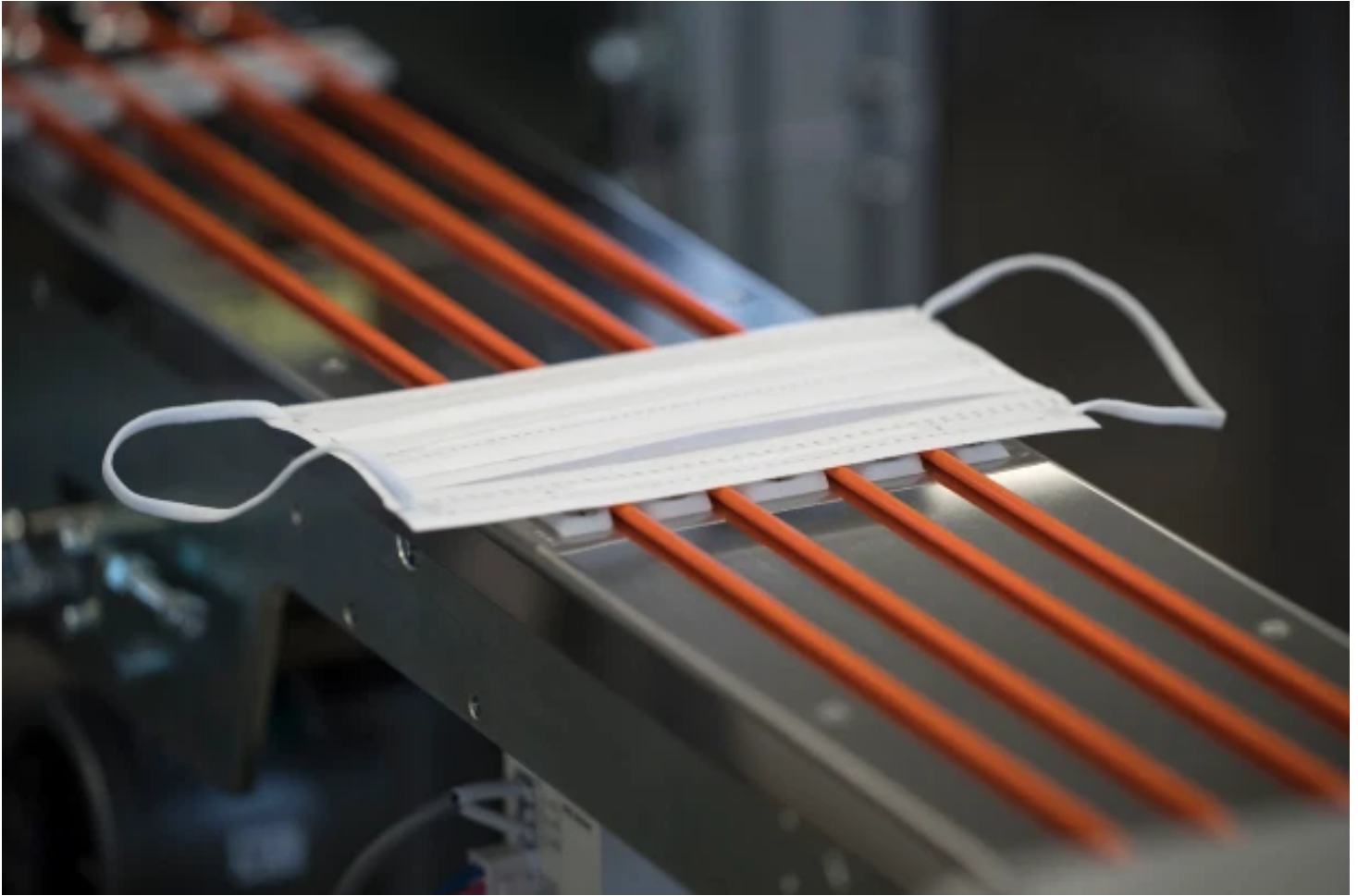


NEWS

# Chinese sex workers hiding their nationality amid coronavirus fears

By [Yaron Steinbuch](#)

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A disposable face mask in Japan.

Getty Images

Potential clients are avoiding Chinese sex workers like the plague in New Zealand [amid the coronavirus outbreak](#) – so the women are claiming to be Korean, Japanese or simply “Asian” in their online ads, according to a report.

“I don’t mention that I am Chinese anymore and I offer a big discount, but clients are avoiding us like we are the virus,” one Chinese woman in New Zealand [told the New Zealand Herald](#).

The woman, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said she had edited her nationality to Asian in a couple of online sex directories.

But despite also slashing her rate by half to \$90, she told the news outlet that business had fallen by more than 50 percent in the past two weeks.

“Business is way down and it’s never been this bad before,” said the sex worker.

Although she is a New Zealand resident who has not been back to China for the last eight years, she said clients saw her as “no different to someone who has just arrived from Wuhan,” the city where the deadly virus originated.

Catherine Healy, a sex workers’ rights activist at the New Zealand Prostitutes Collective, said these are “extremely worrying times for sex workers.”

“We are concerned about the ability for people to both avoid this virus and survive financially,” Healy told the Herald.

Lisa Lewis, a high-profile sex worker, told the paper that she has become diligent in taking precautions and screening clients.

“I tell clients they can’t make a booking if they have any cough, sore throat or cold and flu symptoms. All my clients are made to hand-sanitize after dealing with money,” Lewis said.

 Businessman in car giving money to prostitute

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“I have them shower in front of me where I put the soap I’ve purchased on them to ensure hygiene is maintained, and I don’t kiss clients,” she said, adding that she felt sorry for the Chinese sex workers because many of them were born in New Zealand and may never have even been to China.

“I feel maybe they are being discriminated against which isn’t nice,” she said. “I feel very sorry for them in that way which is unacceptable but maybe why they are hiding under the umbrella of another country.”

Under the Prostitution Reform Act 2003, only New Zealand citizens and residents are permitted to work in the sex industry.

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