

# NEWS FLASH

Sydney Lesbian, Bisexual and Queer Women's Health Findings



The Sydney Women and Sexual Health (SWASH) 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.

# WHO PARTICIPATED?

How the participants thought of themselves

# 69%

Lesbian/dyke/gay/homosexual



Bisexual 16%  
Queer 9%  
Other 6%

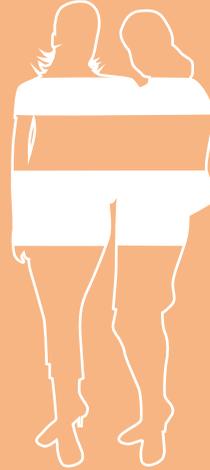
women participated:  
**1100**

# CERVICAL SCREENING

**9%** of women had their last pap smear screen more than three years ago

**20%** had never been screened

Women who had never had sex with a man, were most likely to be overdue for screening



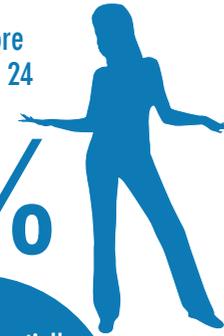
# TOBACCO USE

Smoking was more common in 16 to 24 year olds.

# 48%

This is substantially higher than women in the general community, which is **17%\***

**30%** of all women surveyed were tobacco smokers



# MENTAL HEALTH

**72%** of women had accessed psychological services in their lifetime

**49%** had received a mental health diagnosis in their lifetime

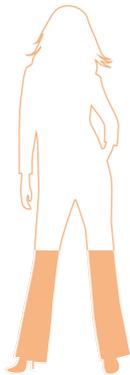
**11%** of women reported high psychological distress (22% of 16 to 24 year olds)



# VIOLENCE

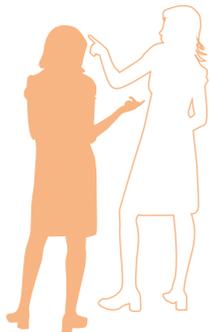
# 29%

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



# 29%

of women had experienced domestic violence with a female partner in their lifetime



# ALCOHOL USE

# 82%

of young women drinkers drank alcohol at a level that put them at risk of alcohol-related disease or injury over their lifetime



# 62%

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



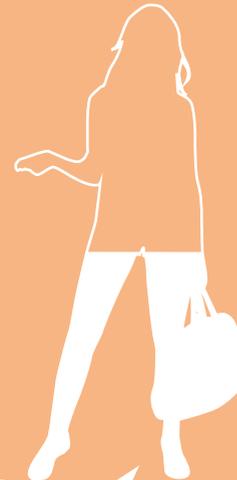
# DRUG USE

In the past six months

# 48%

had used one or more illicit drugs

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



# GENERAL HEALTH



**76%** of women with a regular doctor or health centre were out about their sexuality



**78%** of women were very/satisfied with their regular GP/practice

Women who were out were more likely to be very satisfied with their GP



Want to be  
a part of the  
SWASH story?



Get the full story at:  
[www.acon.org.au/SWASH](http://www.acon.org.au/SWASH)

Be part of the story by  
participating in the next  
SWASH survey at  
Mardi Gras 2016.

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. 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](mailto: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](http://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](http://www.almas.org.au)

\*Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. National Drug Strategy Household Survey detailed report: 2013.  
Canberra: Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2014.

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.



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