typically immersed in the strip club culture, are often heavy drinkers, and may also be involved in drug use. Sex with customers may be part of dancing, or part of dating men they meet while dancing in the clubs. Goal oriented dancers, on the other hand, treat dancing as a temporary job. They often do not use alcohol or drugs and set firm boundaries around what they do as dancers, with sexual activity outside this boundary.

A third type of dancer was not part of this study--dancers brought to Canada on work visas. Our only knowledge of the experience of these dancers was through accounts provided by social service workers, health workers and other dancers who had contact with them.

Lap dancing has increased the vulnerability of all dancers. It presents a potential for direct skin to skin, genital to genital, or oral to genital contact in the guise of dancing. It increases the probability that dancers may be sexually coerced or assaulted, and blurs the boundary between entertainment that relies on sexual fantasy and that which involves physical and potentially sexual contact. The former carries no risk of HIV or other sexually transmitted infections, the latter has the potential for infection.

### **Policy:**

Both the introduction and subsequent banning of lap dancing in Ontario has had implications for the lives of exotic dancers in the region. The coercion and violation that dancers have experienced while lap dancing has had an impact on how many dancers feel about their jobs and themselves, which in turn has affected their personal relationships and lives. Although many dancers we spoke with were supportive of introducing regulations to control lap dancing, the seemingly discriminatory nature of such regulations, holding dancers responsible for the actions of customers, has not helped in reducing the impact of lap dancing on these women and the sense of agency they feel while working. The methods currently used to regulate lap dancing imply that it is the female exotic dancer and the supply side of the industry that need to be regulated, not the male customers who demand that such services be provided. As a result, little consideration is given to the implication of lap dancing and its control for the lives of exotic dancers or the benefits that could be derived from alternative legal controls.

The findings of this study suggest there is a need for a change in policy regarding the regulation of strip clubs. Instead of relying on criminal law or municipal by-laws, which, regardless of intent, have been used to the disadvantage of dancers, we need to move toward treating exotic dancers as workers. Controlling work place activities and protecting employees, through the use of employment-standards law, human-rights law, occupational-health-and-safety

law and workers-compensation law, would help control the sexual contact occurring in the clubs and the assault and other forms of violation reported by dancers.

**Programme Development and Delivery:**

Efforts to develop and deliver health programmes to exotic dancers have met with limited success. The most successful attempts have been those initiated by community nurses who, working with one or two dancers, have spent time in the clubs talking to the dancers about their needs and gaining trust. Such programmes require the cooperation of club managers, are time consuming, costly, and subject to budget cuts.

# **FINAL REPORT: EROTIC DANCING: HIV-RELATED RISK FACTORS**

## **Drs Jacqueline Lewis and Eleanor Maticka-Tyndale**

This study explored the work and careers of exotic dancers. Few research investigations concerned with dancing had been conducted prior to this study, due to the hard to reach nature of the subject population. As a result, little was known about the social world of female strippers, a marginalized group of women. We were particularly interested in the activities that dancers engage in, both inside and outside the strip club environment, that may put them at risk for HIV transmission or other health-related concerns. In the study we focussed our attention on several factors involved in the occupation of exotic dancing that could increase the risks associated with this line of work, particularly those factors that appeared in the literature on exotic dancing (e.g., use of alcohol and other drugs, connections between stripping and prostitution, marginalization of women who work as dancers).

### **METHODOLOGY**

Observations at ten strip clubs in southern Ontario and in-depth interviews with thirty female exotic dancers and eight other strip club employees (e.g., DJ, waitress, bouncer, shooter girl, doorman) were conducted between June 1995 and February 1998 in order to explore the work and careers of exotic dancers. Bars and dancers were selected using non-probability purposive sampling. This sampling methodology maximizes the diversity in a small sample. It contributes to confidence that the conclusions drawn from the research take into account the diversity of experiences and situations relevant to the area of inquiry (Strauss & Corbin, 1990).

Participants were recruited by key informants,<sup>1</sup> members of the research team during field trips to the clubs, or dancers who had participated in the study. Each interview was audio taped and took place in a location chosen by the respondent (e.g., respondents' home, research team members' home, research team members' office, a private space at a club, the backroom at a local coffee shop). Interviews lasted anywhere from one to four hours, with the majority lasting approximately one and a half hours. While all interviews followed the same set of questions, they were conducted in an informal fashion to allow participants to freely express themselves and for the introduction of new questions that arose during the interview.

Interviews with dancers were based on a series of open-ended questions designed to explore how each woman got involved in dancing, her work history and anticipated future in the occupation, a description of her work, the various forms of interaction engaged in with clients, her experience of and views concerning lap dancing, personal power and management of the work situation, the work environment, relationships between employees, contacts with co-workers and with clientele outside the workplace, future plans, family, significant other and reference group relationships, sexual history, current sexual activities, and health concerns. Observational data were used primarily to supplement interview data and to assist us in describing the work environment of exotic dancers including: physical setting, contacts between those present in the

---

<sup>1</sup> Key informants in this study included: (1) several university students who were hired as assistants because of their experience working in strip clubs (e.g., shooter girl, bartender, doorman); and (2) a dancer with whom we had a personal association, who was paid to recruit other participants for the study.

club (employees and clients), and the atmosphere of different clubs. Observations and interviews covered women's experiences dancing in cities of all sizes, and in clubs ranging from executive lounges catering to professionals and celebrities, to bars that had primarily factory workers or farm labourers as their clientele.

Prior to being interviewed, participants were informed that the study had received ethical clearance from the University's Ethics Review Board and were provided with an information sheet about the research project. The information sheet contained a brief description of the purpose of the research project, the researchers' names, affiliations and credentials, the remuneration they would receive for their participation, their rights as research participants (e.g., to withdraw from the study without fear of penalty, assurance of confidentiality), and which University Officer to contact should they have any questions or concerns about the project. Participants were paid a nominal fee to compensate them for time spent in the interview.

Due to the stigma associated with exotic dancing we felt it was important to take a variety of measures to protect participants' identities. Since we wanted to avoid having any written record of who participated in the study, we requested and received ethical clearance to require only verbal consent from participants. In addition, in order to ensure that participant's identities remained confidential, all interview tapes and transcripts were labelled according to the role the participant played in the club (e.g., dancer 1, dancer 2, shooter 1, waitress 1, DJ 1, etc.), rather than with their real or stage names. Pseudonyms were substituted, and identifying information omitted, whenever participants' or clubs' names were used in preparing conference presentations and written manuscripts.

At the time of their interview, two-thirds of the women were working as dancers. The women began dancing between 1979 and 1997 and had been dancing anywhere from less than one to seventeen years, with the median time on the job being four and a half years. Their ages ranged from 18 to 38 years, with a median age of 26. Approximately half of the women either had completed some high school education or had received their high school diploma. The other half had at least some post-secondary training. One quarter of the women interviewed were attending school. Half were single or divorced and half had partners. Of those with partners, less than half were living with their partner. Approximately one-third of the women interviewed had children. Four had more than one child. More than half of the dancers with children were either single mothers or lived separately from their partners.

The experiences of two groups of dancers are not represented in this study because of difficulties gaining access to them for interviews. These two groups are comprised of women brought from other countries (at the time of the study dancers were primarily from Latin America and Asia) specifically for the purpose of working as exotic dancers and women who dance in bars controlled by motorcycle gangs, commonly referred to as "biker bars."

## **FINDINGS TO DATE**

### **Typology of Dancers**

Almost all women who dance begin with the view that it is a temporary job. They usually begin with very precise boundaries as to what they will and will not do as part of their job (e.g., they interact with clients only in the club setting and refuse any physical contact of a sexual nature). As long as dancing remains a temporary aspect of their lives, and dancers dance with a particular goal in mind, with a vision of life after dancing, it appears that they hold to those

boundaries. However, since the hours dancers work isolate them from developing and maintaining relationships in conventional society and the money they can earn dancing often far surpasses what they could make in a “straight” job, some women divert from their original plan. Their involvement in dancing shifts from a short term job to a career.

Based on the interview data collected, there appear to be two types of dancers: the career dancer and the goal oriented dancer. Both types of dancers report money as the primary motivating factor for entry into dancing. They differ, however, in the futures they envision for themselves. Despite the fact that most of the women we spoke with told us that they never intended to make dancing a career, some ended up staying in the industry for many years, essentially making it one. Other women reported that they entered the world of dancing with the expectation that dancing would be their career for a while. Whether they intended to make dancing a career or not, the career dancers we spoke with tended to possess limited skill training and education. As a result, they saw dancing as an employment opportunity that enabled them to make a decent living that would otherwise be unavailable to them through legitimate channels.

You know I’m not educated... uuh, it’s hard to, hard to get back out into the real world once you’re in there, it’s like I feel like, what else can I do. I’ve been a stripper for 7 years, what else am I gonna be able to do? You know, even if I try I’m always gonna be a dancer, I’m always gonna be labeled. I make good money, so why go work for minimum wage.

In contrast with the career dancer, the goal oriented dancer enters dancing with a specific goal in mind.

I don’t look at it like a career so its kind of like a means to an end. You know how you put yourself on a program, like a five year program. Get in there and make a whack of cash and then go on to something else. Like that can’t be the only thing that I want to do for the rest of my life.

Some dancers report being motivated to enter dancing in order to make the money they needed to get or stay out of debt.

I’m getting my Honours Bachelor of Arts in Drama and I want to eventually open my own Drama Therapy Clinic. So, this is just a means of getting there because the money is really good.

The bills kept coming in and coming in and I couldn’t keep my head above water and everybody was threatening to take me to court and I had all these debts and I just - I needed money fast. So, I thought I could dance for a bit until I got on top of things.

Students represent one specific group of goal-oriented dancers. These women report that, for them, dancing is a short-term job that pays well and that can fit in with their class schedule.

It’s ideal when you’re going to school because you just - you make your own schedules. When I have exam week I don’t go at all.... I don’t think I would work [as a dancer] once

I finish school, unless I couldn't find a job or something.

The commonality among goal oriented dancers is that dancing is seen as short term, a means to an end. Once the end is achieved (e.g., they graduate from university, pay off their debts, etc.), they plan to leave dancing. It is important to note though, that although many goal oriented dancers reported planning to leave, some spoke of difficulties exiting once they got used to the money they could earn.

It's kinda hard once you get used to the money to leave [dancing]. I mean, like, I always said I would leave when I got out of debt, but the money draws you back.

Whether a dancer views herself as career or goal-oriented has implications for her socialization to the dancing subculture. Women who see dancing as a career, rather than as a temporary job, are more likely to get involved in the "dancer life," develop relationships with other dancers and club employees, and become immersed in the strip club subculture. Such involvement includes exposure to drug use, chronic alcohol consumption, and stretching the sexual boundaries of dancing (e.g., to escort work). As a result of their involvement in the strip club subculture, the socialization of career dancers is likely to be more complete than goal-oriented dancers, i.e. they take on the "life of a dancer."

Goal-oriented dancers, in contrast, tend to limit their socialization to dancing as a job rather than as a lifestyle, also limiting their ties to others in the business. They keep their work and their personal life separate from each other. This keeps them integrated in mainstream society with respect to their personal lives; however, it typically means they keep their work life a secret from those involved in their personal life. As a result, they have to contend with the stigma associated with dancing on their own, often living very closeted/secretive lives.

I work really hard at keeping this [dancing] a secret from my family. It is hard cuz I still live at home with my parents. So, I keep my costumes in the trunk of my car and I make sure I am the only one with a key.

Goal-oriented dancers do not become involved in a community of supportive others. Without such a community, they have limited access to a definition of reality that validates dancing. They are consequently more likely to feel some sort of guilt or shame for choosing, what to their significant others and in their reference group is a 'less than honourable' occupation.

### **Forms of Exotic Dance**

Striptease performances have been designed to titillate customers at a distance, to please through illusion and fantasy. In most clubs in Ontario, dancers have typically been expected to engage in two forms of performance dance during their shifts: the stage show and the table dance. During the stage show dancers perform a striptease in front of the entire bar. The stage show is important from the perspective of both the club and the dancer. Men who either do not want or cannot afford to pay dancers for private attention, may still be attracted to the bar to consume alcohol and watch the show. For the dancer herself, the stage show is a time when she can attract the attention of customers who may then request a striptease of a more private nature: a table dance.

For a fee, dancers will perform table dances for customers. While table dancing, dancers perform directly in front of particular customers, usually while standing on a small platform or table. The level of privacy of these dances depends upon the amount of money the customer is willing to pay. In most clubs, table dances can take place on the main floor of the club (and are therefore visible to others) for \$5 per song, or they can take place in more private locations in the clubs, referred to as VIP Lounges or Champagne Rooms, for between \$10 and \$20 a song. The more private the location, the more money customers are charged and the more money dancers can expect to earn.<sup>2</sup>

Prior to the early 1990s, regardless of the location of the table dance, the “no touch rule” was officially enforced. If physical contact occurred, it was usually in the form of a friendly touch or embrace, as dancers greeted customers while circulating the club prior to their performances. Over time, adherence to this rule gradually waned and eventually disappeared in many locations with the introduction of lap dancing. As the following dancer noted:

When I first started to dance, you could just stand on the box and dance. You didn’t have to do anything. You didn’t have to go anywhere near them [the men] and you made, um, you know, over two hundred usually every night.... But every year, everybody got closer cause the money was good--and they stopped worrying, you know, they weren’t so picky about the rules and stuff so people get closer and closer.... It got to the point where... everybody was just out of control and I just quit for a while.

Lap dancing varies from city to city in southern Ontario. Although dancers are usually paid between \$10 and \$20 for a lap dance, some dancers talked about how they could earn more money, anywhere from \$50 to \$250 per dance, depending upon the services they were willing to provide. In a typical lap dance the dancer performs for her male customer while wearing little or no clothing and seated on the customer’s lap or between his legs, often in a private or semi-private location in the club. When explaining what lap dancing involves one woman said:

The men know that the basic lap dance is the dancer grinding her genitals against his and the man knows he can expect to get off [ejaculate].

In some clubs dancers sit directly on the men’s laps during lap dances and in others they are limited to sitting between the men’s legs with their tailbone pressed up against the man’s penis. Regardless of their positioning, the dancer moves or gyrates her body in time with the music in order to arouse her customer.

Although the typical lap dancing scenario doesn’t involve direct skin to skin contact, since the customers are supposed to remain clothed, dancers talked about how lap dancing can involve

---

<sup>2</sup> The primary source of income for dancers is customers tips. Although dancers in Ontario often have the option of working for the club on salary for a very minimal wage (e.g., thirty to fifty dollars per shift), many prefer to work freelance since it enables them to set their own hours. Freelance dancers, however, are required to pay the club for “the privilege” of dancing there, usually between \$10 and \$20 a shift, and are therefore even more dependent on customer’s tips.

contact of a sexual nature with customers. For example, one woman, when talking about lap dancing said the following:

The girl would remove her own clothing but at some point she would be expected to grind in his lap.... He's allowed to touch anywhere from just her arms and legs to her breasts. Usually, she won't allow him to touch everywhere, like her genitalia, but some do... and hopefully they're charging more.

As this quotation illustrates, some women talked about how they, or other women they knew, allowed some customers to touch their genitals or provided sexual services to the men in the form of masturbation or oral sex, usually in the VIP Lounges or Champagne Rooms. Sexual intercourse in the club setting was also reported, although masturbation and oral sex were more common, as were experiences of sexual assault.

### **Regulating Lap Dancing**

In 1991, the Metropolitan Toronto Police received a complaint alleging indecent acts were occurring at Cheaters, a local Toronto strip club. A two-month undercover investigation revealed that physical contact and sexual activity were occurring between dancers and patrons during lap dances at the club. According to the police, officers observed dancers:

- a) being nude except for wearing an open shirt or blouse
- b) fondling her own breasts, buttocks, thighs and genitals while close to the customer
- c) sitting on a customer's lap and grinding her bare buttocks' into his lap
- d) sitting on a customer's lap, reaching into his crotch and apparently masturbating the customer
- e) permitting the customer to touch and fondle her breasts, buttock, thighs and genitals
- f) permitting the customer to kiss, lick and such their breasts
- g) permitting what appeared to be cunnilingus (R. v. *Mara*, 1994).

Based on the findings of the undercover investigation, charges were laid against Patrick Mara and Allan East, the owner and manager of Cheaters, for allowing indecent performances (lap dances) to occur in their club, contrary to section 167(1) of the *Criminal Code of Canada*.<sup>3</sup>

In February 1994, Judge Hachborn of the Ontario Court, Provincial Division, in the case of *Mara* (1994), ruled that lap dancing was not indecent and did not violate community standards of tolerance, the Canadian test for obscenity and indecency.<sup>4</sup> In making his ruling, Hachborn

---

<sup>3</sup> Section 167(1) of the *Criminal Code of Canada*, R.S.C., 1985, c. C-46 states: Every one commits an offence who, being the lessee, manager, agent or person in charge of a theatre, presents or gives or allows to be presented or given therein an immoral, indecent or obscene performance, entertainment or representation.

<sup>4</sup>As established in *R. v. Butler*, [1992] 1 S.C.R. 452], the community standards test is based on what the community would tolerate others being exposed to on the basis of the harm that would flow from such exposure

referred to two cases: *R. v. Tremblay* (1993) and *R. v. Hawkins* (1993). According to Hachborn the conduct in *Mara* was not indecent because:

The conduct complained of in this present case is innocuous by comparison to the conduct dealt with by the Supreme Court of Canada [*Tremblay*] and the Court of Appeal of Ontario [*Hawkins*]. If it had not been for these cases there would have been little difficulty in finding the table dancers' conduct to be indecent (*R. v. Mara*, 1994).

Hachborn's decision was appealed by the Crown to the Ontario Court of Appeal where it was eventually overturned. In making their ruling, the judges of the Ontario Court of Appeal, ruled that Hachborn had erred in the application/interpretation of *Tremblay* (1993) and *Hawkins* (1993) to *Mara* (*R. v. Mara*, 1994; *R. v. Mara*, 1996). According to the Ontario Court of Appeal, these cases are clearly distinguishable. Although *Tremblay* (1993) involved erotic performances during which clients were invited to remove their clothes and masturbate, in the acts in question there was no physical contact, the acts occurred in a "private" place, and there was no risk of harm. *Hawkins* (1993), on the other hand, involved the distribution of video tapes, not live sex acts, and an obscenity, rather than an indecency charge, and was therefore ruled by the Ontario Court of Appeal to be distinguishable from the current case.

Although Hachborn's decision was overturned by the Ontario Court of Appeal, there was a time lag of two years (February 10, 1994 to February 9, 1996) between the original ruling and the Court of Appeal's decision. In the interim, Hachborn's decision had a significant impact on lap dancing and the lives of exotic dancers. In ruling that lap dancing was not indecent behaviour, Hachborn's decision was interpreted by club owners, managers and dancers as permission to eliminate the "no touch rule" and offer lap dancing to their customers. As club owners, managers and some dancers began capitalizing on this new money-making enterprise, lap dancing spread to clubs across Ontario (Van Alphen, 1995; Harvey, 1995).

Although several of the women interviewed for this study reported having no difficulty in performing lap dances, other dancers talked about feeling pressured to participate in lap dancing by club owners, managers and customers, especially in the clubs in the Toronto region. In some clubs, women reported being threatened with job loss if they didn't lap dance. For example, Katherine Goldberg (a publicly used pseudonym), one of the founding members of the Association of Burlesque Entertainers (ABE),<sup>5</sup> believes that she was fired from her job, "blackballed" from dancing at clubs in Toronto and had her life threatened for refusing to engage in lap dancing and for trying to organize other dancers to do the same.

Threat of job loss can be a stressful and frightening prospect and serve as an effective tool to achieve compliance. For the women we interviewed who had limited training and education (half had high school education or less) such fears were paramount. It was these women, in particular, who reported feeling there were few "reputable" job opportunities available to them, especially opportunities to earn an income similar to that earned dancing.

As the number of clubs offering lap dancing to their customers increased, so did the public

---

<sup>5</sup> The Association for Burlesque Entertainers was formed primarily in response to the Hachborn decision. According to an Association press release, issued on May 11, 1995, fighting to have lap dancing banned from strip clubs was a top priority for the Association.

outray over the Hachborn decision. Both dancers and other members of the public began pressuring government officials to legislate against lap dancing as a risk to community health and safety (Funston, 1995; Harvey, 1995; Small and Swainson, 1995; Swainson, 1995; Wallace, 1995). Responding to public pressure, municipal government officials began speaking out against lap dancing and introducing bylaws to regulate strip club activities (Funston, 1995).<sup>6</sup> The bylaws introduced to control lap dancing required the re-establishment of the “no touch rule” (e.g., City of Mississauga, By-law No. 351-95; Municipality of Metropolitan Toronto, By-law No. 129-95) and, in some jurisdictions, the removal of private enclosures (VIP and Champagne Rooms) within the clubs (e.g., City of Mississauga, By-law No. 351-95; Municipality of Metropolitan Toronto, By-law No. 123-96). These changes were reinforced by imposing hefty fines on violators (Brazao, 1995; Funston, 1995; Queen, 1995; Small and Swainson, 1995). For example, according to Section 26 of the City of Mississauga By-law No. 572-79, strip club owners, operators, or entertainers who violate the By-law are “guilty of an offence and on conviction [are] liable to a fine, exclusive of costs, not exceeding \$25,000 or to imprisonment for a term not exceeding one year, or to both.” In addition, under this By-law the clubs can be fined up to \$50,000.

On March 12, 1997, when the Supreme Court of Canada upheld the decision of the Ontario Court of Appeal in *Mara* (1996), the expectation was that lap dancing would be eliminated once and for all in Ontario (*R. v. Mara*, 1997). The Supreme Court ruled that lap dancing is indecent because it exceeds the community standards of tolerance in contemporary Canadian society and therefore is prohibited by s. 167(1) of the *Criminal Code*. Applying the legal criteria to determine obscenity/indécency established in *Butler*,<sup>7</sup> the Supreme Court ruled that lap dancing is conduct that is harmful because “it degrades and dehumanizes women, it desensitizes sexuality, it is incompatible with the dignity and equality of each human being, and it

---

<sup>6</sup> Toronto was the first municipality to institute a lap dancing bylaw. The authority of the City of Toronto to create such a bylaw was challenged and upheld in *Ontario Adult Entertainment Bar Association v. Metropolitan Toronto (Municipality)*, (1997), 118 C.C.C. (3d) 481, aff’g. (1996), 27 O.R. (3d) 643.

<sup>7</sup> In *Butler* (1992) the Supreme Court of Canada ruled that the test of obscenity / indécency includes three categories of pornography/undue exploitation of sex:

- 1) explicit sex with violence (the portrayal of sex coupled with violence will almost always constitute the undue exploitation of sex)
- 2) explicit sex without violence but which subjects people to treatment that is degrading and dehumanizing (explicit sex which is degrading or dehumanizing may be undue if the risk of harm is substantial)
- 3) explicit sex without violence that is neither degrading or dehumanizing (explicit sex that is not violent and neither degrading nor dehumanizing is generally tolerated in our society and will not qualify as the undue exploitation of sex unless it employs children in its production).

In *Mara*, it was decided that lap dancing fell under the second category.

predisposes persons to act in an antisocial manner” (R. v. *Mara*, 1997)

Despite the Supreme Court’s 1997 ruling in the case of *Mara*, dancers and club staff reported during their interviews that lap dancing was still going on in some clubs. In some jurisdictions where we did participant observation and interviews, lap dancing and private booths totally disappeared for a while, but reemerged, sometimes with a new name (couch dancing, chair dancing, taboo dancing) or with a new type of dancer (e.g., women brought in from countries such as Thailand or the Philippines, where exotic dancing may involve greater sexual contact between dancer and customer--see Manderson, 1992 and Truong, 1990) and in others it remained unaffected by the laws.

After the ban on lap dancing they took the signs off [advertising the availability of lap dancing] and put taboo dancing, which is just as bad. But they put all the signs inside. They don’t advertise lap dancing on the outside but they say taboo dancing. And so, they’re doing it upstairs somewhere and they’re still doing it [referring to lap dancing].

The Supreme Court’s ruling is limited in its ability to control lap dancing because in making its decision, in the case of *Mara*, it was limited to addressing the issue contained in the original charge, specifically whether lap dancing in a public place is an indecent act. As a result, left unaddressed was whether lap dancing in private booths in strip clubs is also indecent. The possible broad interpretation of the Supreme Court’s ruling makes possible the continuation of lap dancing in strip clubs, as long as it doesn’t occur in public--on the main floor of the bar. Although there is the potential for this type of interpretation, municipalities still have the power to regulate lap dancing through the implementation and enforcement of bylaws designed to control such activities (*Ontario Adult Entertainment Bar Association v. The Municipality of Metropolitan Toronto*, 1997).

The problem with using municipal bylaws to control lap dancing is that the bylaws only effect the supply side of the industry. Municipal jurisdiction in Canada is very limited. Although municipalities are permitted to enact bylaws to regulate adult entertainment clubs and dancers through licensing and workplace standards; they cannot regulate morality or criminal law. The result is that only those who are specified in the bylaws (e.g., clubs owners, managers and dancers, not customers) can be charged (Brazao, 1995; Swainson, 1995; City of Mississauga, By-law No. 572-79; Municipality of Metropolitan Toronto, Schedule 36 to By-Law No. 20-85). As a result, similar to prostitution, enforcement efforts target the supply side rather than the demand side of the industry, i.e. they typically target women (Belknap, 1996; Boritch, 1997; Lowman, 1992; Schur, 1984; Shaver, 1993; Shaver, 1996).

The variety of charges that have been laid against dancers suggest that they are in a “no-win” situation. If the women touch the men or let the men touch them they can be charged, fined under the bylaws, and possibly have their licence revoked. They can even be fined under municipal bylaws when men touch them against their will. Alternatively, they can be convicted of assault under the *Criminal Code* if they defend themselves from such assaults. Case in point is the experience of Tracy Lynn Laird. On March 22, 1995, Tracy Lynn Laird, a dancer at the house of Lancaster I, in Toronto, was convicted of assault in Etobicoke Provincial Court. The charges stemmed from an incident in which Ms. Laird cut a customer with a glass when he complained she wasn’t allowing touching and fingered her without her permission (Bhabra, 1995). Hefty fines, taking away licences, criminal charges and lawyer’s fees can have detrimental effects

on dancers' lives. If the intent of regulating lap dancing is to prevent harm, especially to women, and promote equality, then the regulatory devices currently in use are not the appropriate ones. Perhaps the solution is to regulate exotic dancing in a manner that is similar to other occupations or industries. As suggested by Gotell (1997, 44):

...employment conditions should be the focus of employment laws. Women in the sex industry - be it prostitution, [exotic dancing,] or the production of pornography - should be entitled to the same kind of employment protection that other workers are afforded. They should not have to work in conditions that are hazardous. They should not have to work in conditions against their will....Employment-standards law, human-rights law, occupational-health-and-safety law, and workers-compensation law could all substantially improve the conditions under which sex work occurs. Such legal regulation could directly address the coercive conditions under which some women in these industries find themselves working.

It appears that no matter what its legal status, lap dancing continues to exist. The continuation of lap dancing is problematic because it raises issues regarding the boundary between dancing and sexual contact. Depending on the nature of the physical contact that occurs with the costumer, health issues and concern for sexually transmitted infections (STIs) are raised. Such concerns are heightened in those instances where the women feel physical contact was forced upon them. As previously noted, some women reported feeling sexually assaulted while lap dancing. Others reported feeling pressured to participate in lap dancing by club owners and managers. In some clubs, women were threatened with job loss if they didn't lap dance. According to the women interviewed, if they were to lose their jobs they would find themselves in a position where they would be unable to pay their bills and take care of their children. Since a need for money is the primary reason cited by all dancers for entering dancing, threats of job loss would cause hardships for at least some of these women, especially those who lack an education, since they have limited access to well-paying jobs.

### **HIV and Other Sexually Transmitted Infections**

None of the dancers we interviewed reported a history of HIV. However, 35% of the women in this study had histories of other STIs, most typically gonorrhea (10%) or chlamydia (20%). Only one woman reported contracting an infection during her dancing career (genital warts). Although caution is warranted when drawing generalizations from qualitative research, these results suggest that exotic dancers are more likely to have histories of STIs than the general population of Canadian women 20-29 years of age (e.g. .05% of Canadian women have had gonorrhea and 5.2% chlamydia; Health Canada 1996) but the connection between sexually transmitted infections and dancing is unclear.

### **Exotic Dancing and Risk**

Despite the relative absence of clear evidence of infection associated specifically with dancing, all the women we interviewed expressed concerns that certain aspects of their job might place them at risk for STIs. The areas identified included transmission of infection through contacts with the "pole," chairs and the stage floor, shared clothing or blankets, and lap dancing. Various parts of dancers' bodies, including breasts, buttocks, anus and genitalia come in direct

contact with a metal pole used in stage performances, with the stage floor, and with shared props and articles of clothing (e.g. g-strings/t-bars, towels and blankets). In addition, dancers may sit naked on chairs and couches in the course of their work. Women spoke of concerns that infectious agents contained in vaginal secretions left on these surfaces might facilitate transmission of STIs among dancers. Though most women used towels or blankets on stage floors, chairs and couches to minimize contact, these did not eliminate their fears. Dancers also expressed concern about STI transmission while performing lap dances. Such fears stemmed from the fact that during this form of dance the women's genitals may come in contact with vaginal discharges left on the clothing of customers by previous dancers, or with the ejaculate deposited either on clothing or directly on parts of a dancer's body, including her own external genitalia. These contacts are similar to the sharing of sex toys, suggesting that the women's fears are well founded.

### **Factors Influencing Risk**

The literature review conducted prior to this research led to the identification of several factors that could increase dancers' vulnerability to HIV infection. These included heavy alcohol use (Prus & Irini, 1980; Ronai & Ellis, 1989); use of illicit drugs (Manderson, 1992; Prus & Irini, 1980); sexual contact with customers both inside (Ronai & Ellis, 1989) and outside the club (Prus & Irini, 1980; Ronai & Ellis, 1989; Skipper & McCaghy, 1971); lack of access to resources and opportunities (Ronai & Ellis, 1989); and lack of power and autonomy in sexual encounters (Holland, Ramazanoglu, Scott, Sharpe, & Thomson, 1992).

### **Sexual Contact with Clientele**

We found, as did Ronai and Ellis (1989), that "hand jobs," oral sex and intercourse did take place in some strip clubs. These activities occurred in the more private areas of the clubs, with some clubs even maintaining rooms on separate floors from the main area where more intimate contacts were possible. In addition, some dancers went on "dates" with club patrons, with sex for money included as part of the "date." This too, coincides with results of earlier research (Prus & Irini, 1980; Ronai & Ellis, 1989; Skipper & McCaghy, 1971).

Not all dancers engaged in sex with clients, either inside or outside the club. Some women maintained a clear boundary between dancing, which they performed for pay, and sex which they reserved for their private lives and relationships. Lap dancing, however, had an impact on some women's ability to maintain these boundaries. The degree of impact appeared to depend on the degree of agency and control that dancers felt they had while working. Some women we interviewed felt capable, comfortable and had little problem setting boundaries on what activities they would and would not engage in, and with whom they would do what. Others felt they had few choices open to them while on the job, in terms of what they would do and with whom they would do it and, in general, reported feeling victimized by the lap dancing experience.

Those women who did engage in sex with clientele insisted that condoms were always used, thereby minimizing the risk of transmission of HIV or other STIs. However, all the women we interviewed spoke of dancers they knew who engaged in sex with customers and did not use condoms. In addition, the women reported that they generally did not use condoms with their boyfriends, or with customers once they became boyfriends.

### **Alcohol Use**

Exotic dancers work in an environment where drinking alcohol is the norm. Not only do customers drink and invite dancers to drink with them, but dancers are expected to spend time socializing with customers in order to “keep them happy.” Dancers may even contribute to their earnings if a customer pays them for the time they spend drinking with him. Management imposed rules about drinking vary widely. While some bars forbid dancers to drink, most only require that they limit their intake so that it does not interfere with their performances. These findings are somewhat different from those of earlier research (Manderson, 1992; Ronai & Ellis, 1989) which was conducted in clubs where dancers made a percentage of the profit from the alcoholic beverages customers bought for them. In these earlier studies, some dancers established methods of signaling wait-staff to minimize or exclude the alcohol from their drinks, such club policies encouraged them to drink on the job. Very few of the dancers we interviewed required such signals since they felt they could freely choose whether they drank alcohol or not and that their choice did not have an impact on their potential earnings.

All of the women interviewed reported consuming alcohol before their first stage performance, noting that it would have been impossible to “get up there” without it.

My first dance, I shot back three tequilas before going up. I couldn't have done it otherwise.

For some dancers this dependence on alcohol continued for an extended time period, or throughout their dancing careers. Women who felt uncomfortable with performing as exotic dancers reported that drinking made it possible for them to “put up with” what they were expected to do, to “deal with [their] nerves” or the feeling that what they did was “unnatural,” to “deal with the pain,” to “loosen up,” “get that buzz” or “high” that made it possible to get through the shift, to interact with clients more easily, or to “bring out the other character,” the “persona” of the dancer. Drinking was also used as a way to escape problems and stresses in their personal lives, or to relieve boredom on the job. Several women reported that they had built up a high tolerance to alcohol. One woman, for example, reported that she typically consumed between 5 and 19 drinks each evening shift. This type of reliance on alcohol to perform a job is shared by women in other areas of the sex trade (McKeganey & Barnard, 1996) and is similar to results reported in other studies of exotic dancers (Prus & Irini, 1980; Ronai & Ellis, 1989).

Though all women reported using alcohol early in their career to help make the adjustment to dancing, not all continued drinking. Those women who stopped consuming alcohol at work early in their dancing careers reported that they felt alcohol would compromise their safety by preventing them from remaining “on guard,” alert, or in control, or that it made them more susceptible to injury as a result of losing their balance while dancing. In addition, these women pointed to the potential income that could be lost during the time a dancer spent drinking.

### **Drug Use**

Most of the strip clubs in this study did not have an active drug trade. In those where drugs were available, it was primarily marijuana and cocaine or their derivatives. These substances were available from either staff or customers, depending on the club. The presence or absence of drugs or a drug trade depended primarily on policies set and enforced by owners and

managers of a club.

For those women who used illicit drugs, marijuana was most common. It was used in much the same way as alcohol: to relax, as an escape from dancing, to “get them in the mood” so they could dance. For some women, marijuana was an alternative to alcohol, avoiding, as they said, “the potential for alcohol addiction.”

Some women also used cocaine, with several describing themselves as addicts or recovering addicts. One woman in this study was also involved in dealing or transporting drugs. Use of various hallucinogens, ecstasy, amphetamines, and heroin were all reported in interviews, though these were far less common in this sample than marijuana and cocaine. Those women who used marijuana exclusively did not feel their use was related to their work as dancers, since most had begun prior to beginning their dancing career. In contrast, those women who reported addictions to other illicit substances connected their drug use with dancing, either with the availability of drugs in the clubs, with having been introduced to dancing through someone who supplied their drugs or used drugs with them, or because they felt they needed the drugs to “keep them on top” of the dancing.

The very small number of women in our study who administered drugs using needles reported they had never shared needles. HIV transmission through shared needles is therefore not likely in this group.

### **Power, Money, and Access to Resources**

As already noted, financial need and potential financial gain from exotic dancing were persistent themes throughout our interviews. Few jobs offer young women the possibility of earning the income of exotic dancers, particularly when they have little education and job training. Dancers cited a lack of access to alternative jobs and resources as the dominant motivation for exotic dancing. As with other forms of sex work (Pheterson, 1993; Scambler, Peswanie, Renton & Scambler, 1990), exotic dancing is, for some women, an act of resistance in the face of poverty. Rather than live on welfare or increase their debt-load, the women we interviewed chose to dance. Women facing large mortgages, personal or school debts, the need to support dependents, to pay school expenses or to avoid going into debt, were drawn to dancing. The money earned and the flexibility of work schedules were cited as prime benefits by the women we interviewed. Women with children were able to have the money and the time they needed for their children. Others were able to pursue their education free of debt and heavy employment schedules. Having access to money gave dancers a sense of power over their life circumstances.

Although the economic and personal benefits of dancing are a source of power, the income structure of exotic dancing can also take power away from women and encourage them to place their health and well-being at risk, particularly in clubs where lap dancing is part of the services offered to clients. Dancers are paid little, if anything, by the bars in which they work. The bulk of their earnings come directly from customers. Thus, while the potential earnings from dancing are high (some women reported earning \$1000-\$1500 in a good week or \$500-\$800 in a night), women must “work their customers” to maximize the “tips” they are paid. Payment depends on what the customer wants, what the dancer will do, and the dancer’s ability to manipulate the customer. Some dancers were motivated to push the “no touch” boundaries to earn more money and some became dependent on alcohol or drugs to help maintain the form and duration of interaction with customers that helped maximize their earnings. In some of the interviews we conducted, women spoke of paying those who watched the private rooms to “look

the other way” so they could violate club rules, or go beyond the boundaries of laws that regulate club activities. For those who moved from exotic dancing into prostitution, the amount of money that could be made as well as the ease with which one could make it were spoken of as prime motivations for the change in occupations.

The economic power of the customer can also contribute to women’s vulnerability to risk. Bars earn their money from their customers and are reluctant to anger or turn away a regular customer, particularly when he is a “big spender.” In some clubs, particularly during the lap dancing era, women were required to participate in lap dancing and were threatened with job loss if they did not comply. This differs from findings in research done in jurisdictions where there is no lap dancing (Ronai & Ellis, 1989) and where management limited rather than encouraged physical touching and contact. Several dancers also complained that they were not provided with the protection or back-up they needed to avoid or stop harassment or assault, because the bar management did not want to jeopardize profits. Others told of customers who tipped the bouncers to look the other way so that they could push dancers for greater sexual contact without concern that they would be evicted from the bar. Dancers reported that these incidents were more prevalent since lap dancing, even in bars and regions where lap dancing had been eliminated after a period of availability.

### **Other Sources of Vulnerability**

Several factors associated with vulnerability to HIV and other STIs that were not identified in the literature were evident from the interviews and observations conducted for this study. These include: sexual coercion and assault, the structure of the strip club, and rejection of the identity as a sex worker.

#### **Sexual Coercion and Assault**

Sexual harassment and coercion were daily occurrences for exotic dancers. They took the form of degrading comments, gestures, propositions, and attempts at sexual touching. Women were regularly and frequently propositioned, pressured, and sexually touched and assaulted. All the women we interviewed reported that they had to be constantly watchful of the men they danced for. Wall mirrors helped dancers maintain their watchfulness in the main room and the absence of such mirrors in the VIP and Champagne rooms contributed to dancers’ vulnerability in these locations.

Physical and sexual assault were often part of dealing with men, particularly those who became physically or sexually aggressive when drinking. The women we interviewed talked about having their breasts and genitals touched, and men “poking” fingers inside them or licking various parts of their bodies, including their genitals, while they were dancing.

It was like [you’re] a cow, as if you’re mechanical. They just assumed that they could do things. And when you bend over, they could poke their fingers up you.

... and when a girl goes to take the tip [while stage dancing]...she usually either crawls over him and does the crotch in the face thing or grabs the money with her boobs... and [one time when I did this] he decided that he was going to try to grab me and lick me.

Dances performed in the more private VIP and Champagne rooms were most likely to

bring women into situations where there was the potential for sexual assault. Customers use various strategies to pull dancers onto an exposed penis or hold them down in an attempt at penetration.

I was over top of him dancing, and he pulled me down really fast. And I just happened to look and there it was [his erect penis was exposed]...

Though these rooms were monitored in most clubs, assaults and attempted assaults still occurred. Those women whose careers extended into the years prior to lap dancing reported that assaults had increased since lap dancing had been introduced into the clubs.

Dancers are more vulnerable the closer they are to their customers (in lap dancing more than table dancing and in table dancing more than stage shows) and, as with prostitution (Miller & Swartz 1995), the more physically removed they are from public view. When asked why men pay more for a dance in a VIP or Champagne Room, dancers consistently said “they expect more.” The men, however, are not supposed to get more since the same rules of touch apply in these private areas as in the more public ones. The decreased distance between dancer and customer, the raised expectations, and the increased privacy elevated the risk of sexual assault for the women, as some men tried to turn expectations into reality. Women commented that once lap dancing was available, men began to expect that all forms of exotic dancing would include arousal to ejaculation and greater freedom to touch or be in contact with the dancers.

Vulnerability to harm extended outside the club, with dancers reporting being stalked, harassed and assaulted by customers and others in the communities where they lived. One dancer reported being sexually assaulted in a dark hallway outside the main area of the bar where she was employed. Others reported being followed home by customers. For one part-time dancer, an employer at another job expected sexual favours when he discovered she was a dancer. Another dancer reported that her landlord assumed she would “fuck his friends” because she was a dancer. When stalking or sexual assaults were reported to police they were usually not investigated. The women were told, “What do you expect, you’re a dancer?” Dancers who fought their attackers reported being arrested or, in one case, run out of town as a “trouble-maker.” While research has demonstrated that such victim blaming and disenfranchisement from the rights of citizens are experiences shared by all women (Montreal Health Press, 1994), they are particularly common for women who perform as sexual entertainers or engage in other forms of sexual labour (Chapkis, 1997; Jenness, 1990; Miller, 1993).

To protect themselves, dancers hid their identity, used fictitious names, and attempted to keep customers or even co-workers from knowing where they lived. Some women even carried weapons. Experiences of harassment, assault, stalking and threats meant that many dancers remained in a constant state of vigilance for their own safety, particularly since the usual avenues for protection or recourse were not available to them.

### **Structure of the Strip Club**

The social structure of a strip club can either contribute to the well-being of the dancers or increase their vulnerability to health risks, including HIV infection. Dancers reported that in some clubs management took the concerns of dancers seriously and provided a relatively supportive environment. They spoke of one bar where there were periodic meetings between management and dancers to discuss their work and safety concerns. In clubs such as these, dancers were able

to set personal boundaries and limits with respect to type of dance or contact with customers they would engage in. Pushing the limits was not tolerated. Dancers knew they would lose their job if they went beyond the limits allowed by law, but they also knew that they would have the support of bouncers and management if they encountered a customer who pushed either beyond the legal limits or those set by dancers. In some of the clubs there were no private areas or rooms, with the public view of all dancing providing an additional measure of safety for dancers.

In contrast to the safer work environments of some clubs, the social structure of other clubs made dancers more vulnerable to threats to their health and well-being. There was little support for dancers in these clubs. Sometimes club owners themselves expected sexual favours from the women, and women reported instances where bouncers were more likely to protect customers from angry dancers than to protect the dancers from customers. In some clubs dancers were *expected* to perform lap dances, reducing their freedom to decide their own personal limits and boundaries. And in others, there were private rooms well separated from the main area of the club where commercial sex exchanges could be negotiated.

### **Identity as Sex Workers**

A strong theme that ran through all the interviews was a separation between exotic dancing and other forms of sexual labour. Dancing was entertainment, a visual form of sexual fantasy. Other forms of sexual labour that involved physical contact, were prostitution. Any suggestions of similarities between the work experiences, health threats, or the possibility of forming coalitions with other sex workers as a vehicle to maximize health and well-being were quickly rejected by the women we spoke with. "I'm a dancer, not a whore," was a common reply to such inquiries. It was clear that this boundary was essential to dancers' sense of well-being. However, despite this boundary, dancers shared many experiences with other sex workers. These included: stigmatization (Scambler et al. 1990), harassment and sexual assault (Vanwesenbeeck et al. 1995), and police disinterest or victim blaming (Jenness, 1990; Miller, 1993). These occupations also shared coping strategies such as role distancing or split identity (O'Connell Davidson, 1995; Hoigard & Finstad, 1992; Reid, 1994; Pheterson, 1993), secrecy about one's occupation, and reliance, for some, on alcohol or drugs in order to work (Carey & Peterson, 1974; Davis, 1971; McKeganey & Barnard, 1996). And, for some women, the easy transition between exotic dancing and other forms of sexual labour, such as escort work or street prostitution, belied the boundaries the dancers built between these professions.

### **Organizing Dancers**

The boundaries that dancers placed around themselves, and some of the self-protecting strategies that they used, such as role distancing, hiding their occupations from others, and rejecting the identity of sex worker, work against both their ability to recognize their vulnerability to HIV and other STIs and to organize to protect themselves. Dancers are staunchly independent. Some do not associate with other dancers and may look down on them, rejecting the idea that they have anything in common with their coworkers. For these women, forming an organization of dancers is an anathema. Others are well integrated into the strip club environment and culture. Their lives are spent in the clubs or with clients and coworkers. These women reject the idea of any need to organize since this is *their* world and they feel completely adapted to and comfortable in it. They see little risk or foundation for concern or fear.

Several attempts have been made to organize exotic dancers into advocacy groups. The

Canadian Association of Burlesque Entertainers (CABE) was a union begun in the 1970's, but it died out in the 1980's (Cooke, 1987; Johnson, 1987). During the legal battles over lap-dancing Katherine Goldberg formed the Association of Burlesque Entertainers (ABE). While Goldberg, a former dancer, spoke out loudly on behalf of the rights and needs of exotic dancers, it is unclear whether the organization ever had any members other than Goldberg and one other (non-dancer) member.

More recently, community outreach workers and nurses in the Peel region health unit have been involved in outreach to women working in the strip clubs in Mississauga. They have visited clubs, talked with women and provided advice on health related matters. The Exotic Dancers' Alliance (EDA) was formed based on this outreach in 1995. It produces a newsletter, maintains a telephone information line, and has organized a hepatitis B vaccination programme that took place in the strip clubs in 1998. It is EDA's hope that the Association will become a coalition of dancers, health workers and others in the community who are interested in the health and well-being of dancers. In the 2 ½ year that it has been meeting, 4 former dancers have been actively involved, though most for limited periods and none throughout the 2 ½ years of its existence. EDA is hampered in its outreach and community development work by a lack of on-going funding.

The Talk Shop, a programme of the North York health unit, has recently begun outreach to exotic dancers in Toronto, following a model similar to that used in Peel. She has been successful at bringing a hepatitis B vaccination programme into one strip club, and hopes to build on this success.

To date, these attempts have met with limited success. The most successful attempts at outreach to dancers and work done to improve workplace health and safety in the strip clubs have been those of the local health units. Despite strenuous attempts by the members of these groups to involve dancers and to follow a grass-roots, community advocacy model of organizing, few dancers have become involved. As a result, the approach followed appears more like a service delivery rather than a grass-roots model.

## **CONCLUSION**

During the course of this research we faced many methodological challenges which affected not only research, but also carry over into the development and delivery of programmes. Dancers have little interest in participating in research or in forming grass-roots organizations. They are suspicious of talking to people, particularly after the experiences of some dancers during the lap dancing craze. As a result, dancers were difficult to recruit to our study. Attempts at organization have faced similar problems.

This research explored whether and how the occupation of exotic dancing and the lives and careers of exotic dancers might make dancers vulnerable to HIV infection. From the literature review conducted in preparation for this research, we identified heavy alcohol use, drug use, and engaging in sex with customers, both inside and outside strip clubs, as potential contributors to vulnerability to HIV. We found that these factors are most relevant for career dancers. These dancers are typically immersed in the strip club culture, are often heavy drinkers, and may also be involved in drug use. Sex with customers may be part of dancing, or part of dating men whom they meet while dancing in the clubs. The goal oriented dancer, on the other hand, treats dancing as a temporary job. She often does not use alcohol or drugs and sets a firm

boundary around what she does as a dancer, with sexual activity outside this boundary.

A third type of dancer was not part of this study--dancers brought to Canada on work visas. Our only knowledge of the experience of these dancers was through accounts provided by social service workers, health workers and other dancers who had contact with them. These accounts suggested that these women may be vulnerable to HIV and other STIs.

Lap dancing has increased the vulnerability of all dancers. It presents a potential for direct skin to skin, genital to genital, or oral to genital contact in the guise of dancing. It increases the probability that a dancer will be sexually coerced or assaulted, and blurs the boundary between entertainment that relies on sexual fantasy and that which involves physical and potentially sexual contact. The former carries no risk of HIV or other sexually transmitted infections, the latter has the potential for infection.

The findings of this study suggest there is a need for a change in policy regarding the regulation of strip clubs. Instead of relying on criminal law or municipal by-laws, which, regardless of intent, have been used to the disadvantage of the dancers, we need to move toward treating exotic dancers like other workers. Controlling work place activities and protecting employees, through the use of employment-standards law, human-rights law, occupational-health-and-safety law and workers-compensation law, would help control the sexual contact occurring in the clubs and the assault and other forms of violation reported by dancers.

## REFERENCES

- Belknap, Joanne. (1996). *The Invisible Woman: Gender, Crime and Justice*. Belmont CA: Wadsworth Publishing Company.
- Bhabra, H. S. (1995, May). Ten Dollars a Dance. *Toronto Life*, Pp. 50-53.
- Boritch, Helen. (1997). *Fallen Women: Female Crime and Criminal Justice in Canada*. Toronto: Nelson Publishing.
- Brazao, D. (1995, September 13). Lap Dancers Charged Under No-touching Law. *Toronto Star*, p. A7.
- R. v. Butler*, [1992] 1 S.C.R. 452.
- Carey, S.H. & Peterson, R. (1974). "A study of recruitment and socialization into two deviant female occupations." *Sociological Symposium*, 11, 11-24.
- Chapkis, W. (1997). *Live sex acts: Women performing erotic labor*. NY: Routledge.
- City of Mississauga, By-law No. 572-79, *Adult Entertainment Parlour Licensing By-law* (13 August 1979).
- City of Mississauga, By-law No. 351-95, *A by-law to amend By-law 572-79* (1995).
- Cooke, A. (1987). "Stripping: Who Calls the Tune." Pp. 92-99 in *Good Girls Bad Girls: Sex Trade Workers and Feminists Face to Face*, edited by Laurie Bell. Toronto: The Woman's Press.
- Criminal Code of Canada*, R.S.C., 1985, c. C-46.
- Davis, N.J. (1971). "The prostitute: Developing a deviant identity." Pp. 297-322 in *Studies in the Sociology of Sex*, edited by J.M. Henslin. NY: Appleton-Century Crofts.
- Funston, M. (1995, September 14). Mississauga Bans Lap Dancing - But Clubs, Dancers Protest. *Toronto Star*, p. A6.
- Gotell, Lise. (1997). "Shaping *Butler*: The New Politics of Anti-Pornography." Pp. 48-106 in *Bad Attitude/s on Trial: Pornography, Feminism, and the Butler Decision*, edited by Brenda Cossman, Shannon Bell, Lise Gotell and Becki Ross. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
- Harvey, I. (1995a, March 4). Dirty Dancing Killing Our Fun. *The Saturday Sun*, p. 22.
- Harvey, I. (1995b, July 5). Teetotalers tear into lap dancing. *Toronto Sun*, p. 20. *R. v. Hawkins* (1993), 15 O.R. (3d) 549.
- Health Canada, Laboratory Centres for Disease Control. (1996) *Proceedings of Expert Working Group to Establish National Goals for Sexually Transmitted diseases and Sexual Risk Behaviours*. Toronto, Ontario.
- Holland, J., C. Ramazanoglu, S. Scott, S. Sharpe and R. Thomson. (1992). "Pressure, Resistance, Empowerment: Young Women Negotiation of Safer Sex." Pp. 142-162 in *AIDS: Rights, Risks and Reasons*, edited by Peter Aggleton, Peter Davis and Graham Hart. Washington D.C.: The Falmer Press.
- Johnson, M. (1987). "CABE and Strippers: A Delicate Union." Pp. 49-94 in *Good Girls Bad Girls: Sex Trade Workers and Feminists Face to Face*, edited by Laurie Bell. Toronto: The Woman's Press.
- Lowman, John. (1992). "Street Prostitution." Pp. 49-94 in *Deviance: Conformity and Control in Canadian Society*, edited by Vincent Sacco. Scarborough, Ontario: Prentice-Hall, Canada.
- Manderson, L. (1992). "Public Sex Performances in Patpong and Explorations of the Edges of Imagination." *Journal of Sex Research*, 29(4), 451-475.

- R. v. Mara*, [1994] O.J. No. 264 (QL).
- R. v. Mara* (1996), 27 O.R. (3d) 643.
- R. v. Mara* (1997), 115 C.C.C. (3d) 539.
- McKeganey, N. & Barnard, M. (1996). *Sex work on the streets: Prostitutes and their clients*. Philadelphia, PA: Open University Press.
- Miller, J. (1993). "Your life is on the line every night you are on the streets: Victimization and the resistance among street prostitutes." *Humanity and Society*, 17, 422-446.
- Miller, J. & Swartz, M.D. (1995). "Rape myths and violence against street prostitutes." *Deviant Behaviour: An Interdisciplinary Journal*, 16, 1-23.
- Montreal Health Press. (1994). *A Book About Sexual Assault*. Montreal: Montreal Health Press
- Municipality of Metropolitan Toronto, Schedule 36 to By-law No. 20-85, *A by-law of The Municipality of Metropolitan Toronto respecting the licensing, regulating and governing of trades, callings, businesses and occupations in the Metropolitan Area* (1985).
- Municipality of Metropolitan Toronto, By-law No. 123-96, *A by-law to amend Schedule 36 to By-law No. 20-85* (1996).
- Municipality of Metropolitan Toronto, By-law No. 129-95, *A by-law to amend Schedule 36 to By-law No. 20-85* (1995).
- O'Connell Davidson, J. (1995). "The anatomy of 'free choice' prostitution". *Gender, Work and Organization*, 2, 1-10.
- Ontario Adult Entertainment Bar Association v. Metropolitan Toronto (Municipality)*, (1997), 118 C.C.C. (3d) 481, aff'g. (1996), 27 O.R. (3d) 643.
- Pheterson, G. (1993). "The whore stigma: Female dishonor and male unworthiness." *Social Text*, 37, 39-64.
- Prus, R. and S. Irini. (1980). *Hookers, Rounders and Desk Clerks: The Social Organization of the Hotel Community*. Toronto: Gage Publishing Limited.
- Queen, L. (1995, September 17). York Outlaws Dirty Dancing: Lap Dancer Urges Council to Permit 'Wholesome' Profession.' *The Liberal*, p. 3.
- Reid, S.A. (1994). "Role identity in a devalued occupation: The case of female exotic dancers." *Sociological Focus*, 27, 1-16.
- Ronai, C. R. and C. Ellis. (1989). "Turns-ons for Money: Interactional Strategies of the Table Dancer." *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, 18(3), 271-298.
- Scambler G., Peswanie, R., Renton, A. & Scambler, A. (1990). "Women prostitutes in the AIDS era." *Sociology of Health and Illness*, 12, 260-273.
- Shaver, Frances M. (1996). "The Regulation of Prostitution: Setting the Morality Trap." Pp. 201-226 in *Social Control in Canada: Issues in the Social Construction of Deviance*, edited by Bernard Schissel and Linda Mahood. Toronto: Oxford University Press.
- \_\_\_\_\_, Frances M. (1993). "Prostitution: A Female Crime?" Pp. 153-173 in *In Conflict with the Law: Women and the Canadian Justice System*, edited by Ellen Adelberg and Claudia Currie. Vancouver, British Columbia: Press Gang.
- Schur, Edwin M. (1984). *Labeling Women Deviant: Gender, Stigma and Social Control*. New York: Random House.
- Skipper, J. K. and C. H. McCaghy. (1971). "Stripteasing: A Sex-Oriented Occupation." Pp. 275-296 in *Studies in the Sociology of Sex*, edited by James M. Henslin . New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts.
- Small, P and G. Swainson. (1995, August 16). City Attacks Lap Dance Sleaze. *Toronto*

*Star*, p. A3.

Strauss, A. and J. Corbin. (1990). *Basics of Qualitative Research: Grounded Theory Procedures and Techniques*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.

Swainson, G. (1995, August 18). Metro Bans Lap Dancing. *Toronto Star*, Pp. A1, A16.

*R. v. Tremblay*, [1993] 2 S.C.R. 932.

Van Alphen, T. (1995, May 22). Stripper Protests Lap Dancing. *Toronto Star*, Pp. C1, C3.

Vanwesenbeeck, I., de Graaf, R., van Zessen, G., Straver, C., & Visser, J. (1995) "Professional HIV risk taking, levels of victimization, and well-being in female prostitutes in The Netherlands." *Archives of Sexual Behavior*, 24, 503-514.

Wallace, J. (1995, August 4). Ontario to Probe Lap-dance Beefs. *Toronto Sun*, p. 7.

## PUBLICATIONS

### Journal Articles:

- 1998 Lewis, Jacqueline, Learning to strip: The socialization experiences of exotic dancers. *The Canadian Journal of Human Sexuality*. 7(1): 51-66.
- 1999 Maticka-Tyndale, Eleanor, Lewis, Jacqueline, Clark, Jocalyn, Zubick, Jennifer, Young, Shelley. Social and Cultural Vulnerability to Sexually Transmitted Infection: The Work of Exotic Dancers. *Canadian Journal of Public Health*.

### Articles Accepted for Publication:

Maticka-Tyndale, Eleanor, Lewis, Jacqueline, Clark, Jocalyn, Zubick, Jennifer, Young, Shelley. Exotic Dancing and Health. *Women and Health*.

Lewis, Jacqueline, Maticka-Tyndale, Eleanor. Licensing Sex Work: Public Policy and Women's Lives. *Canadian Journal of Public Policy*

### Abstracts:

- 1998 Maticka-Tyndale, Eleanor. Sex trades: Policies to decrease vulnerability to HIV. *Canadian Journal of Infectious Diseases*. 9(supplement A): 12A
- 1997 Maticka-Tyndale, Eleanor and Lewis, Jacqueline. Erotic Dancing: HIV-related risk factors. *Canadian Journal of Infectious Diseases*. 8(supplementA): 14A

### Conference Proceedings:

- 1997 Lewis, Jacqueline. Working together for money: The social organization of strip clubs. *Interdisciplinary perspectives: Using qualitative methods to study social life*. University of Toronto, Toronto, Ontario. August 5-8.