

South East Queensland Gay Community Periodic Survey: June 1998

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Description of the Study

THE South East Queensland Gay Community Periodic Survey is a cross-sectional survey of gay and homosexually active men recruited through a range of sites in Brisbane, the Gold Coast and the Sunshine Coast. The project was funded by Queensland Health. The Periodic Survey provides a snapshot of sexual and HIV-related practices among gay and homosexually active men. These data can be compared with those obtained from other studies such as the Brisbane Region and Sexual Health (BRASH) study (Prestage *et al.*, 1996a), Male Call 96 (Crawford *et al.*, 1998) and the Sydney Gay Community Periodic Survey (Prestage *et al.*, 1996b; Van de Ven *et al.*, 1997).

The major aim of the South East Queensland Periodic Survey is to provide data on levels of safe and unsafe sexual practice in a broad cross-sectional sample of gay and homosexually active men. To this end, men were recruited from a number of gay-community venues and sexual health clinics.

This study, the initial South East Queensland Periodic Survey, was conducted in June 1998. If similar surveys are conducted in June each year and employ the same recruitment strategies, it will be possible to examine changes in practice over time, albeit from cross-sectional samples.

Eight sites were chosen for the study: one sexual health clinic, five gay-community venues in Brisbane and one each in the Gold Coast and Sunshine Coast respectively. Recruitment in these venues was conducted by trained recruiters over a one-week period. Men were also recruited at the Pride Fair Day.

The questionnaire (appended to this report) is a short, self-administered instrument that typically takes five to 10 minutes to complete. Questions focus on anal intercourse and oral sex, the use of condoms, the nature of sexual relationships, HIV testing practice and serostatus, aspects of social attachment to gay community, recreational drug use, and a range of demographic items including sexual identity, age, education, occupation and ethnicity. Questions were designed to maximise comparability with Sydney Periodic Surveys and other studies.

This report describes the data from the initial South East Queensland Gay Community Periodic Survey (June 1998). More detailed analysis of the data will continue and will be disseminated as it is completed. As with any data analysis, further examination may necessitate minor reinterpretation of the findings.

Sample and Recruitment

Respondents were recruited through eight sites in the Brisbane, Gold Coast and Sunshine Coast areas and at a large public gay-community event (Pride Fair Day). Just under two fifths of the men were recruited at the Pride Fair Day. At the Gold Coast and Sunshine Coast venues, 120 and 96 men respectively were recruited.

TABLE 1 SOURCE OF RECRUITMENT

Sexual health centre	116 (8.7%)
Gay venues	712 (53.1%)
Pride Fair Day	513 (38.3%)
TOTAL	1341 (100%)

In all, 1607 men were asked to complete a questionnaire and 1341 did so. This represents a very acceptable response rate of 83.4%.

In many ways this sample is similar to earlier gay-community-based samples, including that recruited for the Sydney Gay Community Periodic Survey in February 1998. However, one key difference is that a smaller proportion of men was recruited at the Fair Day in Brisbane. This is mainly attributable to the broader reach of the current survey beyond the Brisbane metropolitan area. It could also be attributed to the smaller nature of the Fair Day in Brisbane and the time of year it is held.

Previous studies such as BRASH and SMASH (Prestage *et al.* 1995) have demonstrated that HIV serostatus is an important distinguishing feature among gay men, particularly with regard to sexual behaviour. For this reason some of the data on sexual practices have been reported separately for men who are HIV-positive, those who are HIV-negative, and those who have not been tested or do not know their serostatus.

Also, as indicated in the Sydney Periodic Surveys, men recruited from events such as the Fair Day are different in some respects from those recruited from clinics and gay venues. Nonetheless, most of the data reported here are for the sample as a whole, giving an account of practices drawn from a *broad* cross-sectional sample of South East Queensland gay men.

Seventy nine men indicated that they had participated in the Male Call 96 survey and 124 said they had participated in the BRASH study. In most respects, the men who said they had participated in Male Call 96 and in BRASH were no different from the rest of the sample on key demographic and behavioural variables.

Demographic Profile

In terms of demographic variables, the participants in this study were quite similar to those recruited in other gay-community-based studies.

Geographic distribution

The men came primarily from the Brisbane metropolitan area or from other parts of Queensland. A small percentage of men, who indicated that they participated regularly in South East Queensland gay community, came from outside the State.

TABLE 2 RESIDENTIAL LOCATION

Brisbane Metropolitan Area	957 (71.3%)
Gold Coast	114 (8.5%)
Sunshine Coast	108 (8.1%)
Other Queensland	56 (4.2%)
Elsewhere	106 (7.9%)
TOTAL	1341 (100%)

Age

Respondents ranged between 16 and 72 years of age, with a median of 33. Age range and distribution were similar to those observed in previous studies (eg Prestage *et al*, 1996b).

TABLE 3 AGE

Under 25	224 (17.2%)
25-29	252 (19.3%)
30-39	477 (36.5%)
40-49	226 (17.3%)
50 and over	127 (9.7%)
TOTAL¹	1306 (100%)

¹Data were missing on this item for 35 men.

Ethnicity

This was predominantly an 'Anglo-Australian' sample.

TABLE 4 ETHNICITY	
Anglo-Australian	973 (84.1%)
European	87 (7.5%)
Aboriginal/Torres Strait Islander	20 (1.7%)
Other	77 (6.7%)
TOTAL¹	1157 (100%)

¹Data were missing on this item for 184 men.

Employment and occupation

The proportion of men who were not in the work force was fairly high compared with the general population. This was particularly true of HIV-positive men, probably due to the relatively high percentage who were in receipt of some form of social security payment.

TABLE 5 EMPLOYMENT STATUS	
Full-time	798 (61.9%)
Part-time	192 (14.9%)
Unemployed/Other	300 (23.3%)
TOTAL¹	1290 (100%)

¹Data were missing on this item for 51 men.

As in most studies of male homosexual populations, there was a substantial overrepresentation of professionals/managers and underrepresentation of manual workers (Connell *et al*, 1991; Hood *et al*, 1994).

TABLE 6 OCCUPATION	
PROFESSIONAL/MANAGERIAL	
Professional/ Managerial	357 (33.6%)
Paraprofessional	153 (14.4%)
WHITE COLLAR	
Clerical/ Sales	347 (32.6%)
BLUE COLLAR	
Trades	133 (12.5%)
Plant operator/Labourer	72 (6.7%)
TOTAL¹	1062 (100%)

¹Includes all men who specified their occupation, whether currently employed or not.

Education

As in other gay-community-based studies, this sample was relatively well educated; almost three fifths of the men had received some postsecondary education and almost two fifths had some university education.

TABLE 7 EDUCATION	
Up to 3 years of high school	232 (17.9%)
Up to Year 12/Senior Certificate	299 (23.1%)
Trade certificate or diploma	267 (20.6%)
University	498 (38.4%)
TOTAL¹	1296 (100%)

¹Data were missing on this item for 45 men.

Sexual relationships with women

Few men had had sex with a woman in the previous six months.

TABLE 8 SEX WITH WOMEN IN PREVIOUS SIX MONTHS	
No female partners	1128 (87.9%)
One female partner	90 (7.0%)
More than one female partner	66 (5.1%)
TOTAL¹	1284 (100%)

¹Data were missing on this item for 57 men.

Sexual relationships with men

Well over half the men in the sample were currently in a regular sexual relationship with a man. Slightly less than one in three study participants was monogamous (ie had sex only with a regular partner). Over half the men had sex with casual partners and one in six men was 'currently' not having sex with men at all.

TABLE 9 RELATIONSHIPS WITH MEN	
None	215 (16.4%)
Casual only	278 (21.2%)
Regular plus casual	454 (34.7%)
Regular only (monogamous)	363 (27.7%)
TOTAL¹	1310 (100%)

¹Data were missing on this item for 31 men.

Among those men who were in a regular relationship, almost three in five of the relationships had lasted for more than a year.

TABLE 10 LENGTH OF RELATIONSHIPS WITH MEN

Less than one year	283 (40.1%)
At least one year	422 (59.9%)
TOTAL¹	705 (100%)

¹Includes only those men who 'currently' had a regular partner and answered Question 8.

Association with Gay Community

In several respects, this was a highly gay-identified and gay-community-attached sample.

Sexual identity and sexual relations

The men in the sample were mostly homosexually identified, although somewhat less so than their counterparts in similar surveys in Sydney (Prestage et al, 1996b) or Melbourne (Van de Ven et al, 1998). Homosexual identification included 'gay/homosexual' as well as eight men who thought of themselves as 'queer'. Nonhomosexual identification included 'bisexual' and 'heterosexual'.

TABLE 11 SEXUAL IDENTITY	
Homosexually identified	1115 (84.3%)
Not homosexually identified	207 (15.7%)
TOTAL¹	1322 (100%)

¹Data were missing on this item for 19 men.

Furthermore, few men said they enjoyed having sex mostly with women or with men and women equally. Typically, the men enjoyed having sex with men only or mostly men.

TABLE 12 SEXUAL PREFERENCE	
Men only	1006 (75.5%)
Mostly men	219 (16.4%)
Other ¹	107 (8.1%)
TOTAL²	1332 (100%)

¹Includes 'Men and women equally', 'Mostly women', 'Women only' and 'No-one'.

²Data were missing on this item for 9 men.

Gay community involvement

The men in this sample were quite socially involved with gay men. Over half of the men in the sample said most or all of their friends were gay men.

TABLE 13 GAY FRIENDS	
None	24 (1.8%)
Some or a few	619 (46.3%)
Most or all	698 (51.9%)
TOTAL¹	1337 (100%)

¹Data were missing on this item for 4 men.

Correspondingly, almost half of the men said they spent a lot of their free time with gay men.

TABLE 14. PROPORTION OF FREE TIME SPENT WITH GAY MEN	
None	16 (1.2%)
A little	211 (15.8%)
Some	506 (37.9%)
A lot	603 (45.1%)
TOTAL¹	1336 (100%)

¹Data were missing on this item for 5 men.

HIV Testing

Most of the men had already been tested for antibodies to HIV. Almost one man in seven had not been tested or had failed to obtain the test results, and a further 30 men did not respond to this question. Less than 10% of the men were HIV-positive.

TABLE 15 HIV TEST RESULTS	
Not tested/No results	177 (13.5%)
HIV-negative	1021 (77.9%)
HIV-positive	113 (8.6%)
TOTAL¹	1311 (100%)

¹Data were missing on this item for 30 men.

The following table shows HIV-test results from two earlier studies: BRASH, conducted in 1995-96 (Prestage *et al.* 1996a) and Male Call 96 (Crawford *et al.* 1998). The Male Call 96 data are drawn from the responses of 249 gay-community-attached men who lived in the Brisbane, Gold Coast or Sunshine Coast regions. (Seventy men, who lived in these areas but who were classified as non-gay-community-attached, were excluded. Hence the cross-study comparisons presented here are of like with like.)

In both BRASH and the current survey, a greater proportion of the men had been tested for HIV than in the Male Call 96 study. Proportionately, there were more HIV-positive men in the BRASH sample and fewer HIV-positive men in the Male Call 96 sample.

TABLE 16 HIV TEST RESULTS: OTHER STUDIES		
	BRASH	MALE CALL 96
Not tested/No results	39 (13.1%)	44 (17.7%)
HIV-negative	223 (74.8%)	189 (75.9%)
HIV-positive	36 (12.1%)	16 (6.4%)
TOTAL	298 (100%)	249 (100%)

Time since most recent HIV-antibody test

Among those men who had had tests for HIV, the majority had done so within the previous year. Relatively few men reported infrequent testing.

TABLE 17 TIME SINCE MOST RECENT HIV TEST	
Less than 6 months ago	599 (53.1%)
7-12 months ago	177 (15.7%)
1-2 years ago	175 (15.5%)
Over 2 years ago	178 (15.8%)
TOTAL	1129 (100%)

Note: This table includes only those men who had been tested for HIV.

The pattern of time since most recent test was highly similar to that recorded in the BRASH study. In Male Call 96, however, more men reported that they had been tested for HIV recently than in the current study.

TABLE 18 TIME SINCE MOST RECENT HIV TEST: OTHER STUDIES		
	BRASH	MALE CALL 96
Less than 6 months ago	145 (53.9%)	146 (69.9%)
7-12 months ago	50 (18.6%)	29 (13.9%)
1-2 years ago	34 (12.6%)	11 (5.3%)
Over 2 years ago	40 (14.9%)	23 (11.0%)
TOTAL	269 (100%)	209 (100%)

Combination therapies

Of the men who indicated that they were HIV-positive, almost seven in ten were taking combination therapy.

TABLE 19 USE OF COMBINATION ANTIRETROVIRAL THERAPIES	
Yes	77 (68.8%)
No	35 (31.3%)
TOTAL¹	112 (100%)

¹Data were missing on this item for 1 man.

Regular partner's HIV-status

Participants were asked about the serostatus of their current regular partners. As the question referred to their current partner, fewer men responded to this item than indicated sex with a regular partner during the previous six months. About two thirds had an HIV-negative regular partner, while one in 12 had an HIV-positive regular partner and one in four of the men had a regular partner whose serostatus they did not know.

TABLE 20 HIV STATUS OF REGULAR PARTNERS	
HIV-positive	61 (8.3%)
HIV-negative	486 (66.3%)
HIV status unknown	186 (25.4%)
TOTAL	733 (100%)

Note: Includes only those men who 'currently' had a regular partner.

Half the HIV-positive men had an HIV-negative regular partner and less than one third had an HIV-positive regular partner. HIV-negative men tended to have HIV-negative regular partners. Men who did not know their own serostatus tended not to know the serostatus of their regular partners.

TABLE 21 MATCH OF HIV STATUS IN REGULAR RELATIONSHIPS			
SEROSTATUS OF REGULAR PARTNER	HIV-POSITIVE	HIV-NEGATIVE	UNKNOWN
HIV-positive	20 (30.8%)	34 (5.9%)	5 (6.0%)
HIV-negative	33 (50.8%)	426 (74.1%)	22 (26.2%)
HIV status unknown	12 (18.5%)	190 (20.0%)	57 (67.9%)
TOTAL¹ (N= 724)	65 (100%)	575 (100%)	84 (100%)

¹Includes only those men who 'currently' had a regular partner.

Sexual Practice and 'Safe Sex'

Sexual behaviour between men

Participants were only asked to report on a limited range of sexual practices (separately for regular and casual partners): anal intercourse with and without ejaculation, and oral intercourse with ejaculation. These practices were selected for their possible association with HIV transmission. Based on the responses to the sexual behaviour items and the sort of sexual relationships with men indicated by the participants, approximately six in 10 of the men were classified as having had sex with a regular male partner and approximately seven in 10 of the men were classified as having had sex with a casual male partner 'in the previous six months'.

TABLE 22 REPORTED SEX WITH MALE PARTNERS IN PREVIOUS SIX MONTHS

Any sexual contact with <i>regular</i> partners	826 (61.6%)
Any sexual contact with <i>casual</i> partners	962 (71.7%)
TOTAL	1341

Note: These categories are not mutually exclusive.

Men recruited at the Pride Fair Day were more likely to have had regular partners, and less likely to have had casual partners, than their counterparts recruited at venues or clinics.

TABLE 23 REPORTED SEX WITH MALE PARTNERS IN PREVIOUS SIX MONTHS BY RECRUITMENT SITE

	PRIDE FAIR DAY	VENUES/CLINICS
Any sexual contact with <i>regular</i> partners	360 (70.2%)	466 (56.3%)
Any sexual contact with <i>casual</i> partners	338 (65.9%)	624 (75.4%)
TOTAL	513	828

Note: These categories are not mutually exclusive.

The majority of the men had engaged in sex with between 1 and 10 partners 'in the previous six months', although more than a quarter of the men had more than 10 partners.

TABLE 24 NUMBER OF MALE PARTNERS IN PREVIOUS SIX MONTHS

None	97 (7.3%)
One	282 (21.2%)
2-10	610 (45.9%)
11-50	268 (20.1%)
More than 50	74 (5.6%)
TOTAL¹	1331 (100%)

¹Data were missing on this item for 10 men.

The frequencies for number of male partners 'in the previous six months' were fairly similar to those pertaining to South East Queensland men who participated in previous studies.

TABLE 25 NUMBER OF MALE PARTNERS IN PREVIOUS SIX MONTHS: OTHER STUDIES

	BRASH	MALE CALL 96
None	9 (3.0%)	9 (3.6%)
One	42 (14.1%)	76 (30.5%)
2-10	146 (49.0%)	107 (43.0%)
11-50	71 (23.8%)	47 (18.9%)
More than 50	30 (10.1%)	10 (4.0%)
TOTAL	406 (100%)	249 (100%)

Comparison of sexual practices between regular and casual partners

Not all participants engaged in oral intercourse with ejaculation with their regular male partners, but those who did were equally likely to do so in the insertive as in the receptive role. Almost two thirds of those with regular male partners engaged in oral intercourse with ejaculation with their partners.

Most participants engaged in anal intercourse with their regular male partners. About three quarters of those with regular partners engaged in insertive anal intercourse; slightly fewer engaged in receptive anal intercourse.

TABLE 26 SEXUAL BEHAVIOUR WITH REGULAR MALE PARTNERS

SEX PRACTICES	TOTAL SAMPLE <i>N</i> = 1341	THOSE WITH REGULAR PARTNERS <i>n</i> = 826
Any oral intercourse with ejaculation	523 (39.0%)	523 (63.3%)
Insertive fellatio with ejaculation	417 (31.1%)	417 (51.9%)
Receptive fellatio with ejaculation	427 (31.8%)	427 (53.5%)
Any anal intercourse	725 (54.1%)	725 (87.8%)
Insertive anal intercourse	628 (46.8%)	628 (76.0%)
Receptive anal intercourse	592 (44.1%)	592 (71.7%)

Note: These items are not mutually exclusive. The percentages do not sum to 100% as some men engaged in more than one of these practices and some in none of these practices.

Fewer respondents engaged in either oral intercourse with ejaculation or anal intercourse with casual male partners than with regular male partners. Almost half of the men with casual partners engaged in oral intercourse with ejaculation, more commonly in the insertive role. Almost three quarters of those who had sex with casual male partners engaged in anal intercourse with those partners, again more usually in the insertive role.

TABLE 27 SEXUAL BEHAVIOUR WITH CASUAL MALE PARTNERS

SEX PRACTICES	TOTAL SAMPLE <i>N</i> = 1341	THOSE WITH CASUAL PARTNERS <i>n</i> = 962
Any oral intercourse with ejaculation	424 (31.6%)	424 (44.1%)
Insertive fellatio with ejaculation	351 (26.2%)	351 (40.0%)
Receptive fellatio with ejaculation	274 (20.4%)	274 (31.0%)
Any anal intercourse	673 (50.2%)	673 (70.0%)
Insertive anal intercourse	597 (44.5%)	597 (62.1%)
Receptive anal intercourse	486 (36.2%)	486 (50.5%)

Note: These items are not mutually exclusive.

Sex with regular male partners

Condom Use

Based on the entire sample, a little less than one third of the men who participated in the survey engaged in any unprotected anal intercourse with regular male partners 'in the previous six months'.

TABLE 28 CONDOM USE WITH REGULAR PARTNERS

	TOTAL SAMPLE	THOSE WITH REGULAR PARTNERS
No regular partner	515 (38.4%)	—
No anal intercourse	101 (7.5%)	101 (12.2%)
Always uses condom	314 (23.4%)	314 (38.0%)
Sometimes does not use condom ¹	411 (30.6%)	411 (49.8%)
BASE	1341 (100%)	826 (100%)

¹Of the 411 men who engaged in unprotected anal intercourse with regular partners 'in the previous six months', 104 (7.8% of the total sample) practised only withdrawal prior to ejaculation, 145 (10.8%) practised only ejaculation inside, and 162 (12.1%) engaged in both withdrawal and ejaculation inside.

Patterns of anal intercourse and condom use in the current sample were quite similar to previous South East Queensland findings. An exception was that men who participated in the BRASH study were less likely to have had regular partners.

TABLE 29 CONDOM USE WITH REGULAR PARTNERS: OTHER STUDIES

	BRASH	MALE CALL 96
No regular partner	148 (49.5%)	86 (34.5%)
No anal intercourse	24 (8.0%)	21 (8.4%)
Always uses condom	48 (16.1%)	52 (20.9%)
Sometimes does not use condom	79 (26.4%)	90 (36.1%)
TOTAL	299 (100%)	249 (100%)

Note: These figures should be compared with those in the *Total Sample* column of Table 28.

There were differences between HIV-negative and HIV-positive men in their condom use with regular partners. HIV-negative men were more likely to have any unprotected anal intercourse. Respondents whose serostatus was unknown were less likely to engage in anal intercourse with their regular male partners but where they did they were quite likely to have unprotected anal intercourse.

TABLE 30 SEROSTATUS AND CONDOM USE AMONG REGULAR PARTNERS

	HIV-POSITIVE	HIV-NEGATIVE	UNKNOWN SEROSTATUS
No Anal	6 (9.1%)	68 (10.6%)	25 (25.5%)
Always uses condom	33 (50.0%)	249 (38.7%)	26 (26.5%)
Sometimes does not use condom	27 (40.9%)	321 (50.8%)	47 (48.0%)
TOTAL¹	66 (100%)	644 (100%)	98 (100%)

¹Includes only those men who had a regular partner 'in the previous six months'.

p < .001

These findings should be interpreted in light of the serostatus of the participants' regular partners. In the following table, the serostatus of each of the participants has been compared with that of his regular partner. For each of the nine serostatus combinations, sexual practice has been divided into 'no unprotected anal intercourse' versus 'some unprotected anal intercourse'. Although the numbers are small, HIV-positive men were equally likely to engage in unprotected anal intercourse with regular partners who were also HIV-positive as they were with regular partners who were HIV-negative or of unknown serostatus. Most of the unprotected anal intercourse with regular partners involving participants who were HIV-negative occurred in relationships where both partners were known to be HIV-negative or where the other partner's status was unknown. Again, the numbers are small, but participants of unknown serostatus were roughly as likely to have unprotected anal intercourse with HIV-negative partners as they were with HIV-positive or status-unknown partners.

TABLE 31 CONDOM USE AND MATCH OF HIV STATUS IN REGULAR RELATIONSHIPS

REGULAR PARTNER'S SEROSTATUS	ANAL INTERCOURSE	PARTICIPANT'S SEROSTATUS		
		HIV-POSITIVE	HIV-NEGATIVE	UNKNOWN
HIV-positive	No UAI	6 (42.9%)	18 (69.2%)	4 (50.0%)
	Some UAI	8 (57.1%)	8 (30.8%)	4 (50.0%)
HIV-negative	No UAI	10 (38.5%)	117 (34.6%)	35 (44.3%)
	Some UAI	16 (61.5%)	221 (65.4%)	44 (55.7%)
HIV-unknown	No UAI	1 (50.0%)	3 (18.8%)	14 (41.2%)
	Some UAI	1 (50.0%)	13 (81.2%)	20 (58.8%)
TOTAL¹		42	380	121

Note: UAI = unprotected anal intercourse.

¹Includes only men who had anal intercourse with their 'current' regular partner 'in the previous six months'.

Whereas much of the unprotected anal intercourse was between seroconcordant (positive-positive or negative-negative) couples, 106 men in the above table had unprotected anal intercourse in a relationship where seroconcordance was in doubt.

Agreements

Most participants with regular male partners had agreements with their partners about sex *within* the relationship.

TABLE 32 AGREEMENTS WITH REGULAR MALE PARTNERS ABOUT SEX <i>WITHIN</i> RELATIONSHIP	
No spoken agreement about anal intercourse	178 (24.9%)
No anal intercourse between regular partners is permitted	46 (6.4%)
Anal intercourse permitted only with condom	243 (34.0%)
Anal intercourse without condom is permitted	247 (34.6%)
TOTAL¹	714 (100%)

¹Based on the responses of men who 'currently' had a regular partner.

The types of agreements that the men had were largely similar to those reported from previous studies of South East Queensland gay men. An exception was that participants in the current study were slightly less likely to have struck an agreement to have unprotected anal intercourse with their regular partners.

TABLE 33 AGREEMENTS WITH REGULAR MALE PARTNERS ABOUT SEX <i>WITHIN</i> RELATIONSHIP: OTHER STUDIES		
	BRASH	MALE CALL 96
No spoken agreement	29 (19.2%)	32 (19.7%)
No anal intercourse	10 (6.6%)	14 (8.6%)
Anal intercourse only with condom	52 (34.4%)	55 (33.7%)
Anal intercourse without condom	60 (39.7%)	62 (38.0%)
TOTAL	151 (100%)	163 (100%)

Most participants had made an agreement with their regular partner about sexual interactions *outside* the relationship. Where men did make such an agreement, very few permitted unprotected anal intercourse with casual partners.

TABLE 34 AGREEMENTS WITH REGULAR MALE PARTNERS ABOUT SEX <i>OUTSIDE</i> RELATIONSHIP	
No spoken agreement about anal intercourse	214 (29.9%)
No sexual contact with casual partners is permitted	213 (29.8%)
No anal intercourse with casual partners is permitted	56 (7.8%)
Anal intercourse permitted only with condom	217 (30.3%)
Anal intercourse without condom is permitted	15 (2.1%)
TOTAL¹	715 (100%)

¹Based on the responses of men who currently had a regular partner.

The types of agreements that the men had were broadly in line with those reported from previous Brisbane studies. However, the participants in the current study and in the Male Call 96 survey were more likely to have sanctioned protected anal intercourse with casual partners, and less likely to have agreed to no sex with casual partners, than their BRASH counterparts

TABLE 35 AGREEMENTS WITH REGULAR MALE PARTNERS ABOUT SEX OUTSIDE RELATIONSHIP: OTHER STUDIES

	BRASH	MALE CALL 96
No spoken agreement	38 (29.0%)	44 (27.0%)
No sex with casual partners	52 (39.7%)	56 (34.4%)
No anal intercourse	15 (11.4%)	14 (8.6%)
Anal intercourse only with condom	26 (19.9%)	48 (29.4%)
Anal intercourse without condom	0 (—)	1 (0.6%)
TOTAL	131 (100%)	163 (100%)

Sex with casual male partners

Condom use

Based on the entire sample, 14% of the men who participated in the survey engaged in any unprotected anal intercourse with their casual male partners 'in the previous six months'. A separate analysis revealed that of these 188 men, 85 also had unprotected anal intercourse with regular partners.

TABLE 36 CONDOM USE WITH CASUAL PARTNERS

	TOTAL SAMPLE	THOSE WITH CASUAL PARTNERS
No casual partner	379 (28.3%)	—
No anal intercourse	289 (21.6%)	289 (30.0%)
Always uses condom	485 (36.2%)	485 (50.4%)
Sometimes does not use condom ¹	188 (14.0%)	188 (19.5%)
BASE	1341 (100%)	962 (100%)

¹Of the 188 men who engaged in unprotected anal intercourse with casual partners 'in the previous six months', 78 (5.8% of the total sample) practised only withdrawal prior to ejaculation, 37 (2.8%) practised only ejaculation inside, and 73 (5.4%) engaged in both withdrawal and ejaculation inside.

A comparison of the data in Tables 28 and 36 confirms that more men had unprotected anal intercourse with regular than with casual partners. Furthermore, unprotected anal intercourse *with ejaculation inside* was more common within regular relationships than between casual partners.

Patterns of anal intercourse and condom use in the current sample were somewhat different from earlier South East Queensland findings. Male Call 96 participants were less likely to report no anal intercourse than either their Periodic Survey or BRASH counterparts. BRASH participants were more likely to have had casual partners *per se* and more likely to have had unprotected anal intercourse with casual partners.

TABLE 37 CONDOM USE WITH CASUAL PARTNERS: OTHER STUDIES

	BRASH	MALE CALL 96
No casual partner	49 (16.4%)	80 (32.1%)
No anal intercourse	77 (25.8%)	37 (14.9%)
Always uses condom	116 (38.8%)	92 (36.9%)
Sometimes does not use condom	57 (19.1%)	40 (16.1%)
TOTAL	299 (100%)	249 (100%)

Note: These figures should be compared with those in the *Total Sample* column of Table 36.

HIV-positive men were the most likely to have any unprotected anal intercourse with casual partners. HIV-negative men were most likely only to have protected anal intercourse whereas men of unknown serostatus were the most likely not to have anal intercourse. Some of these differences may be explained by positive-positive sex (Prestage *et al*, 1995).

TABLE 38 SEROSTATUS AND CONDOM USE WITH CASUAL PARTNERS

	HIV-POSITIVE	HIV-NEGATIVE	UNKNOWN
No anal intercourse	18 (20.9%)	219 (29.8%)	47 (37.9%)
Always uses condom	42 (48.8%)	387 (52.7%)	50 (40.3%)
Sometimes does not use condom	26 (30.2%)	129 (17.6%)	27 (21.8%)
TOTAL¹	86 (100%)	1019 (100%)	186 (100%)

¹Includes only those men who had casual partners.

p < .005

Serostatus

Two questions (ie 27 and 28) addressed disclosure of serostatus among casual partners. These questions were included in the questionnaire to obtain a sense of disclosure and sex between casual partners. Many more questions — beyond the scope of the brief questionnaire used here — would need to be asked to fully understand the issue. Furthermore, the inclusion of the two questions was *not* intended to endorse sexual negotiation between casual partners.

Approximately three in five of the participants with casual partners did not disclose their serostatus to any of their casual partners. Relatively few men disclosed to all casual partners.

TABLE 39 PARTICIPANTS' DISCLOSURE OF SEROSTATUS TO CASUAL PARTNERS

Told none	568 (60.5%)
Told some	198 (21.1%)
Told all	173 (18.4%)
TOTAL	939 (100%)

Likewise, approximately three in five of the participants with casual partners were not told the serostatus of their casual partners. Relatively few men were routinely disclosed to by casual partners.

TABLE 40 CASUAL PARTNERS' DISCLOSURE OF SEROSTATUS TO PARTICIPANTS

Told by none	586 (62.1%)
Told by some	255 (27.1%)
Told by all	102 (10.8%)
TOTAL	943 (100%)

Drug Use

Alcohol

About a quarter of the men (based on self-assessment) never got drunk 'in the previous six months'. One third got drunk once or twice only. About one in six men got drunk on at least a weekly basis.

TABLE 41 FREQUENCY OF HAVING GOT DRUNK IN PREVIOUS SIX MONTHS

Never	352 (26.8%)
Once or twice only	429 (32.7%)
Less than once a week	314 (23.9%)
More than once a week	217 (16.6%)
TOTAL¹	1312 (100%)

¹Data were missing for 29 men.

Recreational drugs

The most commonly used recreational drugs were marijuana, amyl/poppers, speed and ecstasy. Relatively few men used tranquillisers, LSD, cocaine or heroin. In all, 831 men used any of the drugs listed in Question 43.

TABLE 42 DRUG USE IN THE PREVIOUS SIX MONTHS

Amyl/Poppers	467 (34.8%)
Marijuana	618 (46.1%)
Tranquillisers	134 (10.0%)
Ecstasy	262 (19.5%)
Speed	325 (24.2%)
LSD	125 (9.3%)
Cocaine	81 (6.0%)
Heroin	42 (3.1%)
ANY OF THE ABOVE	831 (62.0%)

Note: Percentages are based on the total sample of 1341 men, although not all men responded to these items. Items are not mutually exclusive.

Altogether, 116 men (8.7% of the sample) had injected drugs 'in the previous six months', most commonly speed. Only 10 men reported having injected steroids.

TABLE 43 INJECTING DRUG USE IN THE PREVIOUS SIX MONTHS

Speed	88 (6.6%)
Cocaine	16 (1.2%)
Heroin	39 (2.9%)
Steroids	10 (0.7%)
Any other drug	28 (2.1%)
ANY OF THE ABOVE	116 (8.7%)

Note: Percentages are based on the total sample of 1341 men, although not all men responded to these items. Items are not mutually exclusive.

Of the men who had injected drugs, approximately two fifths had done so only once or twice 'in the previous six months'. About a quarter of the injecting drug users injected on at least a weekly basis.

TABLE 44 FREQUENCY OF INJECTION IN PREVIOUS SIX MONTHS

Once or twice only	46 (43.0%)
Less than once a week	34 (31.8%)
More than once a week	27 (25.2%)
TOTAL¹	107 (100%)

¹Data were inconsistent or missing for 9 men.

Of the 116 injecting drug users, only seven had ever shared a needle/syringe 'in the previous six months'. Twenty one men had shared other injecting equipment 'in the previous six months'.

Discussion

The findings from the initial South East Queensland Gay Community Periodic Survey provide a snapshot of the social and sexual lives of gay men in Brisbane, the Gold Coast and the Sunshine Coast. In the main, the findings are quite similar to (and thereby corroborate) the evidence from the earlier BRASH (Prestage *et al.*, 1996a) and Male Call 96 (Crawford *et al.*, 1998) studies. Similarly, many of the results parallel findings from the Sydney Gay Community Periodic Surveys (Prestage *et al.*, 1996b; Van de Ven *et al.*, 1997) and Melbourne Gay Community Periodic Survey (Van de Ven *et al.*, 1998), indicating that in some respects the gay cultures of the three large cities in eastern Australia are akin.

The 1341 participants were recruited at seven gay venues, at a sexual-health centre, and at the Pride Fair Day. Most of these men lived in the Brisbane Metropolitan or the Gold and Sunshine Coast areas. They were predominantly of 'Anglo-Australian' background, in professional/managerial or white-collar occupations, and well educated.

Most of the participants identified as gay or homosexual. Correspondingly, most preferred to have sex with men only, reflected in the finding that almost 88% had not had sex with any women 'in the previous six months'. As a whole, the sample was quite involved socially in gay community with high levels of gay friendships and with much free time spent with gay men.

Approximately 13% of the men had not been tested for HIV, a similar proportion to their counterparts in BRASH but lower than in Male Call 96. The majority of those who had been tested for HIV had done so 'within the past year'. Overall, 8.6% of the men were HIV-positive; a smaller percentage than in BRASH but a greater percentage than among their Male Call 96 counterparts.

Among the HIV-positive participants, use of combination antiretroviral therapies was the norm—68.8% of the HIV-positive men were taking a combination therapy at the time of the survey. Nonetheless, uptake of combination therapies is less than recorded elsewhere, for example in the recent Melbourne Gay Community Periodic Survey (82.6%—Van de Ven *et al.*, 1998).

Most men reported 'current' sexual contact with at least one other man: about a third of the men only had a regular partner; another third had a regular partner and either or both partners also had casual partners; and approximately one fifth of the men only had casual partners. In the six months prior to the survey, approximately 60% of the men had sex with regular partners and approximately 70% of the men had sex with casual partners.

Of the *total*/sample and 'in the previous six months', 411 men (30.6%) had any unprotected anal intercourse with a regular partner and 188 men (14.0%) had any unprotected anal intercourse with a casual partner. Some of these men (85 all told) had unprotected anal intercourse with both regular and casual partners. The remainder of the men in the overall sample—far and away the majority—indicated no unprotected anal intercourse with either regular or casual partners.

Not unexpectedly, more men had unprotected anal intercourse with regular than with casual partners. As well, unprotected anal intercourse that involved ejaculation inside was much more likely to occur between regular than between casual partners.

Most of the men with regular partners had agreements about sex within and outside of their relationship. Whereas approximately one third of these agreements permitted unprotected anal intercourse within the relationship, unprotected anal intercourse with casual partners was rarely allowed.

The numbers were small, but HIV-positive men tended to be as likely to engage in unprotected anal intercourse with HIV-positive regular partners as they were with HIV-negative or 'status unknown' regular partners. HIV-negative men were more likely to engage in unprotected anal intercourse with HIV-negative or 'status unknown' regular partners than with HIV-positive regular partners. Much of the unprotected anal intercourse within regular relationships occurred between seroconcordant (positive-positive or negative-negative) couples. Nonetheless, of those who had anal intercourse with their 'current' regular partner, 106 men had unprotected anal intercourse in a relationship that was not understood to be seroconcordant.

The men did not routinely disclose their serostatus to casual partners. Similarly, they most commonly did not know the serostatus of their casual partners. About 60% of men never disclosed their serostatus to casual partners and about 60% of men were never disclosed to by casual partners.

About three-quarters of the men got drunk 'in the previous six months'. About one in six men got drunk on at least a weekly basis.

Almost two-thirds of the men used recreational drugs, most commonly marijuana, amyl/poppers, speed and ecstasy. Altogether, 116 men (8.7% of the sample) had injected drugs 'in the previous six months', speed being the most likely drug to be injected. A small number of men ($n = 27$) injected on at least a weekly basis.

In conclusion, the initial South East Queensland Gay Community Periodic Survey was conducted very successfully. Recruitment at diverse sites attracted a large sample of gay men from the Brisbane—Gold Coast—Sunshine Coast region. The resulting data are robust and comparisons with data from the BRASH and Male Call 96 studies are suggestive of sound reliability. The findings provide an indispensable baseline against which future cross-sectional data—collected at yearly intervals—can be compared.

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National Centre In HIV Social Research
MACQUARIE UNIVERSITY

National Centre In HIV Epidemiology & Clinical Research
THE UNIVERSITY OF NEW SOUTH WALES

QuAC QPP QUIVAA

SE Qld Gay Community Periodic Survey

This survey is for men who have had sex with another man
in the past five years.

Your responses are very important to us.

PLEASE DO NOT COMPLETE IF YOU HAVE
ALREADY DONE SO THIS WEEK.

For each question, please TICK one box only.

- How many of your friends are gay or homosexual men?
None ☐ A few ☐ Some ☐ Most ☐ All ☐
- How much of your free time is spent with gay or homosexual men?
None ☐ A little ☐ Some ☐ A lot ☐
- Do you think of yourself as:
Gay/homosexual ☐
Bisexual ☐
Heterosexual ☐
Other (please specify) _____
- Do you enjoy having sex with men, women or both?
Men and women equally ☐
Mostly men ☐
Men only ☐
Mostly women ☐
Women only ☐
No one ☐
- How many different men have you had sex with in the past six months?
None ☐ One ☐
2-5 men ☐ 6-10 men ☐
11-50 men ☐ More than 50 men ☐
- How many different women have you had sex with in the past six months?
None ☐
One ☐ 2-5 women ☐
6-10 women ☐ More than 10 women ☐

In this survey we distinguish between **REGULAR** (boyfriend/lover) and **CASUAL** partners.

- How would you describe your sexual relationships with men at present?
No sex with men at present ☐
Monogamous relationship (one man only) ☐
Regular relationship plus . . .
both my partner and I have casual sex with other men ☐
I have casual sex with other men ☐
my partner has casual sex with other men ☐
Regular relationships with several men ☐
All my sex with men is casual only ☐
Other (please specify) _____

- If you are in a **regular** relationship with a man, for how long has it been?
Less than 6 months ☐
6-11 months ☐
1-2 years ☐
More than 2 years ☐
Not in a regular relationship with a man ☐

Regular male partners—last 6 months

- Have you had sex with regular male partner/s in the last six months? Yes ☐ No ☐ Go directly to Q. 18

In the past **SIX MONTHS** which of the following have you done with your **REGULAR** male partner/s?

- Oral sex:** I sucked his cock and he came in my mouth
Never ☐ Occasionally ☐ Often ☐
- Oral sex:** He sucked my cock and I came in his mouth
Never ☐ Occasionally ☐ Often ☐

Anal sex

- I fucked him **with a condom**
Never ☐ Occasionally ☐ Often ☐
- He fucked me **with a condom**
Never ☐ Occasionally ☐ Often ☐
- I fucked him **without a condom** but pulled out before I came
Never ☐ Occasionally ☐ Often ☐

- He fucked me **without a condom** but pulled out before he came
Never ☐ Occasionally ☐ Often ☐
- I fucked him **without a condom** and came inside
Never ☐ Occasionally ☐ Often ☐
- He fucked me **without a condom** and came inside
Never ☐ Occasionally ☐ Often ☐

Casual male partners—last 6 months

- Have you had any sex with any casual male partner/s in the last six months? Yes ☐ No ☐ Go directly to Q. 29

In the past **SIX MONTHS** which of the following have you done with **ANY** of your **CASUAL** male partners?

- Oral sex:** I sucked his cock and he came in my mouth
Never ☐ Occasionally ☐ Often ☐
- Oral sex:** He sucked my cock and I came in his mouth
Never ☐ Occasionally ☐ Often ☐

Anal sex

- I fucked him **with a condom**
Never ☐ Occasionally ☐ Often ☐
- He fucked me **with a condom**
Never ☐ Occasionally ☐ Often ☐
- I fucked him **without a condom** but pulled out before I came
Never ☐ Occasionally ☐ Often ☐
- He fucked me **without a condom** but pulled out before he came
Never ☐ Occasionally ☐ Often ☐
- I fucked him **without a condom** and came inside
Never ☐ Occasionally ☐ Often ☐
- He fucked me **without a condom** and came inside
Never ☐ Occasionally ☐ Often ☐

Continues on other side

27. How many of your *casual* partners in the last 6 months did you tell your HIV status? None ☐ Some ☐ All ☐

28. How many of your *casual* partners in the last 6 months told you their HIV status? None ☐ Some ☐ All ☐

29. Have you ever had an HIV antibody test?
No ☐ Yes ☐

30. When were you last tested for HIV antibodies?
Less than a week ago ☐
1-4 weeks ago ☐
1-6 months ago ☐
7-12 months ago ☐
1-2 years ago ☐
2-4 years ago ☐
More than 4 years ago ☐

31. Based on the results of your HIV antibody tests, what is your HIV status?
No test/Don't know ☐
Negative ☐
Positive ☐
↓
If **positive**, are you on combination antiviral therapy?
No ☐ Yes ☐

IF you are in a regular relationship with a man at present, please complete the next three questions.

32. Do you know the result of your regular partner's HIV antibody test?
Yes—Positive ☐
Yes—Negative ☐
I don't know/He hasn't had a test ☐

33. Do you have a **clear (spoken) agreement** with your regular partner about anal sex (fucking) within your relationship?
No agreement ☐
Agreement: No anal sex at all ☐
Agreement: All anal sex is with a condom ☐
Agreement: Anal sex can be without a condom ☐

34. Do you have a **clear (spoken) agreement** with your regular partner about sex with casual partners?
No agreement ☐
Agreement: No sex at all ☐
Agreement: No anal sex at all ☐
Agreement: All anal sex is with a condom ☐
Agreement: Anal sex can be without a condom ☐

35. How old are you? years

36. What country were you born in? Australia ☐
Other (please specify) _____

37. What is your ethnic background? (eg *Australian Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander, Dutch, Greek, Vietnamese, Lebanese, Chinese*)
Anglo-Australian only ☐
Other (please specify) _____

38. Are you: (tick one only)
Employed full-time ☐
Employed part-time ☐
Unemployed ☐
A student ☐
A pensioner or on social security benefits ☐
Other ☐

39. What is your occupation? (eg *bartender, teacher, welder*)
(please specify) _____

40. Where do you live? Postcode

OR Suburb/Town: _____

41. What is the highest level of education you have had?
Primary school only ☐
Up to 3 years of high school/Year 10 ☐
Up to Year 12/Senior Certificate ☐
Tertiary diploma or trade certificate ☐
University or CAE ☐

42. How often did you get drunk/pissed in the past **six months**?
Never ☐
Once or twice only ☐
Less than once a week ☐
More than once a week ☐

43. Which of these drugs have you **used** in the past **six months**?
Amyl/Poppers No ☐ Yes ☐
Marijuana No ☐ Yes ☐
Tranquillisers No ☐ Yes ☐
Ecstasy No ☐ Yes ☐
Speed No ☐ Yes ☐
LSD No ☐ Yes ☐
Cocaine No ☐ Yes ☐
Heroin No ☐ Yes ☐

44. Which of these drugs have you **injected** in the past **six months**?
Speed No ☐ Yes ☐
Cocaine No ☐ Yes ☐
Heroin No ☐ Yes ☐
Steroids No ☐ Yes ☐
Any other drug No ☐ Yes ☐

45. How often did you inject in the past **six months**?
Never ☐
Once or twice only ☐
Less than once a week ☐
More than once a week ☐

46. In the past six months, did you ever share a needle/syringe with someone else? No ☐ Yes ☐

47. In the past six months, did you ever share any other injecting equipment with someone else?
No ☐ Yes ☐

48. Were you interviewed for the Brisbane Region Men and Sexual Health (BRASH) study? No ☐ Yes ☐

49. Were you interviewed for the Male Call '96 telephone survey?
No ☐ Yes ☐

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME