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

62%
LESBIAN/DYKE/GAY/HOMOSEXUAL

BISEXUAL 16%
QUEER 15%
OTHER 6%

VIOLENCE

40%
of women had experienced some kind of anti-LGBTQ behaviour in the past year, down from previous years

26%
of women had experienced domestic violence with a female partner in their lifetime

ALCOHOL USE

62%
of young women drinkers drank alcohol at a level that put them at risk of alcohol-related disease or injury over their lifetime

48%
of all women drinkers drank alcohol at a level that puts them at risk of an alcohol-related disease or injury over their lifetime

CERVICAL SCREENING

12%
of women had their last pap smear screen more than three years ago

19%
had never been screened

WOMEN WHO HAD NEVER HAD SEX WITH A MAN WERE ROUGHLY TWICE AS LIKELY TO BE OVERDUE FOR SCREENING

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

81% of women were very/satisfied with their regular GP/practice

65% of women had accessed psychological services in their lifetime

47% had received a mental health diagnosis in their lifetime

14% of women reported high psychological distress (22% of 16 to 24 year olds)

30% of all women surveyed were tobacco smokers

This is substantially higher than women in the general community, which is 13%*

Smoking was more common in 16 to 24 year olds.

42% Smoking was more common in 16 to 24 year olds.

45% had used one or more illicit drugs

Cannabis (29%)
Ecstasy (19%)
Cocaine (16%)

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

TOBACCO USE

MENTAL HEALTH

DRUG USE

GENERAL HEALTH
The SWASH survey is the only one of its kind in the world. This research informs ACON’s lesbian and same-sex attracted women’s 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 the 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


The Sydney Women and Sexual Health (SWASH) survey is a collaborative project run by ACON and researchers from the University of Sydney.