

HEALTH CHECK

Sydney Women And Sexual Health Survey

The Sydney Women and Sexual Health (SWASH) survey is a collaborative project run by ACON and researchers from the University of New South Wales and now the University of Sydney. The survey seeks to investigate health issues affecting lesbians and other same-sex attracted women connected to the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ) communities in Sydney.

The survey asked questions about the sex you have and your sexual health, your use of drugs and alcohol, and experiences with your doctor - just to name a few - so we can get a better picture of what's happening for us.

It's important to recognise that being a lesbian or same-sex attracted woman is not a health problem, but the experience of homophobia and discrimination can be. As a group, we experience lower health outcomes compared to our heterosexual counterparts but as a community we continue to demonstrate considerable strength and resilience.



2010
KEY HEALTH
FINDINGS



WHO PARTICIPATED?

How the participants thought of themselves

women participated:

964

Lesbian/
dyke/gay/
homosexual
75.3%

Did Not
Answer 1.4%

Bisexual
10.5%

Queer
9.4%

Other
3.4%

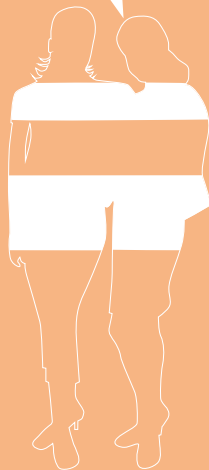
CERVICAL SCREENING

8% of women had their last pap smear screen more than three years ago

16% had never been screened

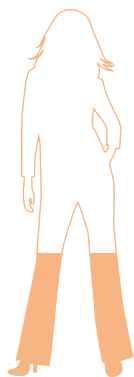
Women who had never had sex with a man, and bisexual women, were more likely to be overdue for screening

More of us are being screened for cervical cancer than ever before

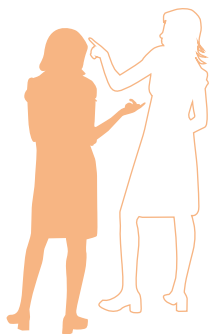


VIOLENCE

34% of women had experienced some kind of anti-LGBTQ behaviour in the past year, down from previous years



28% of women had experienced domestic violence with a female partner in their lifetime; just over half had sought help



ALCOHOL USE

83% of women reported drinking alcohol



56% of drinkers drank alcohol at a level that puts them at risk of an alcohol-related disease or injury over their lifetime



TOBACCO USE

35%

of women were tobacco smokers



This is substantially higher than women in the general community, which is **16%***

Smoking was more common in 16 to 24 year olds

42%

MENTAL HEALTH

8%

of women reported high psychological distress (12% of 16 to 24 year olds)

42%

had received a mental health diagnosis in their lifetime

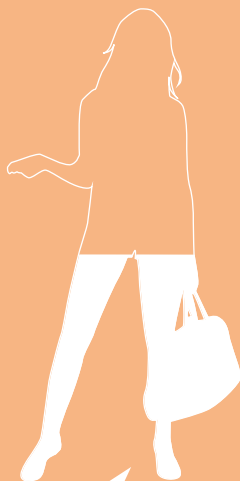
64%

of women had accessed psychological services in their lifetime



DRUG USE

In the past six months **47%** had used one or more illicit drugs



Rates of drug use were much higher than in the general community

GENERAL HEALTH

40%

of women had a Body Mass Index (BMI) that put them in the healthy range...



nearly as many had a BMI that put them in the overweight or obese range

39%

(the distribution of weight is similar to the general community)



Want to be a part of the SWASH story?

Look out for SWASH recruiters at the following locations across the 2012 Mardi Gras period, so you can fill out a 2012 survey



Mardi Gras Fair Day

12 February 2012

Dykes on Bikes: Bike and Tattoo Show

(Hampshire Hotel, Camperdown)

18 February 2012

Women Say Something (Slide Nightclub)

22 February 2012

Velvet Lounge (Bank Hotel)

22 February 2012

A Deck of Kings (The Vanguard Newtown)

24 February 2012

Dangerous Doubles - ACON young women's project
(Serial Space, Chippendale)

24 February 2012

Sydney Femme Guild Picnic (Enmore Park, Enmore)

26 February 2012

Queer Central (Sly Fox Hotel)

29 February 2012

This is only a snapshot of survey findings.

For more information on the SWASH survey

Contact: Dr Julie Mooney-Somers

Email: Julie.mooneysomers@sydney.edu.au

To find out more about ACON's services for lesbians and same sex attracted women contact ACON

Visit: www.acon.org.au

Call: (02) 9206 2000 (Free call: 1800 063 060)

For referrals to lesbian friendly health care practitioners

Contact: ALMA (Australian Lesbian Medical Association)

Visit: www.almas.org.au

?

please only fill out the 2012 survey once

The full report of the findings from SWASH 2006, 2008 and 2010 will be available mid-year

The SWASH survey is the only one of its kind in the world. This research informs ACON's lesbian health work, helps us to create better services and advocate for recognition of the health needs of our community in NSW and Australia.



The University of Sydney



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