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Life on the Streets: The Experiences of Community Researchers in a Study of Prostitution

PETRA M. BOYNTON*
Department of Psychiatry and Behavioural Sciences, Royal Free and University College Medical School, London, UK

ABSTRACT

Whilst community psychology has encouraged discussion of research processes and ways to improve studies, certain issues within community-based research (particularly on sex topics) still require attention. This paper outlines a community study of women involved in street prostitution, and discusses issues arising from this research. By using extracts from the research report, along with researcher's diaries and taped conversations, the paper raises points for discussion concerning the process of sex-research. For instance, training peer researchers, incorporating sex-workers in research strategies, producing tangible results, and ethical issues. Strategies to improve research in general are then suggested. Copyright © 2002 John Wiley & Sons, Ltd.

Key words: community research; prostitution; safety; representation(s)

INTRODUCTION

This paper examines the experiences of three female researchers in a community study of prostitution in a West Midlands town (Boynton *et al.*, 1998), and aims to answer some of the questions the research raised for us. Certain issues raised within this paper are specific to research in the area of 'sex work' (particularly prostitution); however, there are also points which are likely to be of importance in most community-based studies.

During the completion of the research we found it difficult to find solutions to certain issues within academic literature (for example, issues of safety, participant protection in a street-based setting, and confidentiality). The aim of this paper is to raise these factors in relation to community (sex) research. Quoting from the main report (Boynton *et al.*, 1998), with observations and notes from researcher's diaries, factors emerging from the research will be discussed.

* Correspondence to: P. M. Boynton, Department of Psychiatry and Behavioural Sciences, Royal Free and University College Medical School, Royal Free Campus, Rowland Hill Street, London NW3 2PF, UK.
E-mail: pboynton@rfc.ucl.ac.uk

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RESEARCH BACKGROUND

The research was a commissioned, mainly qualitative investigation into issues surrounding prostitution of women and girls. Data collection took place between October 1996 and May 1997. Liasing with participants regarding their interview transcripts, and developing the report took a further year. Two women who attended a local women's resource centre were selected to act as community interviewers/peer researchers. They had knowledge of the local area, of community issues (such as neighbourhood concerns relating to the local 'red light area'), and shared the same regional dialect as the working women. The community researchers and I were of a similar age to the majority of prostitutes interviewed. The peer researchers were paid an hourly wage and expenses whilst employed on the study.

Over a 5-month period the peer researchers received training in health promotion (sexual health, drug misuse, etc.); counselling skills, assertiveness and interviewing/research skills (including practice, videoed interviews and examining transcripts). They accompanied outreach workers on visits to observe how to work with women engaged in prostitution, and conducted workshops with young girls at risk from prostitution. They then conducted taped interviews and completed questionnaires with 25 street prostitutes, and seven professionals who worked in related agencies (police, probation, women's refuge officer, etc.). Interviews were completed either in participant's place of work (including on, or near the street for some of the working women), in the peer researcher's car, or in prostitute women's homes. Following this, questionnaires were analysed, and interviews were transcribed and subjected to thematic discourse analysis (see Burman and Parker, 1993). Transcripts were examined for reoccurring themes, along with reading the text for references to key issues needing answering in the research (e.g. police, pimps, drugs). These were used to compare the different accounts of prostitution, from those who worked in the area; as well as establishing a portrait of the working women's lives.

The research was informed by women-centred psychology (see Khan and Jean, 1983; Matlin, 1996), along with more critical approaches to the study of prostitution (e.g. Chancer, 1993; Jacobsen, 1993). There were a number of issues those commissioning the research wanted investigating, and additional themes emerged through interview analysis. In order to illustrate the many factors surrounding prostitution, the final report addressed: childhood experiences; how girls and women get involved in prostitution; and why do they stay? The pressure on girls and women involved in prostitution (money, pimps, relationships, drugs, etc.) were also explored. Childcare, women's working patterns, and their sexual health were covered. In addition, themes of abuse and exploitation were addressed, particularly relating to punters, pimps and the police; and how others perceived prostitutes. As prostitutes have complained they have been marginalized by existing reports or interventions on prostitution (see Chancer, 1993), the main results of the research included suggestions from prostitute women about changes and improvements they felt were needed to local services (a full account of these results and recommendations can be found in Boynton *et al.*, 1998).

COMMISSIONING RESEARCH

In any community research project where a number of different groups and individuals are involved, there will be tensions around what questions are asked, and how findings

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are presented. Those who work on community-based projects develop skills to handle such difficulties, and guidelines have also been prepared to assist researchers (e.g. Consumers in NHS Research Support Unit, 2000). There may also be misunderstandings between researchers and those who commission projects in terms of method, analysis, and ownership of data. In the research reported here, issues were raised about the meaning of qualitative research. Previous commissioned research completed in the local area had involved interviews, but these were reported as summaries not direct quotes. In this study participants had viewed their transcripts believing they would be summarized—as did the steering group (even though they commissioned a 'qualitative' piece of research). There were therefore concerns over actual quotes appearing in the report. In working with community members (particularly with diverse interests) it is worth clarifying what people want and expect from the research—in terms of methods used, expected outcomes, and style of reporting.

TRAINING PEER RESEARCHERS

The training of those who assist in any study is important. It ensures staff are capable of completing the required task, and maintains that accurate and good quality 'data' are collected. In the case of community staff who may not have completed research before, it prepares them for the study, and incorporates them into the research team. In our study, the peer researchers were highly motivated, and worked very hard to practice the skills required for the project. However, it is important that other researchers working on similar projects do not assume that their assistants will 'naturally' fit the role of researcher.

If researchers are not trained they may put themselves or participants in danger, or may cause unnecessary upset and distress. This applies to any researcher, and even those who have completed research degrees still learn a lot about research once they are 'in the field' (see Simmonds, 2000; Boynton *et al.*, 2001). It is vital that researchers know what their roles and boundaries are, what their task is, and that someone is responsible for checking the accuracy and amount of data being collected. Problems may arise if researchers are not clear on what information they are supposed to be collecting, or how to collect it.

Many projects rely on the goodwill of those who assisting. It has been argued that members of communities should be involved to a greater extent with research, but not on a voluntary basis (Consumers in NHS Research Support Unit, 2000, p. 26). The peer researchers in this study received a salary, a travel allowance, and mobile phones for the duration of the project. It is also suggested that wherever possible, participants should also receive payment. However, in this study, we could not afford to pay the prostitute women the equivalent of their hourly charge. Therefore the peer researchers gave the women condoms, lubricant (ky jelly), and information about advice services, along with explaining why the research was important instead of paying the working women. Most of the women were motivated by a desire to help others—particularly to prevent young girls from being abused by pimps and punters.

The researchers were concerned about leaving the participants behind after the study, but there are additional issues about what happens to community researchers/assistants after a project ends. Suggestions on this project were that the peer researchers had a wider group of people to gain job references from, along with a wider range of acquired skills. It was also suggested certificates could be created, although it may be preferable to link training with existing college courses or equivalent. My concern was that the peer

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researchers were not left feeling abandoned after all their hard work. The peer researchers suggested that other community projects might try offering training, links to other projects (for work opportunities), and end the research in a way that leaves the peer researchers empowered.

WHO COMPLETES INTERVIEWS?

Debates within the social and health services continue about utilizing current or ex-prostitutes as advocates and advisers for other 'sex workers' (Barrett, 1987). Certain groups have welcome those with 'inside knowledge', whilst others have been concerned about the ethical and political implications of using prostitutes as advisers (particularly if they may be working with young people 'at risk' from prostitution). In the research described in this paper, the peer researchers were not selected on this basis (although they shared other similarities with the working women they were interviewing). It could be argued that getting working women to interview each other could be positive—and in some projects it has been found to be worthwhile (see Rickard and Strong, 2000).

Those who wish to incorporate sex-workers into research strategies may wish to consider the following. Firstly, prostitutes are often encouraged to watch each other either for safety or when work becomes competitive, which may introduce pressures into research. Secondly, if a researcher is 'out' about being a prostitute, issues of safety, and protection of their identity need to be considered, both during research and following any publication or publicity. Participants and others may not respect this. Thirdly, if prostitutes are involved in the research, there are issues of bias and meaning, which may need clarifying for a wider audience. Considerations about who may complete interviews are also important (for example, the appropriateness of an older woman who currently or has worked as a prostitute interviewing under-age children at risk from prostitution can be questioned). These may affect the quality of information being collected along with how research is perceived and accepted. Employing current or ex-prostitutes on studies can be very positive, but needs careful planning and consideration.

PRODUCING TANGIBLE RESULTS

One of the major concerns of participants in this study was that research does not always produce obvious results (Bell, 1987). This was particularly influenced by the working women's knowledge that a number of studies had been completed previously in their town: 'I hope something positive comes from it [the report] because as I've said there is another report done; or research done before . . . There was some researchers and they did an interview with the working girls they interviewed the community and it's like what the women wanted . . . they wanted an outreach service, they wanted a drop-in' (participant's details kept anonymous). This participant went on to complain that although women (and others) repeatedly made these requests, very little got done—and prostitute-women felt this was a further indication of how unimportant others thought they were. The participants in the current research also requested an increased outreach and a better drop-in facility. Such services have recently been established.

The prostitute women noted that more change was needed, not more research, as they requested: 'You know . . . mainly drop in centres, where they [prostitutes] can just go in

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and out when they feel like it to get condoms, ask for support, even if they are running away from their pimps somewhere they can go where the pimps aren't allowed to go'. Indeed, the request for action in preference to research has been echoed in conferences where user-groups (or consumers) have been invited to comment on research (e.g. NHS R&D Conferences, 1998 and 2000, and various inclusive conferences between academics and sex-workers).

The working women told us that often police and other services introduced academics, journalists and artists to the women, and they had little idea about what happened to the information they provided. Due to media interest in the area, the women were used to being approached to do interviews and often had their photographs taken without their consent. At first they perceived this research to be the same, which meant the peer researchers had to work very hard to gain their trust. This involved being introduced by outreach staff (whom the women already trusted), taking time to talk to the women before inviting research participation, and continuing to keep contact after an interview had taken place. The working women were not the only ones to be wary of the research. Those who worked with prostitutes were also concerned that they were fairly reflected within the report. We addressed participants' concerns by providing them with interview transcripts and copies of the report to read. Discussions between the researchers and the steering group also covered these issues.

DISSEMINATING RESEARCH

Research on sex related subjects (particularly about 'sex work') can be controversial (Boynton, 2000), and it can be very attractive to outside media sources. As a result, it can be difficult to convey findings from community investigations in a way that is fair, not sensational, and does not lead to adverse effects on the lives of participants or others within the community touched by the research. As mentioned, the prostitute women were concerned about the impact of media attention, and local community members were worried their area would be linked even more publicly to prostitution. Other concerns focused on increased attention from journalists, or those seeking prostitutes (as clients, pimps, or abusers). Researcher's reputation could be affected by being linked to sexual subjects (Reavey, 1997; Boynton, 1998), but could arguably be equally damaged by creating media interest that puts a community at risk.

In our research, we were very worried that the qualitative aspects of the report would be open to misinterpretation—and certainly be 'media friendly'. Concerns were expressed from the steering group that quotes might be taken out of context, particularly those made by professionals (which suggested a perceived division between the 'professionals' and working women). As efforts were being made to create a service to protect young girls at risk from prostitution whilst this research was being completed, there were additional worries that this programme could be negatively affected if adverse publicity was generated from the research.

Following its launch, the report did not receive much media attention although it has been circulated to many agencies who work with prostitutes, and with young people at risk from prostitution. Researchers who work in similar areas have noted (in conversation) the compromise made between publicizing research, and protecting participants. In this study (as with other projects which involve community assistance) there were also the concerns of the peer researchers to consider. Whilst my career was linked to research in sex work,

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they were local people who were worried that media attention might link them to prostitution in a negative way. As they had observed the way the working women had been treated by those who knew them to be prostitutes, they were worried they might also be subjected to abuse and prejudice (along with those close to them).

ETHICS IN A DIFFICULT AREA

Our research examined the needs, lives and experiences of girls and women involved in prostitution. We encountered problems around interviewing and recruiting under aged girls involved in prostitution. In particular, where girls aged under 16 revealed to us they were involved in prostitution, we were obliged to report this to the police/social services. Therefore, if a girl began to imply this was the case, we were to warn her we would have to inform services about her activities. This created a dilemma for us as researchers wanting to protect our participants anonymity and collecting information, and us as women who did not want to perpetuate abuse of young girls. It was therefore decided to use 'older women' (aged over 18) and service providers to form the basis of the report.

There were concerns about identification of participants throughout the research. We were careful to protect participant's identities, and cut certain quotes that were too identifying. This was more of a concern for those who worked with prostitutes. Pressure was put upon the researchers from professionals not interviewed in the study, but who worked for agencies that were represented by staff who featured in the report. These professionals wanted to know who we had interviewed, as they had not liked what 'their staff' had said. We refused to give these details, and instead cut the quotes/comments that had attracted this unwanted attention—which was detrimental to the report, but essential to protecting the participants.

In addition, we were aware of how prostitutes, those who work with prostitutes, and those who live in red light areas may be stereotypically viewed (see Boynton, 1996). We did not want to reinforce stereotypes, but had to be honest with our findings. This paper will later outline how prostitute women were aware of how they were perceived, and we did not want the report to be part of this negative experience. However, we were honest about many of the problems working women face.

It has been claimed that researchers have been patronizing in their treatment of prostitutes, or have reinterpreted what prostitutes say and think (see Roberts, 1986; Jacobsen, 1993). We did not want to contribute to this, but there were situations where we were faced with women describing situations of abuse and exploitation, which they then referred to as 'relationships' (particularly with pimps—referred to as 'boyfriends'). We noted the women's opinions in our interviews, but did draw attention to the pimp/boyfriend discrepancy in the report. Some of the women read and approved the report—and our interpretation of these problematic 'relationships'. The outreach workers or other services were there to assist women if they wished to end such a relationship.

There were also efforts made by the women to seem socially acceptable (they possibly downplayed their use of drugs, emphasized they practised safer sex, and were at pains to stress how they worked to support their children). We acknowledge that given the demands of the study (talking about experiences/completing a questionnaire) we attracted participants who were able to complete the research. The majority of participants were sober, older and more inclined to talk about their lives. We used their comments, along with other references to suggest there were still issues of drugs, unsafe sex, and personal danger that

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prostitute women encounter—without suggesting all prostitutes are drug addicts, and 'fallen women' (Boynton, 1996).

We aimed to protect our participants through the production of the report, and in it's low-key launch. We were also honest about what negative effects could emerge, and discussed strategies for such problems. Other researchers in this area have noted (in conversation) that problems around participant and researcher protection can be lessened by being open about perceived difficulties, and anticipating as many negative reactions as possible.

At the end of the study, the researchers felt frustrated that they would not be able to implement the suggestions made in the report. We no longer had a 'reason' to go and see the working women, although we still wished to maintain contact (see also Miller, 1997; Lipson *et al.*, 1997). On community studies such as this it can be questioned where does the researcher's role end? Certainly we produced and disseminated the report. Aspects of it have been used in papers, and the peer researchers developed an education programme for those at risk from prostitution based on this research. Obviously there were skilled, trained professionals who were better qualified to work with prostitute women. Whilst we did not want to 'speak for' prostitute women, we found that we were placed in that role, as we had completed work with prostitutes and others wanted to know about working women from us (such as professionals and academics outside the area where the research was completed, and journalists from a number of newspapers, magazines and television).

REPRESENTING PROSTITUTES

Debates around prostitution have been heated and have caused divides between women (Chancer, 1993; Jacobsen, 1993). Prostitutes have been excluded from research, and feel they have been problematized or stigmatized by reports of their lives (Jacobsen, 1993). Many working women argue their voices are not heard (Roberts, 1986) or are misrepresented (Chancer, 1993; Arrington, 1987). Researchers have argued it is difficult to work in such an emotionally laden area (Barry, 1995). Stereotypes relating to prostitutes described by non-prostitutes include drugs, diseases and dysfunctional families (Boynton, 1996). However, the current research identified that prostitute women were aware of the way they were perceived: 'I've met people and they've stuck their nose up in the air, do you know what I mean . . . they think you're an alien' and 'They treat us all the same. The word "prostitute" to a lot of people is a six foot blonde, skirt up her arse and like I said they say prostitutes, they assume prostitutes do it without condoms, they say that prostitutes are dirty, but what they seem to forget is that a lot of prostitutes are normal people'.

By including statements from those who work with prostitutes (police, women's refuge, outreach, etc.), as well as information from working women, this study attempted to include a variety of perspectives. We attempted where possible to allow the working women's voices to be heard, to challenge many stereotypes people have about prostitutes, for example: 'I'd like to say that prostitutes aren't all slags and dirty bleached-blonde girls and drug addicts and alcoholics. Some of us are *decent* women who have got families and only do it for our children or . . . to help us out' (emphasis in original). This was particularly important given that some of the findings in the research could be interpreted as negative for prostitute women, and that as researchers we did not have control over who would read the report (or what their views about prostitutes might be).

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THE RESEARCHER AS 'RESCUER'

Certain nineteenth and early twentieth century feminist campaigns around prostitution attempted to rescue 'fallen women' (Nead, 1987; Ferris, 1993). In our study, the researchers negotiated listening to working women and recording their views, whilst living with conflicting ideas about prostitution (see Schneider, 1997; Taussig, 1993). We all began the study believing that it was a woman's right to choose prostitution, and our work was an outlet for their voices to be heard. However, this became difficult as the women outlined they made a choice in a limited field of opportunities, or in the case of many young women were forced or coerced into prostitution. This was supported by observations made by the police, youth justice, and probation services.

As the peer researchers made friendships with the women they were interviewing it became difficult to watch them leave in cars with punters, particularly when the women outlined stories of abuse and violence: 'I've had clients try to rape me, try to strangle me, um took off with me in the car where I've had to climb out of the window and the car's been about 90 miles an hour . . . jumped out the car at 40 miles an hour. I've had a client shoot at me with a starting gun but I thought it was a real gun . . . I've had them try to run me over, everything'. We discussed our concerns and fears about the working women as part of the research, in order to lessen some of the discomfort we felt about watching them work in dangerous areas. Our role was to collect information, not to stop the women from working. Indeed, according to feedback from the women, the fact that we were not stopping them increased their respect for the study. Yet we also felt that we were partially condoning the violence the working women were frequently subjected to from punters and members of the local community (Barry, 1979; Hubbard, 1998).

The peer researchers became aware of a need for personal safety awareness for themselves (Williams *et al.*, 1992; Taylor, 1995) as they were working in the red light area, often late into the night. We found certain strategies helpful (which may be of benefit to any community project—not just those about prostitution) based on Huxford *et al.* (1997) and they are:

(1) Never work 'alone' (i.e. inform others of your location, schedule of your work; have an assistant with you and/or use mobile phones to keep in touch).
(2) Regularly talk through problems with research team members.
(3) Inform all researchers about possible reactions from participants and how to deal with them.
(4) Take advice and use support from security services (where available) and outside agencies (i.e. the police) if necessary.
(5) Position self near the door when conducting interviews or questionnaires in an office/home setting.
(6) Wear comfortable clothes (that you feel confident in when interviewing).
(7) Develop awareness and strategies around being 'visible' (either at work or in the local community) as association with this research can be problematic.

There were risks identified to women working on the street, which the peer researchers were aware of. The safety strategies outlined above were used to protect the peer researchers when out on 'the beat' (in the 'red light area'). However, we found that risks occurred outside this setting too. 'I was very worried that something would happen to me [when on outreach]. The fact is that when I left the women [on the beat] and I was waiting to come

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home, there was two guys calling out to me, sort of singing "you're gonna get your fucking face sliced off", and I was just standing and waiting for a taxi to come. It wasn't even that late. I was actually more at risk then but the idea is obviously [you're in] an out group, a bad group—them a risk group' [researchers taped discussion]. Note here how the researcher is justifying her behaviour, with terms such as 'it wasn't even that late' or 'I was just standing and waiting for a taxi to come'; these recollect the ways women sometimes justify or explain abusive situations, and were particularly common amongst the working women we interviewed—who frequently took responsibility for other people's violence.

However, this paper has presented risk and violence as belonging 'outside', which may possibly 'foster the illusion that "danger" is something that firmly exists in the community setting. Yet the choice of work topic even in the comparatively "safe" work environment may produce problems, especially as it has already been noted that researchers often become associated with their research topics . . . In such circumstances the field setting may indeed provide a welcome break from the "safety" of the workplace' (Wood, 1999, p. 64). A female student working alongside the project, studying people's views of prostitutes suffered harassment from male students, whilst I encountered negative feedback from academic colleagues, e.g. 'he [an academic colleague] laughed and said "whores can't be raped" [during a discussion about abuse of working women]. Later he told me "you'd better watch out now, if anything happens to you out there no one'll believe it wasn't your fault. You're one of *them now*"' [researcher's diary extract, emphasis in original] (see also Boynton, 1998). The prostitute women were clear they did need greater protection, and one of their recommendations for the report was that self-defence training be made available to them. There is currently an 'ugly mugs' campaign where descriptions of problem punters are posted in a location where working women will see it, to warn of clients who are aggressive or dangerous.

WHAT SORT OF A WOMAN ARE YOU?

The peer researchers made an active decision to present a variety of 'female personas' when working with prostitutes and related agencies. These included 'mother', 'sister', 'aunty', or 'friend', which researchers adopted according to the behaviour, or sometimes at the request of participants (e.g. one woman said she liked a community researcher as she reminded her of her sister). All researchers felt comfortable with this role, as one said 'I'll be anything they [participants] want me to be'. As already mentioned, the research was guided by principles relating to women-centred (community) psychology (see also Campbell and Wasco, 2000; Hill *et al.*, 2000), and many of the prostitute women and female coworkers (such as outreach or probation staff), expressed views which could be interpreted as 'feminist'. However, they distanced themselves from feminism, which was perceived as being against-prostitutes, White, middle-class, out of touch, and condescending. As one participant explained—'every time you talk to some of these middle-class people they think everything is drugs and prostitution' (Women's Resource Centre Manager).

Those working with prostitutes argued for tolerance and acceptance of difference: 'we said to these women "we shouldn't be looking at other women as our enemies we should be working to look at, not punishing men, but the men have got the problem, not women right?" so we were not glad when they come in and say "oh look at her she's

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this and she's that'' because we are our own worst enemies at times' (participant's details kept anonymous). We observed tensions between prostitutes and the communities where they work, and also between each other. Pimps often encourage this, the peer researchers had to be sensitive in their interviewing/recruitment and relied heavily on guidance from the outreach workers, who had established confidential and sensitive working practices within a diverse group of clients.

Certain groups such as the English Collective of Prostitutes deliberately do not identify who is and is not a prostitute among them, and it has been suggested that all women are prostituted in some way (Barry, 1979). Within this study the peer researchers observed that they were welcomed by the women who they interviewed, and often differences between them seemed to disappear. However, the divide between us was frequently emphasized by the working women either by statements they made or through events we observed: 'We met a young woman [prostitute] who said she'd been threatened with a knife by two young boys . . . [the outreach worker] asked how she was and she immediately pulled up her top and showed us her tummy. She was about six months pregnant . . . I found that I took it all in which was a surprise to me as inside I was very shocked. I don't think I showed it though, which was a good thing under the circumstances . . . it wasn't that I was part of the group and therefore accepting. It was just that I was so outside it that there was not even the opportunity to feel much. I simply looked on' (researchers diary extract).

Saying we were all the same was unhelpful, but emphasizing similarities was effective. We were of a similar age, and two members of the research team shared the same regional dialect, had grown up in the same town as most of the working women, and had young children, similar to many of the participants. We all had a shared interest in magazines, music, soap operas, and makeup that were items we could discuss as well as 'research questions'. We knew that our participants were aware of the differences between us, and did not try and pretend we had the same experiences that they did.

LEAVING THE RESEARCH (AND PARTICIPANTS) BEHIND

Many researchers, particularly those working with prostitutes (Miller, 1997) have explained how it is often difficult to leave the research once it is 'complete'. This might be because the researcher wishes to keep in touch with participants, or participants wish to still talk to the researcher, or both (Lipson *et al.*, 1997). In this study we all felt depressed, deflated and lethargic following the end of the data collection phase. We were concerned about the safety of the women we had interviewed and wanted to know they were 'okay'. The two peer researchers wished to continue seeing the women they had interviewed, and often found they met them in town. They then had to negotiate meeting the woman in a social setting with the knowledge they had about her life.

Not seeing a woman on the streets was also a worry. One woman died, another two 'disappeared', and several changed 'scene' and went to work elsewhere whilst we were working with the women. Being involved in writing the report, and devising a programme for applying findings via young girls education groups provided an outlet for the peer researchers, and allowed the project to be 'finished' more satisfactorily. However, we all still feel that we have not left the working women behind. In hindsight, the peer researchers suggested that discussing how people might feel at the end of such a project would allow researchers to anticipate negative feelings.

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ENDNOTE

One of the peer researchers decided that she liked research and has now designed her own action research community-based study into identity formation in mixed-heritage children, for which she is seeking funding. She is studying for a higher degree having undertaken access studies, and has worked in a residential home for young children. The other peer researcher did not wish to continue research, but aims to work with children. I have continued to work in the area of community health and 'sex-research'. All the researchers involved in the project continue to work together, developing ideas from the study, and have remained friends. Although not directly linked to the study described in this paper, a permanent drop-in centre has been created for working women, and a pilot scheme has been extended to protect young girls at risk from prostitution.

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