

**WOMEN IN CONTACT WITH THE
SYDNEY LGBTQ COMMUNITIES:**

**REPORT OF THE SWASH LESBIAN, BISEXUAL
AND QUEER WOMEN'S HEALTH SURVEY
2014, 2016, 2018**

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ACON Health is NSW's leading health promotion organisation specialising in HIV prevention, care and support, and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) health.

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1. Executive Summary

The SWASH survey is a comprehensive survey of important health issues relevant to lesbian, bisexual, queer (LBQ) and other non-heterosexual identifying women engaged with Sydney's lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ) communities. The survey covers sexual health and wellbeing, violence, mental health, tobacco use, illicit drug use, alcohol consumption, and cancer, STI and HIV screening.

SWASH has run every two years since 1996, and since 2009 has been run by researchers at the University of Sydney in collaboration with ACON. The survey is regularly revised to reflect the needs of LGBTQ communities and knowledge deficits identified through research literature. Where possible, questions are sourced from established national surveys such as the Australian Health Survey, National Drug Strategy Household Survey, Australian Study of Health and Relationships, and Australian Longitudinal Survey of Women's Health.

Australian epidemiological data on the health and wellbeing of LBQ women remains inconsistent. The inclusion of sexuality indicators in large epidemiological surveys remains patchy, and data is often reported only by sexuality (e.g. LGB people vs heterosexual people) and not by sexuality and gender (e.g. LBQ women, GBQ men, heterosexual women, heterosexual women). In this context, SWASH provides a unique and important source of health-related information on Australian LBQ women and now, non-binary people.

This report presents results from the three most recent iterations of the survey conducted at the Mardi Gras Fair Day and other community events and venues during the Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras seasons in 2014, 2016 and 2018. The report highlights several areas of particular concern (some of which have persisted over time), such as the need for mainstream preventative health interventions that are inclusive of or targeted to this group.

SWASH 2018 Key Findings

Sample: 1272 participants returned valid questionnaires; 49% at the Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras Fair Day, 37% at other LGBTQ social venues and 14% through the online survey.

Demographics: The age range was 16-94 years (median age 34 years). 77% had post-school education, 56% were employed full-time and 18% were students. 16% had dependent children and 13% were planning children in the coming two years. 51% lived in the city or eastern or inner western suburbs of Sydney.

Sexual identity: 55% thought of themselves as lesbian/dyke/homosexual/gay, 17% as bisexual, and 20% as queer; 8% chose the 'other' category. Being in a regular sexual relationship with a woman was the most common relationship status (48%).

Gender identity: 87% of respondents identified as cisgender women, with a further 6% identifying as non-binary and 3% reporting a trans experience.

Community engagement: 54% felt very or mostly connected to LGBTQ communities in their everyday life.

Sexual relations with women: 89% had ever had sex with a woman; 63% had done so in the preceding six months. Among respondents who had had sex with a woman in the preceding six months, 77% reported one sexual partner.

Sexual relations with men: 67% had ever had sex with a man; 21% had done so in the preceding six months. 27% had ever had sex with a man they believed to be gay or bisexual.

Sex work: 8% reported they had ever done sex work.

Cervical cancer screening: 21% had never had a Pap smear, and a further 12% had their last Pap smear more than three years ago. Respondents who had never had sex with a man were three times as likely to be overdue for screening as those who ever had sex with a man.

STI screening: 37% of respondents had never had an STI test, despite the vast majority being sexually active.

Tobacco: 22% were tobacco smokers, a substantially higher proportion than the general community.

Alcohol: 88% reported drinking alcohol; 49% consumed more than the NHMRC guidelines recommend for reducing the lifetime risk of alcohol-related disease or injury. 19% of drinkers drank 5 or more drinks (binge drinking) weekly or more often in the past 6 months.

Illicit drugs: In the preceding six months, 45% had used one or more illicit drug including cannabis (33%), methamphetamines (12%) and cocaine (18%). Rates of drug use were much higher than in the general community. 11% had ever sought help for a drug and/or alcohol issue, most commonly from a counsellor/psychologist.

General health: While most rated their general health as good/very good/excellent, 20% said it was poor or fair. 50% reported a height and weight that placed them outside the “healthy weight” range.

Mental health: 41% reported high or very high psychological distress (62% of 16-24 year olds). Over the past five years, 68% had accessed psychological services, 41% had received a mental health diagnosis. 31% said they had felt life was not worth living in the past 12 months, 14% had self-harmed.

Chronic illness and disability: 24% reported having a disability or chronic illness.

Experiences of abuse and violence: 32% had ever experienced physical or emotional abuse by a female partner. 40% had experienced some kind of anti-LGBTQ behaviour in the past year.

2. Overview

A lack of systematic, nuanced research on the health and wellbeing of Australian lesbian, bisexual and queer (LBQ) women has been a significant barrier to understanding, recognising and addressing their health needs. At worst, LBQ women's health needs have been ignored. At best, they have been considered to be synonymous with general women's health.¹ While sex between women is considered relatively low risk to health, a range of social, psychological and economic factors mean that this minority group has poorer health outcomes than their heterosexual peers. Stigma, family and community rejection and discrimination can impact on health and wellbeing, the delivery of health services, and women's access to services.

SWASH is the longest running periodic survey of LBQ women's health and wellbeing in the world. The first round of the SWASH survey (then called the Sydney Women and Sexual Health survey) was carried out in 1996, making this the twelfth iteration. It was initiated by workers from two ACON projects, Women Partners of Gay and Bisexual Men, and the Gay and Lesbian Injecting Drug Use Project, who were faced with a lack of empirical evidence on which to base their intervention work. Concern had been voiced about the possibility of HIV spreading from gay and bisexual men to the 'general community' so the first SWASH survey focused on sexual and injection-related HIV transmission risks. The survey was addressed to all women in social contact with gay and lesbian communities in Sydney. In the following years, the focus shifted to a general health survey. In 2018, new questions were included on cervical cancer screening, mammography, alcohol and other drug treatment, and self-harm.

A key strength of the SWASH data set is that the same core questions have been asked every two years of women engaging with LGBTQ communities in similar venues and events, at the same time of year. This allows us to track trends in the population of community-engaged LBQ women. We take a conservative approach to changing the survey so as not to undermine our ability to capture trends. In 2018, we changed our approach to asking about survey respondents' gender; this revealed that 13% of survey respondents were not cisgender women. We will continue to work on the survey to meet community expectations around capturing the diversity of ways people describe their experiences, practices or identities, and in some cases, their partners' identities or bodies.

The inclusion of lesbian and bisexual women in the 2010 National Women's Health Policy² and for the first time in 2018, the NSW Women's Strategy³ is a timely recognition of persuasive international and local evidence that some health problems may be more prevalent, risk factors may be different, and interventions may need to be tailored to the needs of this group. SWASH provides a much needed local evidence base to inform best practice in healthcare and prevention for chronic diseases, mental health and wellbeing, sexual and reproductive health and ageing.

This report presents results from the 2018 survey with 2014 and 2016 data presented for comparison; the format follows previous survey iterations.⁴⁻⁹ Slight changes in sampling and questions between iterations mean that differences between the years cannot be attributed solely to change over time. We make note of changes in questions and years when particular questions were not asked.

3. Methods

3.1 Survey instrument

A two-page self-complete questionnaire was used for each iteration; some survey questions were included in all iterations, others appeared only once (see Appendices for copies of the questionnaires). In 2018, the questionnaire included items on demographics; sexual and gender identity; LGBTQ communities connection; smoking, alcohol and drug use; sexual health; general health; chronic illness and disability; psychological wellbeing; experiences of anti-LGBTQ behaviour, intimate partner violence; parenthood intentions; preventive health practices health-related help-seeking behaviour; and healthcare access and satisfaction. Responding to community feedback, and after consultation, we replaced a longstanding question on trans status, with a two-step question on gender identity and gender assigned at birth (as recommended by ACON).

3.2 Sampling and recruitment

SWASH is a repeated cross-sectional survey that takes place every two years in February during the Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras season. It employs a modified version of the Time-Location convenience sampling also used for the HIV behavioural surveillance undertaken by the Gay Community Periodic Survey.¹⁰ This venue-based method is often employed for populations that cluster in locations. We drew on the knowledge of ACON health promotion staff to identify venues and events likely to have a high concentration of LBQ women and non-binary people during the survey recruitment period. As in previous years, in 2018 the primary recruitment site was the Mardi Gras Fair Day – a highly significant community family day with entertainment, stalls, and food attended by up to 80,000 people. Additional recruitment took place at 19 other social events that occurred during the Mardi Gras Season.

In 2018 we made sustained efforts to increase the sample's diversity by recruiting at events that were aimed at Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women or at LBQ-identifying trans and gender diverse people, and at events that were located outside the CBD or that did not revolve around alcohol. The significant disruption to data collection that occurred at Fair Day in 2016 (when security stopped data collectors approaching potential respondents) did not reoccur and respondent numbers returned to usual levels (numbers were almost halved in 2016); in 2018 recruitment was less reliant on commercial venues.

Questionnaires were offered to everyone identifying as a woman who was willing to respond. Because of practical difficulties, refusal rates were not calculated. Recruitment takes place in public spaces and entertainment venues, so potential respondents who wish to avoid completing the questionnaire can easily do so; anecdotally, we can report that few explicitly refused a verbal offer to contribute.

In 2018 we also ran the survey online using REDCap electronic data capture tools hosted at the University of Sydney.¹¹ The survey was open for one month immediately after face-to-face recruitment ceased. We delayed online recruitment to ensure the face-to-face sample was not changed by an online option and to maintain our ability to compare SWASH samples year to year.

3.3 Analysis

Data were entered from the coded questionnaires and loaded into SPSS v24.0 software for analysis. Data were cleaned and checked for internal consistency and, where inconsistencies were found, checked against the questionnaires. Additional comments and answers to open-ended questions were transferred from the questionnaires. The analysis presented here is primarily descriptive, with cross-tabs and t-tests to confirm significant differences between subgroups; p values were calculated using Pearson's chi-square statistic or Fisher's exact test where appropriate (that is, where the 'expected' number was very small).

The non-answer rate for some questions completed face-to-face was relatively high, especially those requiring writing text rather than ticking a box. (The online version of the survey contained controls alerting participants to non-completed questions.) We assume that many respondents simply left a question blank when it did not apply to them, rather than ticking the 'no' response. However, percentages have generally been calculated on the total sample, not on the question-specific response rate, which would have inflated the 'yes' percentages. Readers can take the 'yes' percentages as lower-bound estimates and judge for themselves whether to interpret the missing people as likely to be similar to the respondents or likely to mean 'no' or 'not applicable'. Exceptions to this are tables reporting summaries of questions where respondents could select more than one item, and tables reporting sub-samples.

4. Findings

Reflecting our practice since the 2004 survey report,⁶ 129 respondents who identified as heterosexual were excluded from this report. While respondents who identified as heterosexual may still have had sex with women, most of these respondents did so only rarely (of the 129 heterosexual respondents, 19 had ever had sex with a woman, only six in the last six months). Respondents identifying as male (regardless of gender assigned at birth) would have been removed but none remained in the sample after heterosexual identifying respondents were excluded. Thus, this report focuses on lesbian, bisexual, queer and other non-heterosexual identifying (LBQ) women (cis and trans), and includes non-binary people.

Face to face recruitment generated 1096 valid responses (Table 1). The online survey generated 335 valid responses. SWASH has always been a survey of community-engaged lesbian, bisexual and queer (LBQ) people traditionally recruited at events during the Mardi Gras season, to maintain the sample's coherence we excluded 159 online surveys from people who had not attended any events during the 2018 Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras season. Thus, the final 2018 sample comprised 1096 paper and 176 online responses.

We asked respondents to indicate if they had completed the previous SWASH iteration in 2016; 7% had. This compares to 14% in 2014, 13% in 2012 and 12% in 2010. The decrease in the 2018 repeat participate rate is most likely due to recruitment disruption at Fair Day in 2016.

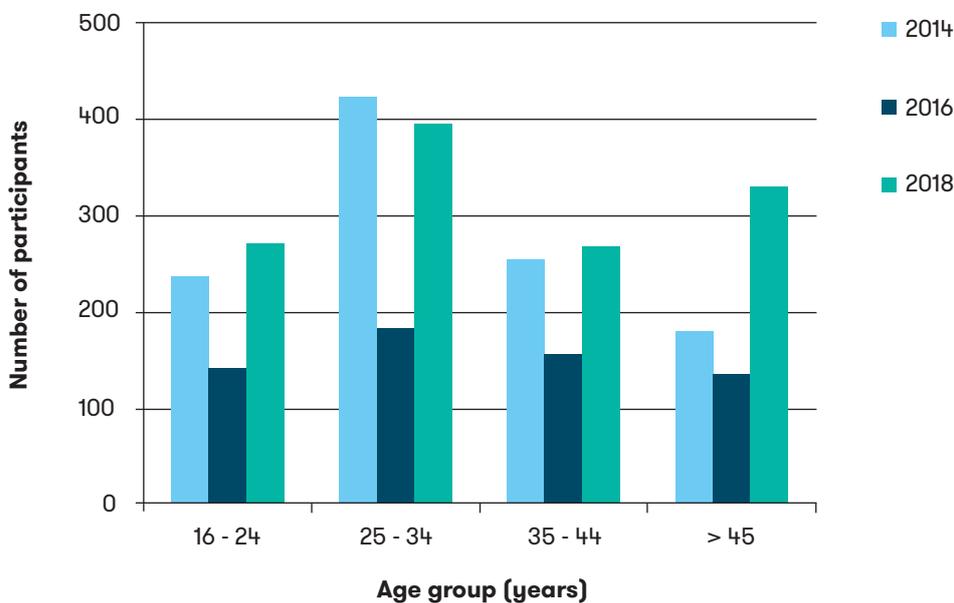
	2014	2016	2018
	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)
Fair Day	767 (69.7)	397 (63.7)	622 (48.9)
Social venues/ events	333 (30.3)	184 (29.5)	474 (37.3)
Community group	-	42 (6.7)	-
Online	-	-	176 (13.8)
Total	1100 (100)	623 (100)	1272 (100)

4.1 Sample Characteristics

4.1.1 Age

The age range was 16-94 years, with a median age of 34 (2014 range 16-66, median age 31; 2016 range 16-74, median 33). Figure 1 compares the proportion of respondents in 5-year age categories over the three surveys. The category with the largest number of respondents has consistently been the 25-34 years age group.

Figure 1: Age distribution of sample



4.1.2 Sexual identity and attraction

We continue to observe a drop in the proportion of respondents identifying as lesbian (58%) in SWASH (since 2006); the decrease over the last three iterations continues to be statistically significant ($p < 0.001$; Table 2). The proportion of respondents identifying as bisexual (17%) has remained steady since 2014. Queer has been a separate response option since 2010 (to reflect the high proportion ticking “other” and then writing “queer”) and now comprises 20% of respondents. As noted earlier, respondents who identified as heterosexual, regardless of their sexual practice or gender identity, were excluded from the data set.

The proportion of respondents who did not feel the available sexuality response options reflected their experience, or who selected more than one, is now 8%. The vast majority of respondents in the ‘other’ category used multiple terms to describe their sexuality, including 20 respondents who ticked multiple responses, e.g. both queer and lesbian. Some people resisted categorisation, making comments such “me” “no label” or “love is love”, or describing themselves as fluid or “heteroflexible”, while others defined themselves in opposition for example as “not heterosexual”. Some people left the categorisation open, describing themselves as “experimenting”, “questioning” or “not enough experience to label yet”. The most common written term was pansexual (N=30) either on its own or in

conjunction with terms like queer or lesbian. Thirteen respondents used the term “asexual” or “ace”, again either on its own or in conjunction other terms such as “queer” or “lesbian”; 13 respondents said they felt attracted to no one at all (Table 3). Several respondents described their sexuality as “trans”.

Exclusive attraction to women was not the majority experience (26%; Table 3), even among this highly community-attached sample, the majority of whom (63%) had been sexually active with a woman in the preceding six months. This is the lowest exclusive attraction to women (26%), and the highest equal attraction to men and women (19%) that SWASH has captured. As would be expected, lesbian-identifying respondents were most likely to say they were attracted only or mostly to women (96%), followed by queer or other respondents (64%), and then bisexual respondents (20%).

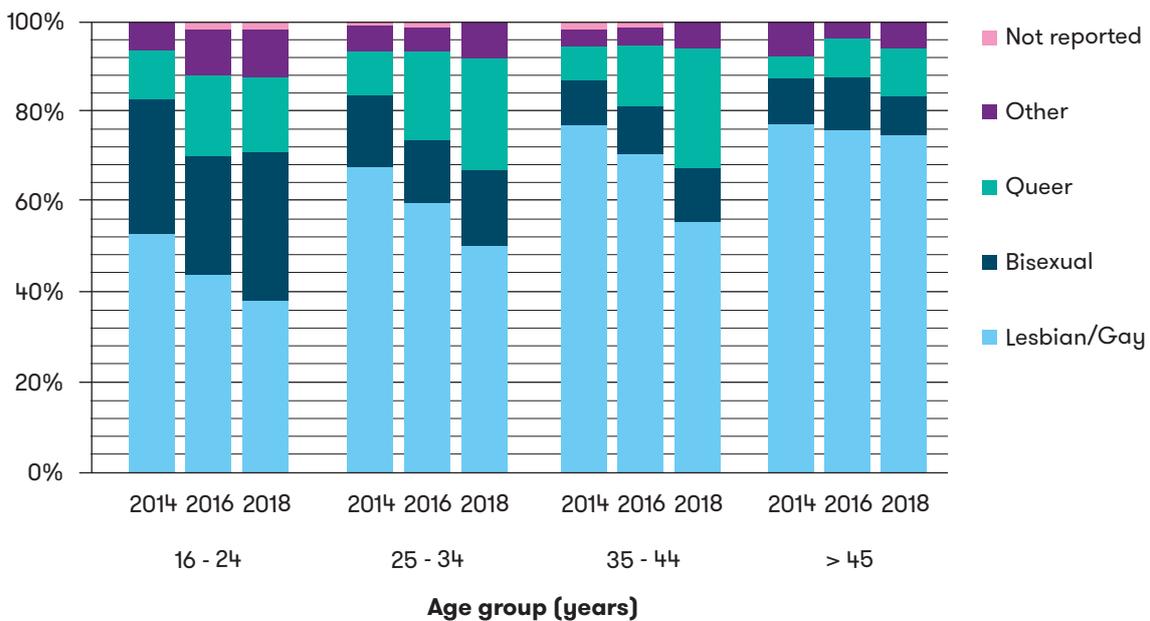
The median age of lesbian respondents was 37 years, of bisexual respondents 26 years, and of queer respondents 33 years (Table 4). Age and sexual identity have been correlated in each SWASH survey, with younger respondents more likely than older respondents to identify as bisexual, queer or other, and less likely to identify as lesbian (Figure 2).

	2014	2016	2018
	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)
Lesbian/dyke/gay/homosexual	753 (68.5)	389 (62.4)	705 (55.4)
Bisexual	180 (16.4)	97 (15.6)	214 (16.8)
Queer	95 (8.6)	95 (15.2)	252 (19.8)
Other	65 (5.9)	36 (5.8)	97 (7.6)
Not reported	7 (0.6)	6 (1.0)	4 (0.3)
Total	1100 (100)	623 (100)	1272 (100)

	2014	2016	2018
	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)
Only to females	372 (33.8)	207 (33.2)	332 (26.1)
More often to females	511 (46.5)	285 (45.7)	586 (46.1)
Equally often to both	131 (11.9)	89 (14.3)	241 (18.9)
More often to males	68 (6.2)	30 (4.8)	90 (7.1)
Only to males	6 (0.5)	3 (0.5)	4 (0.3)
To no one at all	5 (0.5)	5 (0.8)	13 (1.0)
No answer	7 (0.6)	4 (0.6)	6 (0.5)
Total	1100 (100)	623 (100)	1272 (100)

	2014	2016	2018
	Mean (median)	Mean (median)	Mean (median)
Lesbian	34.7 (33.0)	37.8 (36.0)	39.0 (37.0)
Bisexual	29.6 (26.5)	30.1 (28.0)	30.1 (26.0)
Queer	31.1 (29.0)	31.9 (31.0)	33.1 (32.5)
Other	33.3 (28.0)	30.1 (28.0)	32.9 (30.0)
Not reported	34.9 (36.0)	28.7 (28.0)	21.0 (20.5)

Figure 2: Sexual identity by age group



4.1.3 Gender identity

For the 2018 survey, 2018 we reviewed the way the survey captured gender. We previously only captured respondents’ trans experience by collecting transgender status, and so did not reflect the gender diversity among LBO people who engaged with the survey. Drawing on the current recommendations from ACON, we introduced two new questions: “Which of the following best describes your gender identity: female, male, non-binary, other (please specify)” and “What gender were you assigned at birth: female, male”.

The majority of respondents (87%; Table 5) felt female best described their gender identity and had been assigned female at birth; these respondents would usually be referred to as cisgender or cis women. Respondents identifying as non-binary represented 6% of the sample, the overwhelming majority of whom had been assigned female at birth. Thirty three respondents (3%) identified as female and had been assigned male at birth; these respondents have conventionally been referred to as trans women but many may self-

identify simply as women. A further 4% of respondents ticked multiple options or “other”; the majority were assigned female at birth. Respondents who identified as male (whether assigned male or female at birth) would have been excluded from the data set. Four such respondents had already been removed as they identified as heterosexual, and no further male-identifying respondents remained.

The proportion of respondents with a trans experience in previous iterations of SWASH had been increasing (1% in 2006 to 7% in 2016). Due to the new questions in 2018, it is not possible to say that the 12% of respondents reporting trans and gender diverse experiences represents an increase. We have not conducted separate analyses for cis and trans and gender diverse respondents.

	2018
	n %
Female (female at birth)	1110 (87.3)
Female (male at birth)	33 (2.6)
Non-binary (female at birth)	79 (6.2)
Non-binary (male at birth)	2 (0.2)
Other/multiple (female at birth)	32 (2.5)
Other/multiple (male at birth)	14 (1.1)
Not reported	2 (0.2)
Total	1272 (100)

4.1.4 Intersex status

Since 2014 we have asked respondents about their intersex status. Twenty four (1.9%) indicated that they had variations in sex characteristics (Table 6). The most commonly cited estimate of the prevalence of variations in sexual characteristics in the general population is 1.7%;¹² this is the source used by Intersex Human Rights Australia.¹³ We have not conducted separate analyses for people reporting an intersex status.

	2014	2016	2018
	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)
No	1062 (96.5)	593 (95.2)	1230 (96.7)
Yes	9 (0.8)	12 (1.9)	24 (1.9)
Prefer not to say	12 (1.1)	5 (0.8)	11 (0.9)
Not reported	17 (1.6)	13 (2.1)	7 (0.5)
Total	1100 (100)	623 (100)	1272 (100)

4.1.5 Children

In 2018, 16% of respondents said they had dependent children, a similar proportion to other years (Table 7). This number does not capture parents who no longer have dependent children (that is, children have left home and are self-supporting). Ninety five respondents (13%) said they were planning to have children in the next two years (Table 8); most (75%) did not already have dependent children.

	2014	2016	2018
	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)
No	929 (84.5)	510 (81.9)	1062 (83.5)
Yes	152 (13.8)	102 (16.4)	209 (16.4)
Not reported	19 (1.7)	11 (1.8)	1 (0.1)
Total	1100 (100)	623 (100)	1272 (100)

	2014	2016	2018
	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)
No	879 (79.9)	518 (83.1)	1102 (86.6)
Yes / Maybe	198 (18.0)	98 (15.7)	165 (13.0)
Not reported	23 (2.1)	7 (1.2)	5 (0.4)
Total	1100 (100)	623 (100)	1272 (100)

4.1.6 Social attachment to LGBTQ communities

Unsurprisingly for a sample that is generated through attendance at LGBTQ community events, levels of connection were high, with 54% reporting they felt mostly or very connected to LGBTQ communities in their everyday life (Table 9). Of the 1272 respondents, 98% said that at least a few of their friends were lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or queer people (Table 10).

In the preceding six months, 72% had attended at least one LGBTQ group, event or venue (Table 11). Over the past decade of the survey we've tracked a significant decline in overall attendance in all categories (from 86% in 2006 to 72% in 2018). The drop may indicate a change in socialising habits - LBQ people may be attending more mixed-mainstream venues - and/or opportunities to attend LGBTQ events and venues may have decreased. This presents challenges for health services wishing to engage with this group. Previous strategies for delivering health promotion often relied on people physically congregating at events or venues or reading community street press.

Table 9: Connection to LGBTQ communities, by sexual identity						
	Lesbian	Bisexual	Queer	Other	Not reported	Total
	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)	N (%)	n (%)	n (%)
2018						
Very	166 (23.5)	34 (15.9)	86 (34.1)	25 (25.8)	1 (25.0)	312 (24.5)
Mostly	203 (28.8)	57 (26.6)	84 (33.3)	31 (32.0)	0 (0.0)	375 (29.5)
Somewhat	226 (32.1)	83 (38.8)	64 (25.4)	28 (28.9)	2 (50.0)	403 (31.7)
Rarely	87 (12.3)	32 (38.8)	16 (6.3)	3 (3.1)	1 (25.0)	145 (31.4)
Not at all	18 (2.6)	5 (2.3)	1 (0.4)	9 (9.3)	0 (0.0)	27 (2.1)
Not reported	5 (0.7)	3 (1.4)	1 (0.4)	1 (1.0)	0 (0.0)	10 (0.8)
Total	705 (100)	214 (100)	252 (100)	97 (100)	4 (100)	1272 (100)
2016						
Very	84 (21.6)	13 (13.4)	36 (37.9)	7 (19.4)	1 (16.7)	141 (22.6)
Mostly	125 (32.1)	18 (18.6)	26 (27.4)	13 (36.1)	3 (50.0)	185 (29.7)
Somewhat	119 (30.6)	40 (41.2)	23 (24.2)	10 (27.8)	1 (16.7)	193 (31.0)
Rarely	48 (12.3)	16 (16.5)	6 (6.3)	6 (16.7)	1 (16.7)	77 (12.4)
Not at all	8 (2.1)	9 (9.3)	3 (3.2)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	20 (3.2)
Not reported	5 (1.3)	1 (1.0)	1 (1.1)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	7 (1.1)
Total	389 (100)	97 (100)	95 (100)	36 (100)	6 (100)	623 (100)
2014						
Very	153 (20.0)	20 (11.1)	26 (27.4)	11 (16.9)	0 (0.0)	210 (19.1)
Mostly	224 (29.7)	47 (2.61)	28 (29.5)	18 (27.7)	1 (14.3)	318 (28.9)
Somewhat	240 (31.9)	62 (34.4)	31 (32.6)	25 (38.5)	4 (57.1)	362 (32.9)
Rarely	109 (14.5)	32 (17.8)	8 (8.4)	8 (12.3)	1 (14.3)	158 (14.4)
Not at all	23 (3.1)	17 (9.4)	1 (1.1)	3 (4.6)	1 (14.3)	45 (4.1)
Not reported	4 (0.5)	2 (1.1)	1 (1.1)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	7 (0.6)
Total	753 (100)	180 (100)	95 (100)	65 (100)	7 (100)	1100 (100)

	2014	2016	2018
	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)
None	27 (2.5)	6 (1.0)	17 (1.3)
A few	169 (15.4)	85 (13.6)	192 (15.1)
Some	363 (33.0)	185 (29.7)	408 (32.1)
Most	490 (44.5)	321 (51.5)	607 (47.7)
All	25 (2.3)	19 (3.0)	33 (2.6)
Not reported	26 (2.4)	7 (1.1)	15 (1.2)
Total	1100 (100)	623 (100)	1272 (100)

	2014	2016	2018
	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)
Lesbian/queer women's night/bar	640 (58.2)	289 (46.4)	576 (45.3)
Gay night/bar	537 (48.8)	234 (37.6)	446 (35.1)
LGBTQ dance party	333 (30.3)	198 (31.8)	378 (29.7)
LGBTQ group meeting	244 (22.2)	171 (27.4)	294 (23.1)
LGBTQ community event	462 (42.0)	303(48.6)	695 (54.6)
LGBTQ sports group	184 (16.7)	83 (13.3)	191 (15.0)
Any of the above	855 (77.7)	465 (75.6)	956 (72.2)

4.1.7 Education, employment and income

The SWASH sample has always been well educated; the proportion of respondents who have post-school qualifications has increased gradually from 64% in 2006 to 77% in 2018; 23% had a postgraduate qualification (Table 12). Of those who answered the questions on employment, 56% were employed full-time and 18% were students, some of whom were also employed (Table 13). With 45% of respondents earning an annual before tax income of \$60,000 or more and the proportion dependent on state benefits low; this is a reasonably well-off group (Table 14).

Table 12: Education			
	2014	2016	2018
	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)
Up to Year 10/School Certificate	88 (8.0)	70 (11.2)	98 (7.7)
Year 12/Higher School Certificate	170 (15.5)	108 (17.3)	194 (15.3)
Tertiary diploma/trade certificate	229 (20.8)	112 (18.0)	228 (17.9)
University or college degree	403 (36.6)	202 (32.4)	451 (35.5)
Postgraduate degree	207 (18.8)	126 (20.2)	295 (23.2)
Not reported	3 (0.3)	5 (0.8)	6 (0.5)
Total	1100 (100)	623 (100)	1272 (100)

Table 13: Employment status			
	2014	2016	2018
	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)
Employed full-time	683 (62.1)	363 (58.3)	711 (55.9)
Employed part-time	232 (21.1)	134 (21.5)	319 (25.1)
Unemployed	42 (3.8)	35 (5.6)	76 (6.0)
Student	181 (16.5)	100 (16.1)	234 (18.4)
Pensioner/social security benefits	29 (2.6)	30 (4.8)	61 (4.8)
Domestic duties	32 (2.9)	16 (2.6)	43 (3.4)
Not in work force	17 (1.5)	6 (1.0)	40 (3.1)
NOTE: Summary table; adds up to more than 100% because respondents could be in more than one category.			

Table 14: Annual income before tax			
	2014	2016	2018
	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)
Nil-\$19,999	189 (17.2)	125 (20.1)	265 (20.8)
\$20,000-\$39,999	179 (16.3)	101 (16.2)	185 (20.8)
\$40,000-\$59,999	220 (20.0)	107 (17.2)	228 (17.9)
\$60,000-\$99,999	308 (28.0)	173 (27.8)	380 (29.9)
\$100,000+	171 (15.5)	89 (14.3)	191 (15.0)
Not reported	33 (3.0)	28 (4.5)	23 (1.8)
Total	1100 (100)	623 (100)	1272 (100)

4.1.8 Ethnicity

Table 15 shows responses to questions on ethnic or cultural background grouped into broad categories (we have provided an expanded number of categories compared to previous SWASH reports). This cannot be compared directly with the Census data, which report several variables including place of birth, language spoken and ancestry rather than our less specific category of ethnic affiliation. In SWASH, 6% of respondents self-identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander persons; this is higher than the proportion that would be expected if the sample were similar to the total NSW population and may be due to recruitment efforts targeted to relevant events (4.4% of the female population of NSW (aged 15 years and older) identified as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander.)¹⁴

	2014	2016	2018
	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)
Anglo-Australian only	623 (56.6)	387 (62.1)	797 (62.7)
Aboriginal ¹	62 (5.6)	40 (6.4)	83 (6.5)
Australian or Anglo-Australian plus other ethnicity	42 (3.8)	12 (1.9)	37 (2.9)
Oceanian ²	27 (2.5)	16 (2.6)	29 (2.3)
North West European	81 (7.4)	28 (4.5)	75 (5.9)
South and Eastern European	71 (6.5)	38 (6.1)	75 (5.9)
European multi/not specified	12 (1.1)	7 (1.1)	14 (1.1)
African and/or Middle Eastern	34 (3.1)	10 (1.6)	28 (2.2)
Asian	61 (5.5)	28 (4.5)	56 (4.4)
Americas	33 (3.0)	26 (4.2)	17 (1.3)
Multiple/not specified	29 (2.6)	14 (2.2)	55 (4.3)
Not reported	25 (2.3)	17 (2.7)	6 (0.5)
Total	1100 (100)	623 (100)	1272 (100)

NOTE: Open text responses were classified into the above categories based on the 2016 Australian Standard Classification of Cultural and Ethnic Groups.¹⁵

¹ Includes 28 reporting multiple affiliations in 2018

² Includes New Zealand peoples, Melanesian, Papuan, Micronesian and Polynesian

4.1.9 Geographical location and residential status

Just over half (51%) of respondents lived in the city, inner west or eastern suburbs of Sydney (Table 16). This is unsurprising as most recruitment sites including Fair Day were located in this area. The online sample, where recruitment was not driven by geography, had a similar spread in geography. Few respondents (3%) lived in what has traditionally been considered the core gay Sydney suburbs of Darlinghurst, Potts Point, Kings Cross, and Surry Hills. A significant proportion of respondents lived outside the Sydney region (12%) demonstrating the number of respondents coming into the region for the events during Mardi Gras season.

Table 16: Where respondents lived			
	2014	2016	2018
	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)
Gay Sydney ¹	38 (3.5)	27 (4.3)	35 (2.8)
Eastern suburbs ²	86 (7.8)	27 (4.3)	65 (5.1)
City and inner western suburbs ³	480 (43.6)	315 (50.6)	549 (43.2)
Southern suburbs ⁴	65 (5.9)	27 (4.3)	93 (7.3)
Northern suburbs ⁵	154 (14.0)*	62 (10.0)	138 (10.8)
Western suburbs and Blue Mountains ⁶	153 (13.9)	97 (15.6)	214 (16.8)
Outside Sydney region	107 (9.7)*	57 (9.2)	157 (12.3)
Not reported/invalid	17 (1.5)	11 (1.8)	21 (1.7)
Total	1100 (100)	623 (100)	1272 (100)

NOTE: The classification of postcodes and suburbs into the above regions is broadly aligned on the SA4 areas designated within 2016 Australian Statistical Geography Standard (ASGS).¹⁶

(1) Eastern inner city suburbs of Surry Hills, Darlinghurst, Kings Cross and Potts Point

(2) Sydney - Eastern Suburbs

(3) Sydney - Inner West, City and Inner South plus Canterbury, excluding "Gay Sydney"

(4) Sydney - Sutherland, Inner South West and South West, excluding Canterbury

(5) Sydney - North Sydney and Hornsby, Northern Beaches, Ryde, Baulkham Hills, and Central Coast.

(6) Sydney - Parramatta, Outer West, Blacktown, Outer South West, South West, Blue Mountains

*For 2014, proportion of responders residing in Northern suburbs has increased and proportion outside Sydney region decreased compared to previous reports as Central Coast localities are now included in Greater Sydney region.

4.2 Sexual partners and practices

4.2.1 Sex with women

The great majority of respondents (89%) reported that they had ever had sex with a woman; 63% had done so in the preceding six months (Table 17). As expected, lesbian respondents were most likely (72%) to report recent sex with a woman, and bisexual respondents least likely (40%). Respondents who reported sex with a woman in the preceding six months were most likely to report one sexual partner (77%; Table 18) and most likely to have had sex between two and five times in the preceding four weeks (37%; Table 19).

	Lesbian	Bisexual	Queer	Other	Not reported	Total
	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)
2018						
Never	27 (3.8)	48 (22.4)	20 (7.9)	25 (25.8)	0 (0.0)	120 (9.4)
Over 6 months ago	162 (23.0)	74 (34.6)	69 (27.4)	28 (28.9)	1 (25.0)	334 (26.3)
In the past 6 months	505 (71.6)	86 (40.2)	159 (63.1)	42 (43.3)	3 (75.0)	795 (62.5)
Not reported	11 (1.6)	6 (2.8)	4 (1.6)	2 (2.1)	0 (0.0)	23 (1.8)
Total	705 (100)	214 (100)	252 (100)	97 (100)	4 (100)	1272 (100)
2016						
Never	7 (1.8)	24 (24.7)	5 (5.3)	9 (25.0)	2 (33.3)	47 (7.5)
Over 6 months ago	55 (14.1)	30 (30.9)	14 (14.7)	7 (19.4)	0 (0.0)	106 (17.0)
In the past 6 months	318 (81.7)	42 (43.3)	75 (78.9)	17 (19.4)	4 (66.7)	456 (73.2)
Not reported	9 (2.3)	1 (1.0)	1 (1.1)	3 (8.3)	0 (0.0)	14 (2.2)
Total	389 (100)	97 (100)	95 (100)	36 (100)	6 (100)	623 (100)
2014						
Never	13 (1.7)	17 (9.4)	2 (2.1)	13 (20.0)	1 (14.3)	46 (4.2)
Over 6 months ago	116 (15.4)	64 (35.6)	22 (23.2)	14 (21.5)	2 (28.6)	218 (19.8)
In the past 6 months	610 (81.0)	97 (53.9)	70 (73.7)	38 (58.5)	4 (57.1)	819 (74.5)
Not reported	14 (1.9)	2(1.1)	1 (1.1)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	17 (1.5)
Total	753 (100)	180 (100)	95 (100)	65 (100)	7 (100)	1100 (100)

	Lesbian	Bisexual	Queer	Other	Not reported	Total
	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)
2018						
One	414 (83.1)	61 (70.9)	98 (61.6)	28 (66.7)	3 (100)	607 (76.6)
2-5	68 (13.7)	22 (25.6)	48 (30.2)	12 (28.6)	0 (0.0)	150 (19.0)
>5	12 (2.4)	2 (2.3)	12 (7.5)	2 (4.8)	0 (0.0)	28 (3.6)
Not reported	4 (0.8)	1 (1.2)	1 (0.6)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	6 (0.8)
Total	498 (100)	86 (100)	159 (100)	42 (100)	3 (100)	788 (100)
2016						
One	246 (79.4)	32 (76.2)	44 (59.5)	12 (75.0)	4 (100)	338 (75.8)
2-5	45 (14.5)	9 (21.4)	23 (31.1)	4 (25.0)	0 (0.0)	81 (18.2)
>5	16 (5.2)	1 (2.4)	6 (8.1)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	23 (5.2)
Not reported	3 (1.0)	0 (0.0)	1 (1.4)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	4 (0.9)
Total	310 (100)	42 (100)	74 (100)	16 (100)	4 (100)	446 (100)
2014						
One	459 (77.9)	66 (71.0)	42 (62.7)	19 (51.4)	2 (50.0)	588 (74.4)
2-5	102 (17.3)	23 (24.7)	23 (34.3)	15 (40.5)	2 (50.0)	165 (20.0)
>5	20 (3.4)	4 (4.3)	2 (3.0)	2 (5.4)	0 (0.0)	28 (3.5)
Not reported	8 (1.4)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	1 (2.7)	0 (0.0)	9 (1.1)
Total	589 (100)	93 (100)	67 (100)	37 (100)	4 (100)	790 (100)

NOTE: Table only includes respondents who reported sex with a woman in the preceding 6 months.

	2014	2016	2018
	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)
0	171 (21.6)	96 (21.5)	193 (24.5)
1	90 (11.4)	48 (10.8)	102 (12.9)
2-5	224 (28.4)	147 (33.0)	288 (36.5)
6-10	124 (15.7)	64 (14.3)	117 (14.8)
11+	144 (18.2)	58 (13.0)	86 (10.9)
Not reported	37 (4.1)	33 (7.4)	2 (0.3)
Total	790 (100)	446 (100)	788 (100)

NOTE: Table only includes respondents who reported sex with a woman in the preceding 6 months.

4.2.2 Sex with men

Sixty seven percent of respondents reported they had ever had sex with a man; 21% in the last 6 months. Bisexual (85%), queer (84%) and other-identifying (71%) respondents were more likely to have ever had sex with a man compared to lesbian respondents (56%). The fact that a majority of lesbian respondents have a sexual history that includes men is perhaps familiar and unremarkable to members of LGBTQ communities. However, health service providers, policy makers and those designing STI prevention programs need to be aware that a significant proportion of women and non-binary people who do not identify as heterosexual are having sex with men, and consider the reach of their programs. This group may not respond to health promotion campaigns directed at assumed heterosexual audiences.

Sixty four percent of respondents said they had ever had sex with a man they believed to be heterosexual (Table 20), while 27% said they had ever had sex with a man they believed to be gay or bisexual (Table 21). Of the 203 respondents who reported sex with a heterosexual man in the last 6 months, 70% had had any unprotected vaginal or anal intercourse; 37% had done so often. We do not know if the sex reported was with cis or trans men as the SWASH survey does not ask respondents (or allow them to indicate) the specific gender experience of their partners.

Of the 115 respondents who reported sex with a gay or bisexual man in the last 6 months, 64% had had any unprotected vaginal or anal intercourse; 31% had done so often. While the absolute numbers are relatively small, the proportion reporting often having unprotected sex with a gay or bisexual man in 2018 (n = 36) is three times higher than the steady rate reported in 2014 and 2016. There is no evidence of a similar increase of unprotected sex with heterosexual men. These data suggest a need for further research regarding LBQ women and non-binary people's sexual practice with gay and bisexual men, especially in the pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) era where there is evidence of a decrease in consistent condom use by gay and bisexual men when they have sex with other men.¹⁷ In addition to risks of STI and HIV transmission, unprotected vaginal sex also presents a risk of unintended pregnancy.

Table 20: When respondents last had sex with a heterosexual man, by sexual identity						
	Lesbian	Bisexual	Queer	Other	Not reported	Total
	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)
2018						
Never	303 (43.0)	34 (15.9)	50 (19.8)	28 (28.9)	4 (100)	419 (32.9)
Over 6 months ago	366 (51.9)	77 (36.0)	127 (50.4)	42 (43.3)	0 (0.0)	612 (48.1)
In the past 6 months	14 (2.0)	97 (45.3)	68 (27.0)	24 (24.7)	0 (0.0)	203 (16.0)
Not reported	22 (3.1)	6 (2.8)	37 (2.8)	3 (3.1)	0 (0.0)	38 (3.0)
Total	705 (100)	214 (100)	252 (100)	97 (100)	4 (100)	1272 (100)
2016						
Never	180 (46.3)	14 (14.4)	26 (27.4)	13 (5.6)	2 (33.3)	235 (37.7)
Over 6 months ago	187 (48.1)	38 (39.2)	47 (49.5)	10 (27.8)	3 (50.0)	285 (45.7)
In the past 6 months	9 (2.3)	41 (42.3)	19 (20.0)	11 (30.6)	1 (16.7)	81 (13.0)
Not reported	13 (3.3)	4 (4.1)	3 (3.2)	2 (5.6)	0 (0.0)	22 (3.5)
Total	389 (100)	97 (100)	95 (100)	36 (100)	6 (100)	623 (100)
2014						
Never	312 (41.4)	16 (8.9)	23 (24.2)	17 (26.2)	1 (14.3)	369 (33.5)
Over 6 months ago	392 (52.1)	69 (38.3)	47 (49.5)	25 (38.8)	1 (14.3)	534 (48.6)
In the past 6 months	33 (4.4)	86 (47.8)	24 (25.3)	22 (33.8)	4 (57.1)	169 (15.4)
Not reported	16 (2.1)	9 (5.0)	1 (1.1)	1 (1.5)	1 (14.3)	28 (2.5)
Total	753 (100)	180 (100)	95 (100)	65 (100)	7 (100)	1100 (100)

Table 21: When respondents last had sex with a gay or bisexual man, by sexual identity						
	Lesbian	Bisexual	Queer	Other	Not reported	Total
	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)	N (%)	n (%)	n (%)
2018						
Never	590 (83.7)	127 (59.3)	126 (50.0)	55 (56.7)	4 (100)	902 (70.9)
Over 6 months ago	89 (12.6)	41 (19.2)	75 (29.8)	24 (24.7)	0 (0.0)	229 (18.0)
In the past 6 months	13 (1.8)	42 (19.6)	44 (17.5)	16 (16.5)	0 (0.0)	115 (9.0)
Not reported	13 (1.8)	4 (1.9)	7 (2.8)	2 (2.1)	0 (0.0)	26 (2.1)
Total	705 (100)	214 (100)	252 (100)	97 (100)	4 (100)	1272 (100)
2016						
Never	313 (80.5)	58 (59.8)	45 (46.4)	21 (58.3)	4 (66.7)	441 (70.8)
Over 6 months ago	51 (13.1)	22 (22.7)	31 (32.6)	6 (16.7)	2 (33.3)	112 (18.0)
In the past 6 months	16 (4.1)	15 (15.5)	18 (18.9)	9 (15.0)	0 (0.0)	58 (9.3)
Not reported	9 (2.3)	2 (2.1)	1 (1.1)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	12 (1.9)
Total	389 (100)	97 (100)	95 (100)	36 (100)	6 (100)	623 (100)
2014						
Never	592 (78.6)	103 (57.2)	53 (55.8)	44 (67.7)	4 (57.1)	796 (72.4)
Over 6 months ago	84 (11.2)	47 (26.1)	27 (28.4)	12 (18.5)	2 (28.6)	172 (15.6)
In the past 6 months	48 (6.4)	25 (13.9)	14 (14.7)	8 (12.3)	0 (0.0)	95 (8.6)
Not reported	29 (3.9)	5 (2.8)	1 (1.1)	1 (1.5)	1 (14.3)	37 (3.4)
Total	753 (100)	180 (100)	95 (100)	65 (100)	7 (100)	1100 (100)

4.2.3 Sexual practices

Among the 63% of respondents who had had sex with a woman in the preceding six months, the most common sexual practice was manual sex (involving hands and genitals; Table 22). Stimulation of the external genitals was practised by only a few more respondents than sex with the fingers or hand inside the vagina. Most respondents also practised oral sex (cunnilingus), the majority who had done so had both given and received (77%). More than half (60%) reported having used a sex toy. Most respondents who had used a toy had done so both on the external genitals and inside the vagina (53%). Anal practices were less common (30%), with manual stimulation (24%) a more common practice than oral stimulation (rimming; 14%) or the use of sex toys (14%). We do not know if the sex reported was with cis or trans women as the SWASH survey does not ask respondents (or allow them to indicate) the specific gender experience of their partners.

Twenty seven percent of respondents reported having been involved in ‘S/M dominance/bondage’ (e.g., sadomasochism or slave-mistress encounters) without or with blood (e.g., practices such as cutting, piercing, whipping or fisting; Table 23). Ten percent of respondents reported they had had group sex in the preceding six months; of the 131 reporting group sex 80% said this had involved a woman (Table 24). One hundred and four respondents (8%) reported they had ever done sex work (Table 25).

Table 22: Sexual practices with a woman in the past 6 months

	2014	2016	2018
	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)
Fingers/hand on external genitals	740 (93.7)	416 (93.3)	756 (93.4)
Fingers/hand inside vagina	729 (92.3)	405 (90.8)	714 (88.3)
Fingers/hand inside anus	198 (25.1)	127 (28.5)	190 (23.5)
Oral sex (mouth on partner’s genitals)	644 (81.5)	381 (85.4)	633 (78.2)
Oral sex (mouth on respondent’s genitals)	622 (78.7)	367 (82.3)	601 (74.3)
Rimming (mouth on partner’s anus)	98 (12.4)	80 (17.9)	95 (11.7)
Rimming (mouth on respondent’s anus)	103 (13.0)	73 (16.4)	87 (10.8)
Sex toy used on external genitals	419 (53.8)	266 (59.6)	435 (53.8)
Sex toy used inside vagina	425 (53.8)	252 (56.5)	426 (25.7)
Sex toy used inside anus	91 (11.5)	71 (15.9)	114 (14.1)

NOTE: Summary table; adds up to more than 100% because respondents could be in more than one category; only includes respondents who reported sex with a woman in the past 6 months.

	2014	2016	2018
	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)
Yes	185 (16.8)	167 (26.8)	340 (26.8)
- with blood	39 (3.5)	48 (7.7)	63 (5.0)
No	868 (78.9)	428 (68.7)	883 (69.4)
Not reported	47 (4.3)	28 (4.5)	49 (3.9)
Total	1100 (100)	623 (100)	1272 (100)

	2014	2016	2018
Group sex which included:	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)
A woman	115 (10.5)	51 (8.2)	105 (8.3)
A straight or heterosexual man	50 (4.5)	28 (4.5)	53 (4.2)
A gay or bisexual man	21 (1.9)	17 (2.7)	42 (3.3)
BDSM ¹ no blood	43 (3.9)	39 (6.3)	67 (5.3)
BDSM ² with blood	15 (1.4)	15 (2.4)	16 (1.3)
Any group sex	139 (12.6)	72 (11.6)	131 (10.3)

NOTE: Summary table; adds up to more than 100% because respondents could be in more than one category.

¹ BDSM is bondage, dominance or sadomasochism or slave-mistress encounters

² Practices such as cutting, piercing, whipping or fisting

	2014	2016	2018
	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)
Never	1020 (92.7)	559 (89.7)	1149 (90.3)
Over 6 months ago	42 (3.8)	39 (6.3)	72 (5.7)
In last 6 months	22 (2.0)	15 (2.4)	32 (2.5)
Not reported	16 (1.5)	10 (1.6)	19 (1.5)
Total	1100 (100)	623 (100)	1272 (100)

4.2.4 Sexual relationships

Forty eight percent of respondents were in a regular sexual relationship with a woman, 8% with a man and 36% were not in a regular sexual relationship (Table 26). The decreasing trend in the proportion of respondents reporting a relationship with a woman (2006: 66% to 48% in 2018) reflects the general decrease in lesbian-identifying respondents and the increase in recent sex with men already reported. The most common relationship length was over five years (35%; Table 27). Twenty five per cent of respondents reported they had

had a casual partner(s) in the preceding six months; 20% reported casual sex with a female partner (Table 28). We do not know if respondents are reporting relationships with cis or trans people as the SWASH survey does not ask respondents (or allow them to indicate) the specific gender experience of their partners.

	2014	2016	2018
	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)
No	350 (31.8)	191 (30.7)	461 (36.2)
With a woman	634 (57.6)	355 (57.0)	611 (48.1)
With a man	64 (5.8)	39 (6.3)	107 (8.4)
Poly/Multiple partners	41 (3.7)	23 (3.7)	73 (5.7)
Not reported	11 (1.0)	13 (2.1)	20 (1.6)
Total	1100 (100)	623 (100)	1272 (100)

	2014	2016	2018
	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)
Less than 6 months	114 (15.4)	62 (14.9)	128 (16.2)
6-11 months	100 (13.5)	49 (11.8)	90 (11.4)
1-2 years	142 (19.2)	83 (19.9)	130 (16.4)
3-5 years	162 (21.9)	93 (22.3)	158 (20.0)
Over 5 years	214 (29.0)	128 (30.7)	280 (35.4)
Not reported	7 (0.9)	2 (0.5)	5 (0.6)
Total	739 (100)	417 (100)	791 (100)

NOTE: Table only includes respondents who reported being in a regular relationship.

	2014	2016	2018
	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)
No	780 (70.9)	437 (70.1)	937 (73.7)
Yes, with women	192 (17.5)	105 (16.9)	167 (13.1)
Yes, with men	48 (4.4)	26 (4.2)	67 (5.3)
Yes, with both	68 (6.2)	39 (6.3)	83 (6.5)
Not reported	12 (1.1)	16 (2.6)	18 (1.4)
Total	1100 (100)	623 (100)	1272 (100)

4.3 Tobacco, alcohol and illicit drug use

4.3.1 Tobacco

Twenty two percent of respondents were current tobacco smokers (Table 29), with 59% of smokers smoking daily. SWASH data has shown a significant, although slow, downward trend from 35% in 2006 to 30% in 2016, so the drop to 22% is notable. The marked change is due to younger respondents. Over time, SWASH has tracked a very high rate of smoking among younger respondents (Table 29). Among 16-24 year olds, smoking has dropped from 42% in 2016 to 24% in 2018, and among 25-34 year olds from 34% to 25%. Rates of smoking among older respondents are steady. For the first time in the life of the survey slightly more than half of respondents have never smoked (67% of 16-24 year olds and 56% of 25-34 year olds).

These results need to be treated with caution. This is a surprisingly large drop (7% overall, 18% among younger respondents) for a behaviour linked to addiction, that had appeared intransigent.¹⁸ It is not clear what explains this drop, although the first tailored and targeted community smoking cessation campaign (a joint initiative by ACON and Cancer Institute NSW) ran in May 2016.¹⁹ Rates of smoking remain higher among this population group when compared with the general population, especially considering this is a highly educated urban sample. In comparison, in 2017, 12% of women in NSW (cf SWASH 22%) smoked, and 14% of those aged 16-24 (cf 24%).²⁰ We continue to see rates of smoking around double the general population,^{18,21} yet tobacco control policies fail to recognise that tobacco use is a significant public health issue facing LBQ people and their communities.

Table 29: Smoking status by age group						
	16-24 years	25-34 years	35-44 years	45+ years	Not reported	Total
	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)
2018						
Current smoker	64 (23.5)	99 (24.9)	62 (23.0)	57 (17.2)	1 (50.0)	283 (22.2)
Ex-smoker	23 (8.5)	70 (17.6)	94 (34.8)	138 (41.7)	1 (50.0)	326 (25.6)
Never smoked	181 (66.5)	221 (55.7)	110 (40.7)	131 (39.6)	0 (0.0)	643 (50.6)
Not reported	4 (1.5)	7 (1.8)	4 (1.5)	5 (1.5)	0 (0.0)	20 (1.6)
Total	272 (100)	397 (100)	270 (100)	331 (100)	2 (100)	1272 (100)
2016						
Current smoker	59 (41.8)	63 (34.2)	33 (21.0)	29 (21.2)	0 (0.0)	184 (29.5)
Ex-smoker	8 (5.7)	29 (15.8)	56 (35.7)	47 (34.3)	2 (50.0)	142 (22.8)
Never smoked	71 (50.4)	87 (47.3)	59 (37.6)	51 (37.2)	2 (50.0)	270 (43.3)
Not reported	3 (2.1)	5 (2.7)	9 (5.7)	10 (7.3)	0 (0.0)	27 (4.3)
Total	141 (100)	184 (100)	157 (100)	137 (100)	4 (100)	623 (100)
2014						
Current smoker	113 (47.7)	127 (30.0)	56 (22.0)	32 (17.6)	1 (50.0)	329 (29.9)
Ex-smoker	30 (12.7)	104 (24.5)	78 (30.6)	73 (40.1)	1 (50.0)	286 (26.0)
Never smoked	91 (38.4)	185 (43.6)	116 (45.5)	73 (40.1)	0 (0.0)	465 (42.3)
Not reported	3 (1.3)	8 (1.9)	5 (2.0)	4 (2.2)	0 (0.0)	20 (1.8)
Total	237 (100)	424 (100)	255 (100)	182 (100)	2(100)	1100 (100)

4.3.2 Alcohol

The majority of respondents (88%) in the 2018 survey reported drinking alcohol (among NSW women, 64% drink alcohol).²⁰ Table 30 illustrates the frequency of drinking was related to age: younger drinkers were more likely to drink two or fewer days per week (78% of 16-34 year olds compared to 64% of 35-44) while older drinkers were more likely to drink three or more days per week (23% of 16-34 year olds compared to 36% of 35-44).

The National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) recommends drinking no more than two standard drinks on any day to reduce the **lifetime risk** of harm from alcohol-related disease or injury.²² We asked respondents: *on a day when you drink alcohol, how many standard drinks do you usually have?* Nearly half of all respondents (49%; 57% of those who drank) and 63% of 16-24 year olds (72% of younger drinkers) reported they usually drank at levels that exceed this recommendation (Table 33).

The NHMRC recommends that drinking no more than four standard drinks on a single occasion to reduce the risk of alcohol-related injury arising from that **single occasion**.²² Using data from the same question about how many standard drinks respondents usually have, 17% of all respondents (19% of those who drank) reported that they usually drank at levels that exceed this recommendation (Table 31). Seventeen percent of respondents (20% of those who drank) reported drinking five or more drinks ('binge drinking') weekly or more often in the past six months (Table 32). Respondents aged 16-24 years (75%) were more likely to binge drink two or more times in the last 6 months compared to the oldest age group (45 years plus; 56%); this pattern has not changed substantially over time.

Table 30: Frequency of drinking alcohol

	2014	2016	2018
	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)
Less often than weekly	359 (32.6)	195 (31.3)	469 (36.9)
1 or 2 days a week	310 (28.2)	178 (28.6)	3188 (25.0)
3 or 4 days a week	200 (18.2)	88 (14.1)	190 (14.9)
5 or 6 days a week	71 (6.5)	32 (5.1)	96 (7.5)
Every day	48 (4.4)	26 (4.2)	42 (3.3)
Not reported	18 (1.6)	21 (3.4)	19 (1.5)
Never	94 (8.5)	83 (13.3)	138 (10.8)
Total	1100 (100)	623 (100)	1272 (100)

Table 31: Number of drinks consumed per occasion

	2014	2016	2018
	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)
1 or 2 drinks	369 (33.6)	206 (33.1)	473 (37.2)
3 or 4 drinks	348 (31.6)	198 (31.8)	405 (31.8)
5 to 8 drinks	186 (16.9)	71 (11.4)	168 (13.2)
9 or more drinks	84 (7.6)	32 (5.1)	47 (3.7)
Not reported	19 (1.7)	33 (5.3)	41 (3.2)
Non-drinker	94 (8.5)	83 (13.3)	138 (10.8)
Total	1100 (100)	623 (100)	1272 (100)

Table 32: Frequency of drinking 5 or more on a single occasion in past 6 months

	2014	2016	2018
	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)
Never	191 (17.4)	120 (19.3)	233 (18.3)
Once or twice	232 (21.1)	141 (22.6)	380 (29.9)
About once a month	294 (26.7)	154 (24.7)	273 (21.5)
About once a week	171 (15.5)	60 (9.6)	149 (11.7)
More than once a week	95 (8.6)	35 (5.6)	64 (5.0)
Every day	11 (1.0)	3 (0.5)	7 (0.6)
Not reported	12 (1.1)	27 (4.3)	28 (2.2)
Non-drinker	94 (8.5)	83 (13.3)	138 (10.8)
Total	1100 (100)	623 (100)	1272 (100)

4.3.3 Illicit drugs

In the preceding six months, 47% of respondents had used any illicit drug (Table 33). Drug use remains steady including cannabis (33%), methamphetamine use (12%; although it dropped over the last decade from 23% in 2006), and cocaine (18%). In response to the question ‘Have you ever injected drugs?’ 7% of respondents indicated that they had ever done so (steady over three iterations).

Rates of illicit drug use remain several times higher among the SWASH sample than reported for the general community (Table 34). The NDSHS 2016 found 13% of women in Australia reported using any illicit drug in the past 12 months, compared to 47% in our sample who reported using any illicit drug in the past 6 months. Echoing these disparities, the NDSHS found homosexual and bisexual people (not disaggregated by gender) generally reported recent illicit drug use several times higher than heterosexual people, most notably ecstasy and meth/amphetamines (5.8 times), cocaine (3.7 times), and cannabis (3.2).²³ Without a sophisticated understanding of the drivers of illicit drug use for LBQ women and non-binary people, and the conditions under which these practices become problematic, interventions are unlikely to succeed.

Respondents indicated whether selected drug types were usually taken at home, at a friend’s home or private party, a public venue or party, or before or during sex. Table 35 shows the most common context for each drug: natural cannabis and benzos/Valium were more likely to be consumed in private, ecstasy and methamphetamines at public venues, while cocaine was most likely consumed at a private venue or public party. A small number of respondents reported drug use during sex, cocaine, ecstasy and cannabis were the most likely illicit drugs consumed in this context.

4.3.4 Help seeking

Eleven percent (n=142) of respondents said they had ever sought help for a drug and/or alcohol issue. The most common support sought was counsellor/psychologist (71%; Table 36), GP (53%), self-help groups (36%), friends/relatives (35%), and specialist drug and alcohol services (23%). One hundred and seven respondents told us which of these supports they had found the most helpful: counsellor/psychologist (26%), self-help groups (13%), friends/relatives (10%), GP (9%), and specialist drug and alcohol services (9%).

	2014	2016	2018
	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)
Any cannabis ¹	371 (33.7)	184 (29.5)	416 (32.7)
<i>Natural</i>	371 (33.7)	183 (29.4)	387 (30.4)
<i>Synthetic</i>	-	20 (3.2)	67 (5.3)
Ecstasy	232 (21.1)	117 (18.8)	207 (16.3)
Methamphetamine ²	153 (13.9)	61 (9.8)	154 (12.1)
Cocaine	209 (19.0)	101 (16.2)	233 (18.3)
Benzos / Valium	140 (12.7)	115 (18.5)	229 (18.0)
Amyl / poppers	106 (9.6)	50 (8.0)	122 (9.6)
LSD / trips	78 (7.1)	35 (5.6)	82 (6.4)
Special K/ ketamine	49 (4.5)	28 (4.5)	89 (7.0)
GHB	32 (2.9)	13 (2.1)	33 (2.6)
New/emerging psychostimulants ³	-	4 (0.6)	17 (1.3)
Other drugs	41 (3.7)	19 (3.0)	47 (3.7)
Any of the above	524 (47.6)	280 (44.9)	595 (46.8)

NOTE: Summary table; adds up to more than 100% because respondents could be in more than one category.

¹ From 2016 respondents were asked separately about natural and synthetic cannabis; in 2014 we have assumed all use to be natural form.

² Use of speed and crystalline forms of methamphetamine no longer asked separately from 2016; we have collapsed 2014 responses for this report.

³ New question in 2016.

	SWASH 2018	NDSHS 2016
	past 6 months	past 12 months
	%	%
Cannabis (natural)	30.4	7.9
Ecstasy	16.3	1.8
Cocaine	18.3	2.0

	Home	Friends home / Private party	Public venue/ party	Before or during sex
	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)
Cannabis (natural)	163 (42.1)	223 (57.6)	40 (10.3)	31 (8.0)
Ecstasy	22 (10.6)	69 (33.3)	149 (72.0)	19 (9.2)
Methamphetamine	34 (22.1)	42 (27.3)	86 (55.8)	13 (8.4)
Benzos / Valium	190 (83.0)	30 (13.1)	14 (6.1)	6 (2.6)
Cocaine	51 (21.9)	139 (59.7)	109 (46.8)	23 (9.9)
Alcohol	320 (19.6)	350 (21.4)	369 (22.6)	94 (5.8)

NOTE: Summary table; adds up to more than 100% because respondents could be in more than one category; percentages are calculated on proportion of respondents who reported using that drug in the past 6 months.

	2016	2018
	n (%)	n (%)
GP	27 (39.1)	75 (52.8)
Counsellor/psychologist	54 (78.3)	101 (71.1)
Helpline	6 (8.7)	22 (15.5)
Specialist drug & alcohol service	17 (24.6)	33 (23.2)
LGBTI service	10 (14.5)	17 (12.1)
Community organisation	7 (10.1)	21 (14.8)
Friends/relatives	16 (23.2)	49 (34.5)
Self-help groups (AA/NA/SMART)	17 (24.6)	51 (35.9)
Hospital/ED	12 (17.4)	23 (16.2)
Online/apps	2 (2.9)	12 (8.5)
Other	4 (5.8)	11 (7.7)

NOTE: Summary table; adds up to more than 100% because respondents could be in more than one category.

4.4 Health status and behaviour

4.4.1 Relationships with doctors

The majority of respondents reported they had a regular doctor (59%) or health practice (18%; Table 37). The vast majority of respondents with a regular doctor/practice (84%) reported being satisfied or very satisfied (Table 38). Respondents who were out to their regular GP were more likely to be very satisfied (49%, $p < 0.01$) than those who were not out (30%). That is, while respondents were largely satisfied with the service they received, disclosing sexuality appeared to be associated with a more positive evaluation of that service/relationship.

	2014	2016	2018
	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)
No regular doctor	239 (21.7)	123 (19.7)	278 (21.9)
Yes, regular GP	684 (62.2)	375 (60.2)	754 (59.3)
Yes, regular health practice	169 (15.4)	105 (16.9)	222 (17.5)
Not reported	8 (0.7)	20 (3.2)	18 (1.4)
Total	1100 (100)	623 (100)	1272 (100)

	2014	2016	2018
	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)
Very satisfied	363 (42.6)	218 (45.4)	433 (44.4)
Satisfied	301 (35.3)	173 (36.0)	385 (39.4)
Neither	86 (10.1)	44 (9.2)	93 (9.5)
Unsatisfied	33 (3.9)	14 (2.9)	38 (3.9)
Very unsatisfied	21 (2.1)	8 (1.7)	5 (0.5)
Not reported	49 (5.7)	23 (4.8)	22 (2.3)
Total	853 (100)	480 (100)	976 (100)

NOTE: Table only includes respondents who reported having a regular GP or practice

4.4.2 General health

The majority of respondents rated their general health as excellent/very good/good (78%; Table 39); 20% reported their health as fair/poor. The proportion reporting fair/poor health has increased over time. Three hundred respondents (24%) said they had a chronic (long-term) illness or disability.

	Lesbian	Bisexual	Queer	Other	Not reported	Total
	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)
2018						
Poor/Fair	116 (16.5)	44 (20.6)	66 (26.2)	37 (38.1)	0 (0.0)	263 (20.7)
Good/Very good	474 (67.2)	146 (68.2)	163 (64.7)	52 (53.6)	4 (100)	839 (66.0)
Excellent	107 (15.2)	20 (9.3)	20 (7.9)	7 (7.2)	0 (0.0)	154 (12.1)
Not reported	8 (1.1)	4 (1.9)	3 (1.2)	1 (1.0)	0 (0.0)	16 (1.3)
Total	705 (100)	214 (100)	252 (100)	97 (7.2)	4 (100)	1272 (100)
2016						
Poor/Fair	55 (14.1)	23 (23.7)	15 (15.8)	11 (30.6)	2 (33.3)	106 (17.0)
Good/Very good	264 (67.9)	65 (67.0)	65 (68.4)	24 (66.7)	4 (66.7)	422 (67.7)
Excellent	56 (14.4)	5 (5.2)	11 (11.6)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	72 (11.6)
Not reported	14 (3.6)	4 (4.1)	4 (4.2)	1 (2.8)	0 (0.0)	23 (3.7)
Total	389 (100)	97 (100)	95 (100)	36 (100)	6 (100)	623 (100)
2014						
Poor/Fair	71 (9.4)	19 (10.6)	8 (8.4)	11 (16.9)	1 (14.3)	110 (10.0)
Good/Very good	501 (66.5)	123 (68.3)	69 (72.6)	44 (67.7)	4 (57.1)	741 (67.4)
Excellent	173 (23.0)	37 (20.6)	18 (18.9)	10 (15.4)	2 (28.6)	240 (21.8)
Not reported	8 (1.1)	1 (0.6)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	9 (0.8)
Total	753 (100)	180 (100)	95 (100)	65 (100)	7 (100)	1100 (100)

4.4.3 Height and weight

We use respondent's height and weight to calculate a body mass index (BMI) for each respondent. The BMI is an internationally recognised standard for classifying overweight and obesity in adult populations, and is one of the World Health Organisation's 100 Core Health Indicators.²⁴ It is an imperfect measure as people tend to overestimate height and underestimate weight when self-reporting,²⁵ and it does not recognise differences in height and weight proportions which may be related to cultural heritage. We acknowledge understandable concern among members of LGBTQ communities about a focus on body weight, and in particular on using normative ideals of body shape. While 41% of the sample was within the "healthy weight" range, 50% reported height and weight that placed them above this range (Table 42). We have provided comparative self-report data from women aged 18 years and older in the 2014-15 National Health Survey (NHS; Table 41).²⁶

	2014	2016	2018
	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)
Below range	39 (3.5)	21 (3.4)	31 (2.4)
Within range	524 (47.6)	267 (42.9)	519 (40.8)
Above range	266 (24.2)	138(22.2)	347 (27.3)
Higher range	172 (15.6)	140 (22.5)	289 (22.7)
Not reported	99 (9.0)	57 (9.1)	86 (6.8)
Total	1100 (100)	623 (100)	1272 (100)

NOTE: Cut off scores were Below range = <18.50, Within range = 18.50- 24.99, Above range = 25-29.99, Higher range = >30

	SWASH 2016 %	SWASH 2018 %	NHS 2014-15 %
Below/Healthy range	51.0	46.1	45.1
Above range	24.0	29.2	28.2
Higher range	25.0	24.7	27.2

NOTE: Cut off scores were Below/Within range = <24.99, Above range = 25-29.99, Higher range = >30 For comparison, table excludes SWASH non-responders and those aged less than 18 years.

4.4.4 Mental health

We use the Kessler 6 (K6) to measure non-specific psychological distress (e.g. feeling nervous, hopeless, restless, worthless) in the preceding four weeks.²⁷ The proportion of respondents reporting high or very high acute distress has been trending up since we first posed the questions in 2006, and over the last three iterations has risen 10% to 41% (Table 42). HealthStats NSW use the K10,²⁸ and while these measures cannot be directly compared, the categories are broadly equivalent: in 2017, 4% of women in NSW reported very high levels of distress, and 8% reported high distress.²⁰ These rates are between one-quarter and one-third the levels of high and very high distress reported in our sample.

Reflecting the levels of acute distress reported, 31% of respondents said they that in the preceding 12 months they had felt that life was not worth living (suicidal ideation; Table 43) and 14% said they had deliberately hurt themselves or done something they knew might harm or kill them (self-harm; Table 44). A majority of respondents (68%) had accessed mental health services in the last five years (Table 46). In the same period, 46% had received a diagnosis of depression, anxiety disorder or other mental health disorder (Table 45).

Psychological distress among 16-24 year olds is alarming; 62% reported high/very high acute distress (Table 42), an increase of 20% over the last three iterations of the survey. This is markedly higher than among 16-24 year old women in NSW, where 11% report very high and 10% report high psychological distress.²⁰ Over the preceding 12 months, 45% of our youngest respondents had felt that life was not worth living and 26% had deliberately hurt themselves or done something they knew might harm or kill them. These are higher levels

than reported by 18-23 year old women in the Australian Longitudinal Survey of Women's Health, where 31% reported suicidal ideation in the last 12 months and 13% reported self-harm.²⁹ Almost three quarters of the youngest respondents (71%) had accessed mental health services in the last five years (Table 46). In the same period, 60% had received a diagnosis of depression, anxiety disorder or other mental health disorder (Table 45).

The self-harm question ("have you deliberately hurt yourself or done something you knew might harm or kill you") was drawn from the Australian Longitudinal Survey of Women's Health.³⁰ It covers self-harm with suicidal intent and non-suicidal self-harm and relies on respondents' self-definition of self-harm. We have heard anecdotally of SWASH respondents discussing how to interpret this question, whether to include for example drug use or snapping yourself with an elastic band. We do not know how these respondents ultimately responded to the question. However researchers using this question have argued that there is good evidence that people understand what is meant by self-harm.³⁰

Table 42: Kessler 6 measure of acute psychological distress, by age group

	16-24 years	25-34 years	35-44 years	45+ years	Not reported	Total
	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)
2018						
Low distress	32 (11.8)	91 (22.9)	79 (29.3)	162 (48.9)	2 (100)	366 (28.8)
Medium distress	64 (23.5)	106 (26.7)	69 (25.6)	88 (26.6)	0 (0.0)	327 (25.7)
High distress	79 (29.0)	108 (27.2)	63 (23.3)	39 (11.8)	0 (0.0)	289 (22.7)
Very high distress	89 (32.7)	77 (19.4)	43 (15.9)	26 (7.9)	0 (0.0)	235 (18.5)
Not reported	8 (2.9)	15 (3.8)	16 (5.9)	16 (4.8)	0 (0.0)	55 (4.3)
Total	272 (100)	397 (100)	270 (100)	331 (100)	2 (100)	1272 (100)
2016						
Low distress	15 (10.6)	44 (23.9)	57 (36.3)	59 (43.1)	1 (25.0)	176 (28.3)
Medium distress	24 (17.0)	63 (34.2)	46 (29.3)	25 (18.2)	1 (25.0)	159 (25.5)
High distress	42 (29.8)	44 (23.9)	29 (18.5)	22 (16.1)	2 (50.0)	139 (22.3)
Very high distress	49 (34.8)	20 (10.9)	10 (6.4)	7 (5.1)	0 (0.0)	86 (13.8)
Not reported	11 (7.8)	13 (7.1)	15 (9.6)	24 (17.5)	0 (0.0)	63 (10.1)
Total	141 (100)	184 (100)	157 (100)	137 (100)	4 (100)	623 (100)
2014						
Low distress	63 (26.6)	146 (34.4)	126 (49.4)	99 (54.4)	0 (0.0)	434 (39.5)
Medium distress	53 (22.4)	14 (26.9)	50 (19.6)	34 (18.7)	1 (50.0)	252 (22.9)
High distress	54 (22.8)	85 (20.0)	39 (15.3)	25 (13.7)	1 (50.0)	204 (18.5)
Very high distress	51 (21.5)	49 (11.6)	17 (6.7)	8 (4.4)	0 (0.0)	125 (11.4)
Not reported	16 (6.8)	30 (7.1)	23 (9.0)	16 (8.8)	0 (0.0)	85 (7.7)
Total	237 (100)	424 (100)	255 (100)	182 (100)	2 (100)	1100 (100)

NOTE: Cut off scores were Low = 0-3, Medium = 4-7, High = 8-12, Very high = 13+³¹

	16-24 years	25-34 years	35-44 years	45+ years	Not Reported	Total
	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)
Yes	189 (69.5)	269 (67.8)	170 (63.0)	176 (53.2)	1 (50.0)	805 (63.3)
<i>in the last 12 months</i>	121 (44.5)	134 (33.8)	80 (26.9)	56 (19.6)	0 (0.0)	391 (30.7)
No	1 (50.0)	77 (28.3)	123 (31.0)	97 (35.9)	152 (45.9)	450 (35.4)
Not reported	6 (2.2)	5 (1.3)	3 (1.1)	3 (0.9)	0 (0.0)	17 (1.3)
Total	272 (100)	397 (100)	270 (100)	331 (100)	2 (100)	1272 (100)

	16-24 years	25-34 years	35-44 years	45+ years	Not Reported	Total
	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)
Yes	171 (62.9)	218 (54.9)	117 (43.3)	83 (25.1)	1 (50.0)	590 (46.4)
<i>in the last 12 months</i>	70 (25.7)	64 (16.1)	29 (10.7)	12 (3.6)	0 (0.0)	175 (13.8)
No	92 (33.8)	172 (43.3)	148 (54.8)	244 (73.7)	1 (50.0)	657 (51.7)
Not reported	9 (3.3)	7 (1.8)	5 (1.9)	4 (1.2)	0 (0.0)	25 (1.9)
Total	272 (100)	397 (100)	270 (100)	331 (100)	2 (100)	1272 (100)

Table 44: Ever accessed counselling or psychological services						
	16-24 years	25-34 years	35-44 years	45+ years	Not reported	Total
	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)
2018						
No	63 (23.2)	64 (16.1)	45 (16.7)	61 (18.4)	0 (0.0)	233 (18.3)
Yes, in the past 5 years	192 (70.6)	295 (74.3)	191 (70.7)	180 (54.4)	1 (50.0)	859 (67.5)
Yes, over 5 years ago	14 (5.1)	32 (8.1)	31 (11.5)	86 (26.0)	1 (50.0)	164 (12.9)
Not reported	3 (1.1)	6 (1.5)	3 (1.1)	4 (1.2)	0 (0.0)	16 (1.3)
Total	272 (100)	397 (100)	270 (100)	331 (100)	2 (100)	1272 (100)
2016						
No	37 (26.2)	41 (22.3)	25 (15.9)	27 (19.7)	0 (0.0)	130 (20.9)
Yes, in the past 5 years	96 (68.1)	119 (64.7)	107 (68.2)	77 (56.2)	3 (75.0)	402 (64.5)
Yes, over 5 years ago	6 (4.3)	20 (10.9)	19 (12.1)	26 (19.0)	1 (25.0)	72 (11.6)
Not reported	2 (1.4)	4 (2.2)	6 (3.8)	7 (5.1)	0 (0.0)	19 (3.0)
Total	141 (100)	184 (100)	157 (100)	137 (100)	4 (100)	623 (100)
2014						
No	71 (30.0)	140 (33.0)	55 (21.6)	34 (18.7)	0 (0.0)	300 (37.3)
Yes, in the past 5 years	149 (62.9)	240 (56.6)	160 (62.7)	109 (59.9)	2 (100)	660 (60.0)
Yes, over 5 years ago	14 (5.9)	41 (9.7)	39 (15.3)	36 (19.8)	0 (0.0)	130 (11.8)
Not reported	3 (1.3)	3 (0.7)	1 (0.4)	3 (1.6)	0 (0.0)	10 (0.9)
Total	237 (100)	424 (100)	255 (100)	182 (100)	2 (100)	1100 (100)

Table 45: Ever diagnosed (self-report) with anxiety, depression or other mental health disorder						
	16 -24 years	25-34 years	35-44 years	45+ years	Not reported	Total
	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)
2018						
No	89 (32.7)	143 (36.0)	98 (36.3)	152 (45.9)	0 (0.0)	482 (37.9)
Yes, in past 5 years	163 (59.9)	195 (49.1)	130 (48.1)	99 (29.9)	0 (0.0)	587 (46.1)
Yes, over 5 years ago	16 (5.9)	53 (13.4)	39 (14.4)	75 (22.7)	2 (100)	185 (14.5)
Not reported	4 (1.5)	6 (1.5)	3 (1.1)	5 (1.5)	0 (0.0)	18 (1.4)
Total	272 (100)	397 (100)	270 (100)	331 (100)	2 (100)	1272 (100)
2016						
No	47 (33.3)	74 (40.2)	63 (40.1)	55 (40.1)	1 (25.0)	240 (38.5)
Yes, in past 5 years	89 (63.1)	85 (46.2)	63 (40.1)	53 (38.7)	2 (50.0)	292 (46.9)
Yes, over 5 years ago	3 (2.1)	23 (12.5)	21 (13.4)	21 (15.3)	1 (25.0)	69 (11.1)
Not reported	2 (1.4)	2 (1.1)	10 (6.4)	8 (5.8)	0 (0.0)	22 (3.5)
Total	141 (100)	184 (100)	157 (100)	137 (100)	4 (100)	623 (100)
2014						
No	107 (45.1)	208 (49.1)	133 (52.2)	99 (54.4)	0 (0.0)	547 (49.7)
Yes, in past 5 years	121 (51.1)	164 (38.7)	85 (33.3)	53 (29.1)	2 (100)	425 (38.6)
Yes, over 5 years ago	5 (2.1)	47 (11.1)	35 (13.7)	28 (15.4)	0 (0.0)	115 (10.5)
Not reported	4 (1.7)	5 (1.2)	2 (0.8)	2 (1.1)	0 (00)	13 (1.2)
Total	237 (100)	424 (100)	255 (100)	182 (100)	2 (100)	1100 (100)

4.4.5 Preventive health practices

From 1st December 2017, the National Cervical Screening Program changed to recommend the age at which screening starts increase from 18 to 25 years (ending at age 74 years) and the time between screening tests increase from two to five years. The Pap smear test (looking for physical changes indicating cancer) was replaced by a Cervical Screening Test (CST; testing for the Human Papilloma Virus (HPV) that may lead to cancer). Anyone who had previously had a Pap smear test is due to attend for the new CST within two years, after which they will be on a five-year cycle.³²

The new CST began a few months before the 2018 survey was conducted; we continued to ask about Pap smears, apply the two-year rule and not remove anyone due to age (too young/old) as the overwhelmingly majority of respondents would have been screened under the previous program.³³ We did not exclude anyone who spontaneously reported they did

not have/no longer had a cervix, because our knowledge of this fact for the whole sample is incomplete. There may be a slight overestimation in the proportion who are overdue for screening.

Table 47 shows that 34% of respondents were overdue for screening – that is, they were last screened more than three years ago, never had screening or were not sure when they last had a Pap smear. The proportion of women in NSW who had had at least one Pap smear test in the preceding 3 years (the 3-year participation) for the period 2015-2016 (the latest available) was 68%.³⁴ The equivalent screening rate for SWASH respondents aged 20-69 years is very similar: 69% (the rate has remained around 70% since 2006). However, respondents who had never had sex with a man were three times more likely to have never been screened (39% compared to 13% who had ever had sex with a man; Table 47); this discrepancy has remained steady. Despite HPV transmission only requiring skin-to-skin contact³⁵, and research demonstrating the prevalence of genital warts in women with a sexual history with women is similar to that of exclusively heterosexual women,³⁶ the idea that lesbian women are at lower risk of cervical cancer persists,³⁷ including among Australian healthcare providers.³⁸ ACON's recent health promotion campaign *The Inner Circle*³⁹ to educate LGBTIQ+ communities of changes to the Cervical Cancer Screening Program used language and imagery to raise awareness of the need for anyone with a cervix, regardless of gender identity or sexuality, to be screened.

The main reasons respondents gave for not having had a Pap smear in the last three years were, being busy (22%), the awkward nature of the test (22%), and fear of the test (12%; Table 48). In response to an invitation to provide other reasons the most common reasons provided were: not having a cervix (generally from birth) or having had a hysterectomy (9%); being too young or too old (6%); unsure if needed/ had never occurred to them/never invited or told by a doctor that it was not necessary (6%); and trauma (including sexual abuse or past experiences of prejudice around body shape or sex worker status), pain (including vaginismus) or the lack of a safe inclusive service (4%).

Under the new National Cervical Screening Program, people are able to self-collect their CST in a clinical setting (that is, not at home) if they are aged 30 years or older and at least two years overdue (that is, four years since their last test) or have never been screened.⁴⁰ Self-collection is less accurate than a test conducted by a clinician using a speculum. However, for people who may be put off seeking CST due to past experiences of trauma or pain, anticipated trauma or pain, or fear of discrimination including around sexuality, gender identity or presentation (Table 48), self-collection may be a valuable access option. We asked respondents if they would prefer to take their own sample and 42% said yes (Table 49); this was higher (53%) among respondents who were overdue for screening.

The HPV vaccine, or cervical cancer vaccine, offers protection against nine HPV types related to cancer in the cervix (and some cancers in the anus, vulva, vagina, penis and throat) and related to genital warts. Since 2007 it has been offered free to girls aged 12 to 13 years (and since 2013 to boys) through the National HPV Vaccination Program run in Australian schools, with a parallel catch up program available for free through GPs for those aged up to 19 years old. Several jurisdictions also offer free catch up programs for men who have sex with men, and anyone can access the vaccine at their own expense. Over half of 18 to 28 years old respondents (64%) said they had received at least one dose; only 31% reported completing the full vaccine schedule (3 doses; Table 50). Coverage in this sample does not come close to that reported for the general population; a 2014 study of 2011 data found 50% of women surveyed in NSW, who were eligible to receive the HPV vaccine, believed they had

the full 3 doses (61% reported 1 dose, 56% reported 2 doses).⁴¹ The concern here is that LBQ women and non-binary people may not benefit from the markedly reduced incidence in genital warts nor, more importantly, protection against HPV-related cervical cancer.

BreastScreen NSW recommend a free mammogram to screen for breast cancer every two years for all women aged 50 to 74. Women aged 40–49 or over 74 can also access a mammogram free of charge but they are not directly invited. (We have chosen to reflect the gendered language used by BreastScreen NSW in their eligibility information.) For the first time in 2018, we asked respondents aged 40 years and older if they had ever had a mammogram: 66% had. However, 55% were overdue: they were last screened more than two years ago, never had a mammogram (30%) or were not sure if they had been screened (Table 51). According to HealthStats NSW, 51% of women aged 50–69 years old in the Sydney Local Health District (where most of the SWASH sample resides) had received a mammogram in the preceding two years.²⁰ The equivalent screening rate for SWASH respondents aged 50–69 years is 64%. Other Australian studies asking LBQ women about mammography report rates are slightly higher or slightly lower than the general population.^{42,43} ACON's ongoing breast health campaign *Talk Touch Test* has been promoting breast cancer awareness and working to bring the mobile screening van to community events and expand access to trans and gender diverse people.⁴⁴

Rates of STI testing within the sample appear steady. Over half of respondents (61%) had ever had a test for an STI other than HIV; 17% had done so in the previous six months (Table 52). Echoing the findings on Pap smears, respondents who had ever had sex with a man were 1.8 times more likely to have had an STI test (72%) compared to respondents who had never had sex with a man (40%; $p < 0.001$); this discrepancy has remained steady. Only thirty six percent of respondents reporting recent unprotected sex with a gay or bisexual man had had a recent STI test. This (again) suggests a need for STI testing campaigns and resources targeting LBQ people about their sexual health, risks and the need for regular screening. Of those ever tested for an STI, 24% respondents had ever received an STI diagnosis. An STI diagnosis was significantly more likely among respondents who reported ever having had sex with a man (27%) compared to those who had never had sex with a man (8%; $p < 0.001$). In comparison to STI testing, the proportion of respondents who reported ever having had an

HIV test was 35%, the lowest we've seen. Only fifty three percent of respondents who had ever had sex with a gay or bisexual man, had had a HIV test. Less than 1% of respondents reported they were HIV positive.

Table 47: Timing of last Pap smear, by experience of sex with men				
	Never had sex with a man	Ever had sex with a man	Not reported	Total
	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)
2018				
Less than 3 years ago	170 (44.9)	613 (71.5)	14 (38.9)	797 (62.7)
More than 3 years ago	43 (11.3)	106 (12.4)	1 (2.8)	150 (11.8)
Never	148 (39.1)	113 (13.2)	9 (25.0)	270 (21.2)
Not sure	2 (0.5)	7 (0.8)	0 (0.0)	9 (0.7)
Not reported	16 (4.2)	18 (2.1)	12 (33.3)	46 (3.6)
Total	379 (100)	857 (100)	36 (100)	1272 (100)
2016				
Less than 3 years ago	106 (52.5)	289 (72.4)	13 (59.1)	408 (65.5)
More than 3 years ago	18 (8.9)	52 (13.0)	2 (9.1)	72 (11.6)
Never	64 (31.7)	50 (12.5)	2 (9.1)	116 (18.6)
Not sure	7 (3.5)	4 (1.0)	1 (4.5)	12 (1.9)
Not reported	7 (3.5)	4 (1.0)	4 (18.2)	15 (2.4)
Total	202 (100)	399 (100)	22 (100)	623 (100)
2014				
Less than 3 years ago	185 (57.3)	540 (72.2)	17 (58.6)	742 (67.5)
More than 3 years ago	21 (6.5)	76 (10.2)	3 (10.3)	100 (9.1)
Never	103 (31.9)	110 (14.7)	7 (24.1)	220 (20.0)
Not sure	9 (2.8)	16 (2.1)	1 (3.4)	26 (2.4)
Not reported	5 (1.6)	6 (0.8)	1 (3.4)	12 (1.1)
Total	323 (100)	748 (100)	29 (100)	1100 (100)

Table 48: Reasons why respondents had not had a Pap smear in past 3 years (2018)

	2018
	n (%)
Being busy/forgetting when your next test is due	103 (21.7)
Embarrassment/awkward nature of the test	104 (21.9)
Fear of Pap tests	59 (12.4)
Other: No cervix	44 (9.2)
Other: Age	28 (5.9)
Other: Unsure if needed/advised not required	26 (5.5)
Other: Trauma/pain	18 (3.8)

NOTE: Table only includes respondents who had not had a Pap smear in the past 3 years.

Table 49: Prefer to self collect HPV test? (2018 only)

	2018
	n (%)
Yes	529 (41.6)
No	229 (18.0)
Unsure of preference	446 (35.1)
Not reported	68 (5.3)

Table 50: HPV vaccine uptake in 18 to 28 year olds (2018)

	16-19 years	20-28 years	Total
	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)
2018			
One dose	11 (7.7)	25 (9.2)	36 (8.7)
Two doses	12 (8.4)	19 (7.0)	31 (7.5)
Three doses	24 (16.8)	104 (38.1)	128 (30.8)
Yes but unsure about no. of doses	30 (21.0)	42 (15.4)	72 (17.3)
No	22 (15.4)	33 (12.1)	55 (13.2)
Not sure if at all	40 (28.0)	40 (14.7)	80 (19.2)
Not reported	4 (2.8)	10 (3.7)	14 (3.4)
Total	143 (100)	273 (100)	416 (100)

NOTE: The vaccine is delivered in three doses at 0, 2, 6 months; table only includes people aged 18 to 28 years

	2018
	n (%)
Less than 2 years ago	192 (43.2)
2-3 years ago	50 (11.3)
3-5 years ago	29 (6.5)
More than 5 years ago	24 (5.4)
Never	135 (30.4)
Not Sure	4 (0.9)
Not Reported	10 (2.3)
Total	444 (100)

NOTE: Table only includes respondents aged 40 years and older.

	Never had sex with a man	Ever had sex with a man	Not reported	Total
	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)
2018				
Never	222 (58.6)	235 (27.4)	14 (38.9)	471 (37.0)
Yes, over 6 months ago	112 (29.6)	439 (51.2)	8 (22.2)	559 (43.9)
Yes, in the past 6 months	39 (10.3)	175 (20.4)	1 (2.8)	215 (16.9)
Not reported	6 (1.6)	8 (0.8)	13 (36.1)	27 (2.1)
Total	379 (100)	857 (100)	36 (100)	1272 (100)
2016				
Never	102 (50.5)	104 (26.1)	10 (45.5)	216 (34.7)
Yes, over 6 months ago	65 (32.2)	198 (49.6)	3 (13.6)	266 (42.7)
Yes, in the past 6 months	26 (12.9)	91 (22.8)	3 (13.6)	120 (19.3)
Not reported	9 (4.5)	6 (1.5)	6 (27.3)	21 (3.4)
Total	202 (100)	399 (100)	22 (100)	623 (100)
2014				
Never	167 (51.7)	255 (34.1)	13 (44.8)	435 (39.5)
Yes, over 6 months ago	112 (34.7)	330 (44.1)	11 (37.9)	453 (41.2)
Yes, in the past 6 months	38 (11.8)	155 (20.7)	4 (13.8)	197 (17.9)
Not reported	6 (1.9)	8 (1.1)	1 (3.4)	15 (1.4)
Total	323 (100)	748 (100)	29 (100)	1100 (100)

4.5 Experiences of violence and abuse

4.5.1 Intimate partner violence

Forty eight percent of women reported they had ever been in a relationship where a partner had physically or emotionally abused them; 32% reported experiencing intimate partner violence (IPV) from a female partner (Table 53). The apparent increase in IPV (since we first started asking about it in 2006) needs to be interpreted with caution. It is not clear if IPV is increasing or if awareness and willingness to disclose has increased through work by ACON, the Inner City Legal Centre, and the LGBTIQ Domestic and Family Violence Interagency on LGBTQ domestic violence through Another Closet,⁴⁵ and the more recent Say It Loud campaign.⁴⁶

	2014	2016	2018
	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)
Never	643 (58.5)	328 (52.6)	633 (49.8)
Yes, with a male only	124 (11.3)	81 (13.0)	210 (16.5)
Yes, with a female only	292 (26.5)	163 (26.2)	333 (26.2)
Yes, with both	29 (2.6)	34 (5.5)	72 (5.7)
Not reported	12 (1.1)	17 (2.7)	24 (1.9)
Total	1100 (100)	623 (100)	1272 (100)

4.5.2 Anti-lesbian, gay, bi, trans and queer behaviour

Respondents were asked whether they had experienced any of six specified anti-LGBTQ acts against them in the preceding 12 months (Table 54). Forty percent of respondents had experienced some form of abuse or harassment. The most common experience was verbal abuse or harassment. Over a decade of data from SWASH shows that while other types of abuse and harassment have remained steady, verbal abuse and harassment has varied significantly over time; 2018 rates are similar to rates to those we captured in 2006/2008. That so few respondents reported abusive behaviour to police is of concern (Table 55) and points to a need for further work to strengthen the relationship between LGBTQ communities and the NSW police force.

Table 54: Anti-LGBTQ behaviour experienced in the past 12 months

	2014	2016	2018
	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)
Verbal abuse or harassment	297 (27.0)	233 (37.4)	478 (37.6)
Being pushed or shoved	86 (7.8)	41 (6.6)	77 (6.1)
Being bashed	24 (2.2)	15 (2.4)	10 (0.8)
Physical threat or intimidation	110 (10.0)	65 (10.4)	155 (12.2)
Refusal of service	60 (5.5)	34 (5.5)	61 (4.8)
Refused employment or promotion	42 (3.8)	24 (3.9)	47 (3.7)
Any of the above	315 (28.6)	247 (39.8)	509 (40.0)

Table 55: Anti-LGBTQ behaviour reported to police in the past 12 months

	2014	2016	2018
	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)
Verbal abuse or harassment	7 (2.4)	7 (3.0)	10 (2.1)
Being pushed or shoved	5 (5.8)	5 (12.2)	1 (1.3)
Being bashed	3 (12.5)	1 (6.7)	1 (10.0)
Physical threat or intimidation	8 (7.3)	5 (7.7)	5 (3.2)
Refusal of service	1 (1.7)	1 (2.9)	1 (1.6)
Refused employment or promotion	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	1 (2.1)

5. Conclusion

SWASH provides a snapshot of the health and wellbeing of community-engaged lesbian, bisexual, queer (LBQ) and other non-heterosexual identifying women and non-binary people. It highlights several areas of particular concern – many of which have persisted over time – where mainstream preventive health interventions that are inclusive of or targeted to LBQ, are needed.

Despite the survey's breadth, we are not collecting information on all salient health issues. In particular, presentations at community forums and professional meetings have raised questions about the use of prescribed medication for psychological distress and use of mental health or physical health services. SWASH is a convenience survey rather than a random sample, but recruitment is done in settings not specifically related to the health outcomes under study. People come to Mardi Gras Fair Day, which remains the core recruitment source, for social reasons, not because they have health or other problems. This means that the sample is not skewed towards people with high rates of health difficulties or risk factors. On the other hand, a survey of this sort is not likely to include people who do not wish to associate or engage with LGBTQ communities or who are not drawn to the activities or events on offer during Mardi Gras season. The results reflect the features of a generally younger, metropolitan, community-attached group of LBQ women and non-binary people, rather than merely those who have had sexual experiences with women, or who do not identify as heterosexual.

The lack of comparable surveys within Australia (and to our knowledge, internationally) highlights the ongoing importance of SWASH. This report provides an unparalleled insight into the health and wellbeing of LBQ women and non-binary people, and indicates findings of particular salience and urgency for those interested in improving the health and wellbeing of this population.

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7. Appendix 1: Questionnaires

2018 SWASH SURVEY LESBIAN, BISEXUAL AND QUEER WOMEN'S HEALTH SURVEY

DEFINITIONS: BY WOMAN WE MEAN A PERSON WHO IDENTIFIES AS A WOMAN (BORN FEMALE OR NOW IDENTIFIES AS FEMALE). BY MAN WE MEAN A PERSON WHO IDENTIFIES AS A MAN (BORN MALE OR NOW IDENTIFIES AS MALE). BY LGBTIQ WE MEAN LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL, TRANSGENDER, INTERSEX AND QUEER.

This code allows us to track changes in health over time.

First two letters of first name

First two letters of surname

Did you complete the SWASH survey in 2016? Yes No

BEFORE YOU START

ABOUT YOU

1. What is your age? years
2. Postcode/suburb/town where you live
3. Are you of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander origin?
No Yes
4. What is your ethnic or cultural background? (e.g. Greek, Vietnamese, Lebanese, Chinese)
Anglo-Australian only Other (specify)
5. Do you think of yourself primarily as:
Lesbian/dyke/gay/homosexual
Bisexual
Queer
Heterosexual/straight
Other (specify)
6. Which of these six statements best describes you?
I have felt sexually attracted—
Only to females, never to males
More often to females, & at least once to a male
About equally often to females and to males
More often to males, & at least once to a female
Only to males, never to females
To no one at all
7. Which of the following best describes your gender identity?
Female
Male
Non-Binary
Other (specify)
8. What gender were you assigned at birth?
Female
Male
9. Are you intersex?
No
Yes
Prefer not to say
10. Are you: (tick all that apply)
Employed full-time
Employed part-time
Unemployed
Doing domestic duties
Not in the work force
Pensioner/social security
Student
11. What is your annual income before tax?
Nil-\$19,999
\$20,000-\$39,999
\$40,000-\$59,999
\$60,000-\$99,999
\$100,000+
12. What is the highest level of education you have completed?
Up to Year 10 / School Certificate
Year 12 / HSC / Leaving Cert / IB
Tertiary diploma or trade certificate
University or college degree
Postgraduate degree (MA, MSc, PhD)
13. Do you have any dependent children?
No
Yes
14. Are you planning to have a child in the next 2 years?
No
Yes
15. Do you have a chronic (long-term) illness or disability? (Please specify)
No
Yes

52. During the past 4 wks, how much of the time did you feel:
Nervous All Most Some A little None
Restless or fidgety
Hopeless
Everything was an effort
Worthless
Sad; nothing could cheer you up
53. Have you ever felt that life isn't worth living?
Yes, in the last 12 months;
Yes, more than 12 months ago;
Never
54. Have you ever deliberately hurt yourself or done anything that you knew might have harmed or even killed you?
Yes, in the last 12 months;
Yes, more than 12 months ago;
Never

SMOKING, DRINKING AND DRUG USE

55. Do you currently smoke cigarettes or other tobacco?
Daily
More than weekly (not daily)
Less than weekly
Ex-smoker
Never smoked/less than 100 in lifetime
56. How often do you normally drink alcohol?
Never Go to Q68
Less often than weekly
1 or 2 days a week
3-4 days a week
5-6 days a week
Every day
57. On a day when you drink alcohol, how many standard drinks do you usually have? (1 drink = a small glass of wine, a middy of beer or a nip of spirits)
1-2 drinks
3-4 drinks
5-6 drinks
7-12 drinks
13-20 drinks
20+ drinks
58. In the past 6 mths, how often have you drunk 5 or more drinks on one occasion?
Never
Once or twice
About once a month
About once a week
More than once a week
Every day
59. How often have you used these drugs in the last 6 months?
Never 1-5 Times 6+ Times
Benzos / Valium
Amyl / poppers
Natural cannabis
Synthetic cannabis
Ecstasy
Amphetamines
Cocaine
LSD / trips
GHB
Ketamine
New/emerging psychostimulants
/Any other drug (please specify)
60. For the drugs below, where did you usually take them? (Last 6 months)
Your home Friends home/private party Venue/public party Before/after sex
Benzos / Valium
Natural cannabis
Ecstasy
Amphetamines
Cocaine
Alcohol
Have you ever injected drugs?
Never Over 6 months ago In past 6 months
61. Have you ever sought support for a drug and/or alcohol issue (your own)
No End of survey Yes Go to Q63
63. Where did you seek support? (tick all that apply)
GP
Counselor/psychologist
Helpline
Specialist D&A service
LGBTI service
Community organisation
Friends/relatives
Self-help groups (AA/NA/SMART)
Hospital/ED
Online/apps (specify)
Other
64. Which support did you find the most helpful?
GP
Counselor/psychologist
Helpline
Specialist D&A service
LGBTI service
Community organisation
Friends/relatives
Self-help groups (AA/NA/SMART)
Hospital/ED
Online/apps (specify)
Other

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THANK YOU FOR TAKING THE TIME TO COMPLETE OUR SURVEY

COMMUNITY

16. Do you feel connected to a LGBTIQ community in your everyday life?
 Very Mostly Somewhat Rarely Not at all
17. In the past 6 mths have you attended:
 No Monthly Weekly More
 Lesbian/queer womens event/bar
 Gay night/bar
 LGBTIQ dance party
 LGBTIQ group meeting
 LGBTIQ community event
 LGBTIQ sports group
18. How many of your friends are LGBTIQ?
 None A few Some Most All

SEX AND RELATIONSHIPS

19. When was the last time you had sex with a woman?
 Never Go to Q23
 Over 6 mths ago Go to Q23
 In the past 6 mths
20. In the past 6 mths, how many women have you had sex with?
 None One 2-5 6-10 More than 10
21. In the last 4 wks, how many times have you had sex with a woman? (write a number)
 _____ times
22. In the past 6 mths, which of the following have you done while having sex with a woman?
 No Yes
 Fingers / hand on external genitals
 Fingers / hand inside vagina
 Fingers / hand inside anus
 Oral sex (your mouth, her genitals)
 Oral sex (her mouth, your genitals)
 Rimming (her mouth, your anus)
 Rimming (your mouth, her anus)
 Sex toy used on external genitals
 Sex toy used inside vagina
 Sex toy used inside anus
 In the past 6 mths, have you done:
 Kink, S/M dominance/bondage (no blood)
 Kink, S/M dominance/bondage (with blood)

VIOLENCE

33. In the last 12 months, have you experienced any of the following anti-lesbian, gay, bi or trans behaviour?
 -REPORTED TO POLICE
 No Yes No* Yes*
 Verbal abuse or harassment
 Being pushed or shoved
 Being bashed
 Physical threat or intimidation
 Refusal of service
 Refused employment/promotion
 34. Have you been in a relationship where a partner physically/emotionally abused you?
 Never Yes, a man Yes, a woman Yes, both
35. Do you have a regular GP?
 No Go to Q38 I see the same GP I attend the same health centre
36. If you have a regular GP, how satisfied are you?
 Very satisfied Satisfied Neither Unsatisfied Very unsatisfied
37. Are you out to your GP about your sexuality/gender identity?
 No Yes
38. In general, would you say your health is?
 Poor Fair Good Very good Excellent
39. How tall are you without shoes? _____ cms
40. How much do you weigh? _____ kgs
41. If you are 40+ years old, when did you last have a mammogram:
 Less than 2 years ago 2-3 years ago 3-5 years ago More than 5 years ago Never Don't know
42. When did you have your last Pap smear/
 Cervical cancer test?
 Less than 2 yrs ago 2-3 yrs ago 3-5 yrs ago More than 5 yrs ago Never Not sure

GENERAL HEALTH

43. If you have NOT had a Pap test in the last 3 years, please tell us why:
 Being busy/forgetting when your next test is due Embarrassment/awkward nature of the test Fear of Pap tests Other (please specify): _____
44. Australia's new cervical screening program will allow some women to take their own HPV sample in a healthcare setting (not at home). Would you prefer to do this, instead of having a cervical screening test?
 No Yes Unsure
45. Have you been vaccinated against Human Papillomavirus (HPV; Gardasil/Cervarix)?
 No, never Not sure Yes, at least 1 dose Yes, at least 2 doses Yes, at least 3 doses Yes, unsure how many doses
46. Have you ever had a test for a sexually transmitted infection (not HIV)?
 No Over 6 mths ago In the past 6 mths
47. Have you ever been diagnosed with an STI?
 No Yes
48. Have you ever had an HIV antibody test?
 No Go to Q50
 Yes Not sure
49. What was the result of your last HIV test?
 Positive (you have HIV) Negative Not sure

PSYCHOLOGICAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING

50. Have you ever accessed a counsellor or psychiatrist?
 No Yes, in past 5 yrs Yes, over 5 yrs ago
51. Have you ever been diagnosed with depression, anxiety disorder or other mental health disorder?
 No Yes, in past 5 yrs Yes, over 5 yrs ago

GO TO NEXT PAGE →

GO TO NEXT PAGE →



SWASH - Lesbian, Bisexual and Queer Women's Health Survey 2016

Definitions: By *woman* we mean a person who identifies as a woman (born female or now identifies as female). By *man* we mean a person who identifies as a man (born male or now identifies as male). By **LGBTIQ** we mean lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex and queer

Before you start: This code allows us to track changes in health over time. This will NOT identify you.

First two letters of first name and surname

Did you complete the SWASH survey in 2014? Yes

About You

1. What is your age? _____ years
2. Postcode/suburb/town where you live _____
3. Are you of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander origin? No Yes
4. What is your ethnic or cultural background? (e.g. Greek, Vietnamese, Lebanese, Chinese) Anglo-Australian only Other (specify)
5. Do you think of yourself primarily as: Lesbian/dyke/gay/homosexual Queer Bisexual Heterosexual/straight Other (specify)
6. Which of these six statements best describes you? *I have felt sexually attracted—*
Only to females, never to males
More often to females, and at least once to a male
About equally often to females and to males
More often to males, and at least once to a female
Only to males, never to females
To no one at all
7. Are you transgender or transsexual? No Yes
Prefer not to say
8. Are you intersex? No Yes
Prefer not to say

9. Are you: (tick all that apply) Employed full-time Unemployed Employed part-time Unemployed Doing domestic duties Not in the work force Pensioner/social security Student
 10. What is your annual income before tax? Nil-\$19,999 \$20,000-\$39,999 \$40,000-\$59,999 \$60,000-\$99,999 \$100,000+
 11. What is the highest level of education you have completed? Up to Year 10 / School Certificate Year 12 / HSC / Leaving Cert / IB Tertiary diploma or trade certificate University or college degree Postgraduate degree (MA, MSc, PhD)
 12. Do you have any dependent children? If yes, how many? No Yes
 13. Are you planning to have a child in the next 2 yrs? No Yes
 14. Do you have a chronic (long-term) illness or disability? If yes, please specify: _____ No Yes
- Community**
15. Do you feel connected to a LGBTIQ community in your everyday life? Very Mostly Somewhat Rarely Not at all
 16. In the past 6 mths have you attended: No Monthly/Weekly More Lesbian/queer women's night/bar Gay night/bar LGBTQ dance party LGBTQ group meeting LGBTQ community event LGBTQ sports group
 17. Please tell us where you connect with LGBTIQ community or content online (sites, pages, groups) _____
 18. How many of your friends are LGBTIQ? None A few Some Most All
- Sex and relationships**
19. When was the last time you had sex with a woman? Never Go to Q23 Over 6 mths ago Go to Q23 In the past 6 mths
20. In the past 6 mths, how many women have you had sex with? None One 2-5 6-10 More than 10
 21. In the last 4 wks, how many times have you had sex with a woman? (write a number) _____ times
 22. In the past 6 mths, which of the following have you done while having sex with a woman? No Yes Fingers / hand on external genitals Fingers / hand inside vagina Fingers / hand inside anus Oral sex (your mouth, her genitals) Oral sex (her mouth, your genitals) Rimming (her mouth, your anus) Rimming (your mouth, her anus) Sex toy used on external genitals Sex toy used inside vagina Sex toy used inside anus
 23. In the past 6 mths, have you done: No Yes Kink, S/M dominance/bondage (no blood) Kink, S/M dominance/bondage (with blood) Never Over 6 mths ago In the past 6 mths
 24. Have you done any sex work? Never Over 6 mths ago In the past 6 mths
 25. When was the last occasion you had sex with a gay/homosexual/bisexual man? Never Go to Q27 Over 6 mths ago Go to Q27 In the past 6 mths
 26. In the past 6 mths have you had vaginal/anal intercourse with a gay/bisexual man (regular or casual partner) without a condom? Never Occasionally Often Over 6 mths ago Go to Q29 In the past 6 mths
 27. When was the last occasion you had sex with a straight/heterosexual man? Never Go to Q29 Over 6 mths ago Go to Q29 In the past 6 mths
 28. In the past 6 mths have you had vaginal/anal intercourse with a straight/heterosexual man (regular or casual partner) without a condom? Never Occasionally Often
 29. Are you currently in a sexual relationship with a regular partner? No Go to Q31 A woman A man Multiple regular partners/poly
 30. How long is this relationship? Less than 6 mths 6-11 mths 1-2 yrs 3-5 yrs More than 5 yrs
 31. Have you had casual sex in the past 6 mths? No Yes, with women Yes, with men Yes, with both

32. On any occasion in the past 6 mths have you had group sex which included:
 a gay, homosexual or bisexual man No Yes
 a straight or heterosexual man
 a woman
 Kink, S/M dominance/bondage (no blood)
 Kink, S/M dominance/bondage (with blood)

Violence
 33. In the last 12 months, have you experienced any of the following anti-lesbian, gay, bi or trans behaviour?
 Yes No Tick if reported to police:
 Verbal abuse or harassment Yes No
 Being pushed or shoved
 Being bashed
 Physical threat or intimidation
 Refusal of service
 Refused employment/promotion

34. Have you been in a relationship where a partner physically/emotionally abused you?
 Yes, a man Yes, a woman Never Go to Q38
 Yes, both

35. Please indicate when this last was:
 In past 2 yrs 2-5 years ago Over 5 yrs ago

36. Did you talk to someone/seek help?
 No Go to Q38
 Yes

37. Who did you talk to? (tick all that apply)
 Friend/Neighbour
 Counsellor/psychologist Family or relative
 Police Doctor or hospital
 LGBTI service DV helpline
 Online service (specify)

General health
 38. Do you have a regular GP?
 I see the same GP I attend the same health centre No Go to Q41

39. If you have a regular GP, how satisfied are you?
 Very Satisfied Satisfied Neither Satisfied Unsatisfied Very unsatisfied

40. Are you out to your GP about your sexuality/gender identity?
 No Yes

41. In general, would you say your health is?
 Poor Fair Good Very good Excellent

42. How tall are you without shoes? _____ cms
 43. How much do you weigh? _____ kgs

44. When did you have your last Pap smear test?
 Less than 2-3 yrs ago 3-5 yrs ago More than 5 yrs ago Never Not sure

45. Have you been vaccinated against Human Papillomavirus (HPV: Gardasil/Cervarix)?
 No, never Not sure
 Yes, at least 1 dose Yes, at least 2 doses
 Yes, at least 3 doses Unsure how many doses

46. Have you ever had a test for a sexually transmitted infection (not HIV)?
 Over 6 mths ago In the past 6 mths No

47. Have you ever been diagnosed with an STI?
 No Yes

48. Have you ever had an HIV antibody test?
 No Go to Q50 Yes Not sure

49. What was the result of your last HIV test?
 Positive (you have HIV) Negative Not sure

50. Where do you get sexual health information?
 Friends GP Community organisation Other (specify)

Psychological health and wellbeing
 51. Have you ever accessed a counsellor or psychiatrist?
 No Yes, in past 5 yrs Yes, over 5 yrs ago

52. Have you ever been diagnosed with depression, anxiety disorder or other mental health disorder?
 No Yes, in past 5 yrs Yes, over 5 yrs ago

53. During the past 4 wks, how much of the time did you feel
 All of the time Most of the time Some of the time A little of the time None of the time

So sad nothing could cheer you up

Nervous

Restless or fidgety

Hopeless

That everything was an effort

Worthless

Smoking, drinking and drug use
 54. Do you currently smoke cigarettes or other tobacco?
 Daily More than weekly (not daily) Less than weekly Ex-smoker Never smoked/less than 100 in lifetime

55. How often do you normally drink alcohol?
 Never Go to Q58 Less often than weekly
 1 or 2 days a week 3-4 days a week
 5-6 days a week Every day

56. On a day when you drink alcohol, how many standard drinks do you usually have?
 (1 drink = a small glass of wine, a middy of beer or a nip of spirits)
 1-2 drinks 3-4 drinks 5-8 drinks
 9-12 drinks 13-20 drinks 20+ drinks

57. In the past 6 mths, how often have you drunk 5 or more drinks on one occasion?
 Never Once or twice
 About once a month About once a week
 More than once a week Every day

58. How often have you used these drugs in the last 6 mths?
 And where did you take usually them?
 1-5 6+ Home party sex
 Venue/ During
 Benzos / Valium
 Amyl / poppers
 Natural cannabis
 Synthetic cannabis
 Ecstasy
 Amphetamines
 (speed/ice)
 Cocaine
 LSD / trips
 GHB
 Ketamine
 New/emerging
 psychostimulants
 Any other drug
 (specify) _____

59. Have you ever injected drugs?
 Never Over 6 months ago In past 6 months

60. Have you ever sought help for a drug and/or alcohol issue (your own)?
 No End of survey Yes Go to Q61

61. Where did you seek help? (tick all that apply)
 Counsellor/psychologist GP
 Specialist D&A service Helpline
 Community organisation LGBTI service
 Self-help groups (AA/NA/SMART) Friends/relatives
 Online/apps (specify) Hospital/ED
 Other (specify)

Thank you for taking the time to complete our survey



Sydney Women and Sexual Health (SWASH) Survey 2014

Before you start, complete this code so we can track changes in women's health over time. This will NOT identify you.

First two letters of first name and surname

Did you complete the SWASH survey in 2012? Yes No

About You

1. What is your age? _____ years
2. Postcode or Suburb/Town where you live _____
3. Are you of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander origin? No Yes

4. What is your ethnic or cultural background? (e.g. Greek, Vietnamese, Lebanese, Chinese)
 Anglo-Australian only Other (specify)

5. Do you think of yourself primarily as:
 Lesbian/dyke/gay/homosexual Bisexual
 Queer Heterosexual/straight
 Other (specify)

6. Which of these six statements best describes you? / I have felt sexually attracted—
 Only to females, never to males
 More often to females, and at least once to a male
 About equally often to females and to males
 More often to males, and at least once to a female
 Only to males, never to females
 To no one at all

7. Are you transgender or transsexual? No Yes
 Prefer not to say

8. Are you intersex? No Yes
 Prefer not to say

9. Are you: Tick all that apply
 Employed part-time Employed full-time
 Doing domestic duties Unemployed
 Pensioner/social security Not in the work force
 Student

10. What is your annual income before tax? Nil—\$19,999
 \$20,000—\$39,999 \$40,000—\$59,999
 \$60,000—\$99,999 \$100,000+

11. What is the highest level of education you have completed?

- Up to Year 10 / School Certificate 1
- Year 12 / HSC / Leaving Cert / IB 2
- Tertiary diploma or trade certificate 3
- University or college degree 4
- Postgraduate degree (MA, MSc, PhD) 5

12. Do you have any dependent children? No Yes
 If yes, how many? _____

13. Are you planning to have a child in the next 2 years? No Yes

14. Have you ever been homeless? Tick all that apply
 Now Past Never

- Sleeping rough/squatting 1 2 3
- Emergency accommodation, refuge, shifting between friends/relatives 1 2 3
- Boarding house, caravan park, hostel, hotel, motel 1 2 3

Community

LGBTQ means Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer

15. Do you feel connected to a LGBTQ community in your everyday life? Very 1 Mostly 2 Somewhat 3 Rarely 4 Not at all 5

16. In the past 6 mths have you attended:
 No Monthly Weekly More

- Lesbian/queer women's night/bar 1 2 3 4
- Gay night/bar 1 2 3 4
- LGBTQ dance party 1 2 3 4
- LGBTQ group meeting 1 2 3 4
- LGBTQ community event 1 2 3 4
- LGBTQ sports group 1 2 3 4

17. How many of your friends are LGBTQ? None 1 A few 2 Some 3 Most 4 All 5

Sex and relationships

18. When was the last time you had sex with a woman? Over 6 mths ago 2 Go to Q22 3 In the past 6 mths 4
 Never 1 Go to Q22 5

19. In the past 6 mths, how many women have you had sex with? None 1 One 2 2-5 3 6-10 4 More than 10 5

20. In the last 4 weeks, how many times have you had sex with a woman? (write a number) _____ times

21. In the past 6 mths, which of the following have you done while having sex with a woman? No Yes

- Fingers / hand on external genitals 1 2
- Fingers / hand inside vagina 1 2
- Fingers / hand inside anus 1 2
- Oral sex (your mouth, her genitals) 1 2
- Oral sex (her mouth, your genitals) 1 2
- Rimming (her mouth, your anus) 1 2
- Rimming (your mouth, her anus) 1 2
- Sex toy used on external genitals 1 2
- Sex toy used inside vagina 1 2
- Sex toy used inside anus 1 2

22. In the past 6 mths, have you done: S/M dominance/bondage (no blood) 1 2
 S/M dominance/bondage (with blood) 1 2

23. Have you done any sex work? Over 6 mths ago 2 In the past 6 mths 3
 Never 1

24. When was the last occasion you had sex with a gay/homosexual/bisexual man? Over 6 mths ago 2 Go to Q26 3
 In the past 6 mths 4
 Never 1 Go to Q26 5

25. In the past 6 mths have you had vaginal or anal intercourse with a gay/bisexual man (regular or casual partner) without a condom? Never 1 Once 2 Occasionally 3 Often 4

26. When was the last occasion you had sex with a straight/heterosexual man? Over 6 mths ago 2 Go to Q28 3
 In the past 6 mths 4
 Never 1 Go to Q28 5

27. In the past 6 mths have you had vaginal or anal intercourse with a straight/heterosexual man (regular or casual partner) without a condom? Never 1 Once 2 Occasionally 3 Often 4

28. Are you currently in a sexual relationship with a regular partner? No 1 Go to Q30 2
 A woman 3 A man 4 Multiple regular partners/poly 5

29. How long is this relationship? Less than 6 mths 1 6-11 mths 2 1-2 yrs 3 3-5 yrs 4
 More than 5 yrs 5

30. Have you had casual sex in the past 6 mths? No 1 Go to Q32 2
 Yes, with men 3 Yes, with women 4
 Yes, with both 5

31. Where do you meet casual sexual partners? Tick all that apply
 Bars/night clubs 1
 Online dating sites 2
 Social networking sites 3
 Friends of friends 4
 Other (specify) _____ 5

32. On any occasion in the past 6 months have you had group sex which included:
 a gay, homosexual or bisexual man 1 No Yes 2
 a straight or heterosexual man 1 2
 a woman 1 2
 S/M dominance/bondage (no blood) 1 2
 S/M dominance/bondage (with blood) 1 2
- Your health**
33. Do you have a regular GP? 1 No 2 Go to Q36
 I see the same GP 2 I attend the same health centre 3
34. If you have a regular GP, how satisfied are you?
 Very satisfied 1 Satisfied 2 Neither 3 Unsatisfied 4 Very unsatisfied 5
35. Are you out to your GP about your sexuality/gender identity? 1 No 2 Yes 3
36. In general, would you say your health is?
 Poor 1 Fair 2 Good 3 Very good 4 Excellent 5
37. How tall are you without shoes? _____cms
38. How much do you weigh (no clothes/shoes)? _____kgs
39. When did you have your last Pap smear test?
 Less than 2 yrs ago 1 2-3 yrs ago 2 3-5 yrs ago 3 More than 5 yrs ago 4 Never 5 Not sure 6
40. Have you been vaccinated against Human Papillomavirus (HPV; Gardasil/Cervarix)?
 1 dose 1 2 doses 2 3 doses 3 Never 4 Not sure 5
41. Have you ever had a test for a sexually transmitted infection (not HIV)?
 Over 6 mths ago 1 In the past 6 mths 2 No 3
42. Have you ever been diagnosed with an STI?
 Yes 1 No 2 In the past 6 mths 3
43. Have you ever had an HIV antibody test?
 Yes 1 No 2 Go to Q45
 Not sure 3
44. What was the result of your last HIV test?
 Positive (you have HIV) 1 Negative 2 Not sure 3
45. Where do you get sexual health information?
 Friends 1 GP 2 Community organisation 3
 Other (specify) _____ 4 Don't seek information 5
- Psychological health and wellbeing**
46. Have you ever accessed a counsellor or psychiatrist?
 No 1 Yes, in past 5 yrs 2 Yes, over 5 yrs ago 3
47. Have you ever been diagnosed with depression, anxiety disorder or other mental health disorder?
 No 1 Yes, in past 5 yrs 2 Yes, over 5 yrs ago 3
48. During the past 4 weeks, how much of the time did you feel:
 All of the time 1 Most of the time 2 Some of the time 3 A little of the time 4 None of the time 5
 So sad nothing could cheer you up 1
 Nervous 1
 Restless or fidgety 1
 Hopeless 1
 That everything was an effort 1
 Worthless 1
- Smoking, drinking and drug use**
49. Do you currently smoke cigarettes or other tobacco?
 Daily 1 More than weekly (not daily) 2
 Less than weekly 3 Ex-smoker 4
 Never smoked/less than 100 in lifetime 5 Go to Q52
50. In the last 12 mths, have you:
 Successfully given up smoking (more than a month) 1
 Tried to give up unsuccessfully 2
 Changed to a brand with lower tar/nicotine content 3
 Tried to change to a brand with lower tar/nicotine content, but were unsuccessful 4
 Reduced the amount of tobacco you smoke in a day 5
 Tried to reduce the amount of tobacco smoked in a day, but were unsuccessful 6
 None of these 7
51. Would you like to reduce or quit your current level of smoking? 1 No 2 Yes 3
52. How often do you normally drink alcohol?
 Never 1 Go to Q57
 1 or 2 days a week 2
 3-4 days a week 3
 5-6 days a week 4
 Every day 5
 7-8 days a week 6
53. On a day when you drink alcohol, how many standard drinks do you usually have? (1 drink = a small glass of wine, a middy of beer or a nip of spirits)
 1-2 drinks 1 3-4 drinks 2 5-8 drinks 3
 9-12 drinks 4 13-20 drinks 5 20+ drinks 6
54. In the past 6 mths, how often have you drunk 5 or more drinks on one occasion?
 Never 1 Once or twice 2
 About once a month 3 About once a week 4
 More than once a week 5 Every day 6
55. In the last 12 mths, have you:
 Reduced the number of times you drink 1
 Switched to drinking more low-alcoholic drinks than you used to 2
 Stopped drinking alcohol 3
 Changed your main drink 4
 None of the above 5
56. Would you like to reduce or quit your current level of alcohol use? 1 No 2 Yes 3
57. How often have you used these drugs in the last 6 mths?
 Never 1 1-5 times 2 6-10 times 3 11-20 times 4 More than 20 times 5
- | | | | | | |
|--------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| Benzos / Valium | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 |
| Amyl / poppers | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 |
| Marijuana | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 |
| Ecstasy | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 |
| Speed | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 |
| Cocaine | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 |
| Crystal meth | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 |
| LSD / trips | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 |
| GHB | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 |
| Ketamine | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 |
| Any other drug (specify) | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 |
58. Have you ever injected drugs?
 Never 1 Over 6 months ago 2 In past 6 months 3
- Violence**
59. In the last 12 months, have you experienced any of the following anti-lesbian, gay, bi or trans behaviour?
 Yes 1 No 2 Tick if reported to police:
 Verbal abuse or harassment 1 2 3
 Being pushed or shoved 1 2 3
 Being bashed 1 2 3
 Physical threat or intimidation 1 2 3
 Refusal of service 1 2 3
 Refused employment/promotion 1 2 3
60. Have you ever been in a relationship where your partner physically or emotionally abused you?
 Never 1 Go to Q62 Yes, with a man 2 Yes, with a woman 3
61. Did you talk to someone else about it or seek help?
 No 1 Yes 2
62. Since the age of 16, have you been forced or frightened into doing something sexually that you didn't want to do?
 Never 1 Yes, by a man 2 Yes, by a woman 3

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey
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