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2018 Sydney Gay Asian Men Survey

Brief report on findings



October 2018



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BBV & STI RESEARCH, INTERVENTION
AND STRATEGIC EVALUATION



CALD GAY MEN'S
Action Group



CSRH

Centre for Social Research in Health

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Suggested citation

Wong, H.T.H., Mao, L., Chen, T., Yullus, H., Mackie, B., Sparks, M., Wark, T., Kao, S.C., Wong, S., Dailey, B., Haque, M.A., Gonzalez, N., Prihaswan, P., Stackpool, G., Brooks, M., Dabbhadatta, J., Aung, E., Lewis, D., Halliday, D. (2018). *2018 Sydney Gay Asian Men Survey: Brief report on findings*. Sydney: Centre for Social Research in Health, UNSW Sydney.
<http://doi.org/10.26190/5c070cf9692fe>

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Preface

The 2018 Sydney Gay Asian Men Survey was a part of a national research project designed to provide a comprehensive assessment of key HIV- and STI-related practices and health needs amongst gay and other men who have sex with men of Asian background in Australia. It was led and sponsored by the Sydney-based Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) Gay Men Action Group—a partnership between ACON, the Multicultural HIV and Hepatitis Service (MHAHS), South Eastern Sydney LHD, Sydney LHD, South Western Sydney LHD, Western Sydney LHD, Northern Sydney LHD and the Centre for Social Research in Health (CSRH) at UNSW. The 2018 round of data collection, in particular, was funded by the NSW Ministry of Health under the BBV & STI Research, Intervention and Strategic Evaluation (BRISE) program.

Between February and October 2018, a total of 733 valid questionnaires were collected from the internet, community venues and clinics across Sydney. Among all respondents, 599 reported currently residing in Sydney¹. This brief report presents the data based on these 599 respondents.

1 The remaining 134 respondents including 12 from NSW, 116 from other Australian states and 6 from overseas.

1 Characteristics of respondents

1.1 Recruitment channels

Respondents were mainly recruited from the internet (n=229, 38%), sex on premise venues (SOPV) (n=179, 30%) and LGBTQ+ events (e.g. Queer Screen, public discussion forums and ACON's events) (n=142, 24%).

1.2 Age, sexualities, education and employment status

The median age of respondents was 31 (range 15 to 69). Compared to Australian born respondents, overseas-born respondents were older (mean age: 29 vs 34, $t=5.796$, $p=.003$).

The majority of respondents identified themselves as being gay/homosexual (n=515, 86%) and male (n=580, 97%).

Most (n=465, 78%) respondents had attained a university degree. About half (n=317, 53%) were working full-time while 18% (n=106) were full-time students.

1.3 Race/ethnicity and visa status

The most reported races/ethnicities of respondents were Chinese (n=250, 37%), Thai (n=82, 12%), Filipino (n=65, 11%), Vietnamese (n=52, 9%), mixed (n=38, 6%), Indonesian (n=35, 6%) and Malaysian (n=35, 6%)².

A majority (n=500, 84%) of respondents were born overseas. About one-third (n=201, 34%) had been living in Australia for five years or less. Most (n=419, 70%) respondents were Australian citizens or permanent residents. Some (n=99, 17%) reported living in Australia with a student visa, or (n=38, 6%) with a working visa.

1.4 Location of residency

About half (n=317, 53%) of the respondents were residing in so-called 'gay suburbs' (e.g. Darlinghurst, Surry Hills, Potts Point, Newtown). The five most reported postcodes of residence were 2000 (e.g. Sydney, Haymarket, The Rocks) (9%), 2010 (Darlinghurst and Surry Hills) (9%), 2011 (e.g. Potts Point, Woolloomooloo, Elizabeth Bay) (5%), 2016 (Redfern) (4%) and 2131 (Ashfield) (3%).

2 In this report, the category 'Chinese' includes respondents from Mainland China, Taiwan and Hong Kong regions. Respondents reported more than one racial/ethnic background are categorised as 'mixed'.

2 HIV-related health-seeking practices

2.1 Self-reported HIV prevalence and engagement in HIV treatment

In this survey, 5% (n=30) of respondents reported living with HIV. Among HIV positive respondents, most (n=22, 73%) reported having an undetectable viral load and 83% (n=25) reported being on anti-HIV medication.

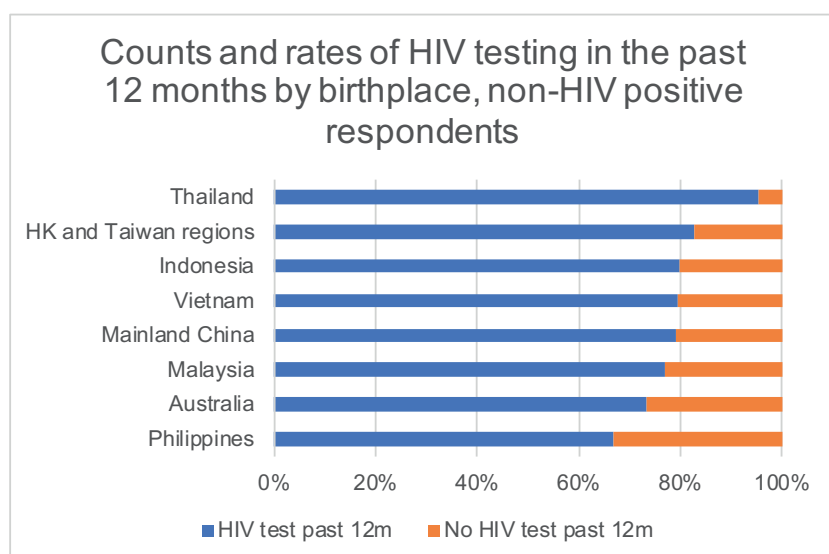
2.2 HIV testing pattern among non-HIV positive respondents (n=569)

Among the 569 non-HIV positive respondents, 93% (n=528) had ever had a HIV test, and 82% (n=465) had their most recent test within the past 12 months. A total of 225 (40%) non-HIV positive respondents had tested more than 3 times in the past 12 months.

The most reported venues of respondents' most recent HIV test were sexual health clinics (n=217, 38%), GP (n=128, 22%) and community-based testing service (e.g. a[Test]) (n=93, 16%).

In this survey, the non-HIV positive respondents who were born in Thailand (n=61/64, 95%)³, Hong Kong and Taiwan regions (n=57/69, 83%) and Indonesia (n=36/45, 80%) had the highest 12-month HIV testing rates. The lowest 12-month HIV testing rate was reported by Filipino-born respondents, with only 67% (n=38/57). The 12-month HIV testing rate of Australian-born non-HIV positive respondents was 73% (n=69/94). (Figure 1)

Figure 1. HIV testing in the past 12 months by birthplace among non-HIV positive respondents (n=569)⁴



³ It has to be noted that about 40% of Thai-born respondents were recruited at HIV testing sites or through SWOP's network.

⁴ Only the countries or geographical regions with more than 25 respondents reported as their birthplace were shown.

2.3 Dried blood spot (DBS) HIV test

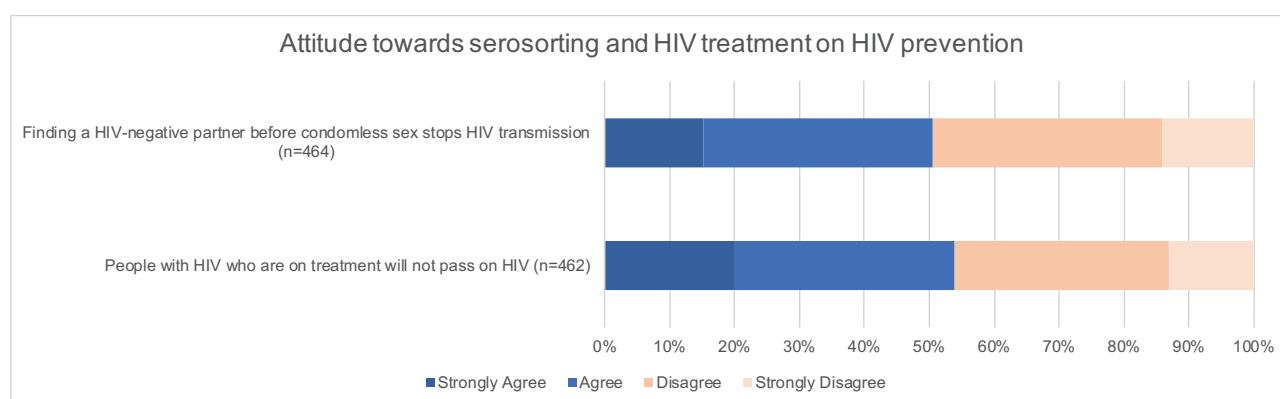
Only 4 (0.7%) respondents in the survey reported having had used a DBS test kit for HIV test.

Among all non-HIV positive respondents, although most (n=342, 60%) were interested in getting an HIV testing kit that they could use at home, a majority (n=478, 84%) did not know where to get a DBS test kit.

2.4 Attitude towards serosorting and HIV treatment on HIV prevention

Among the respondents who answered the questions regarding their attitude towards serosorting and HIV Treatment as Prevention (TasP), only about half believed that finding a HIV-negative partner (51%) and HIV TasP (54%) could prevent HIV transmission. (Figure 2)

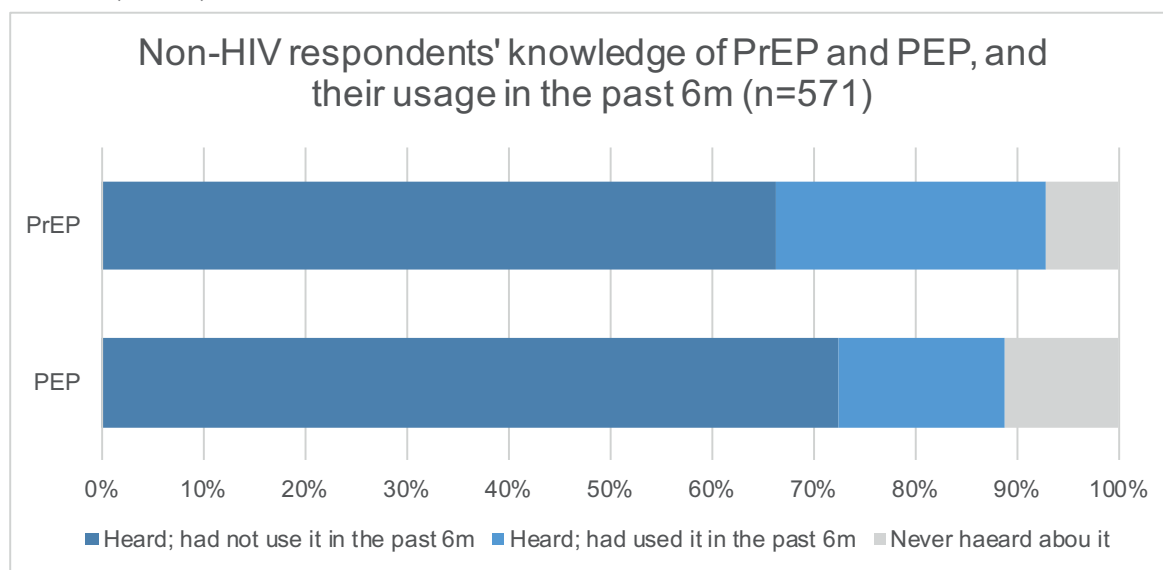
Figure 2. Attitude towards serosorting and HIV treatment on HIV prevention



2.5 PrEP and PEP knowledge and usage (non-HIV positive respondents) (n=569)

Among non-HIV positive respondents, a majority reported having heard about PrEP (n=530, 93%) and/or PEP (n=507, 89%). In the past 6 months, 27% (n=151) of non-HIV positive respondents reported having had used PrEP and 16% (n=93) used PEP. (Figure 3)

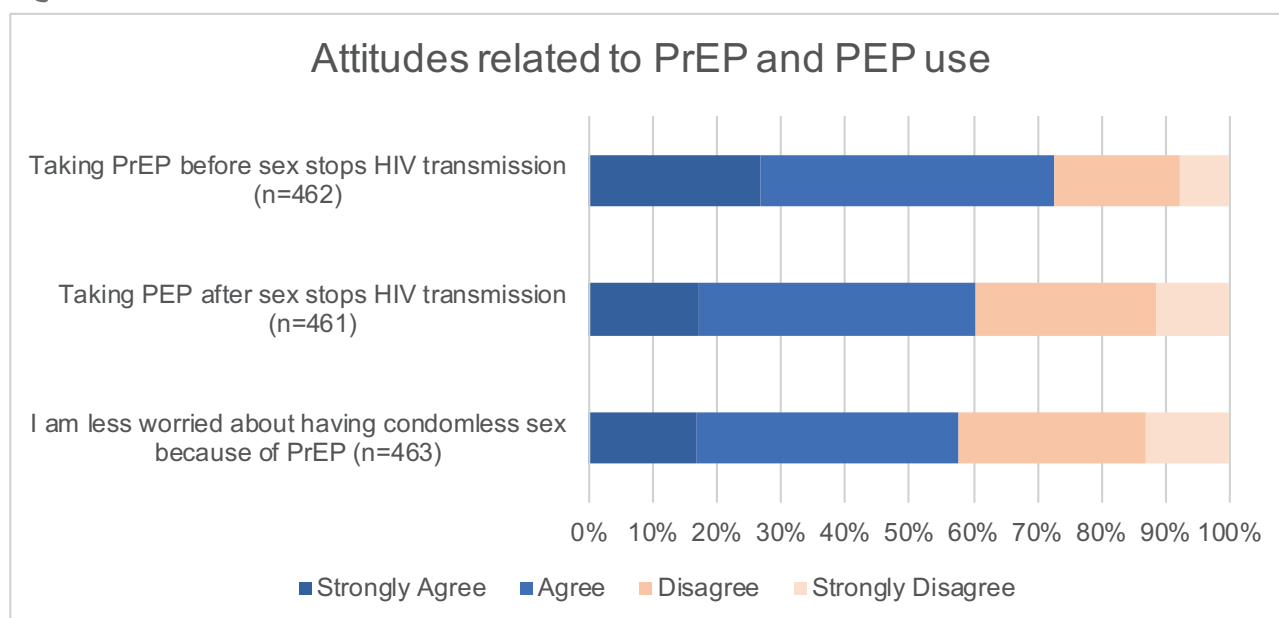
Figure 3. Non-HIV positive respondents' knowledge of PrEP and PEP, and their usage in the past 6 months (n=571)



2.6 Attitude towards PrEP and PEP

Among the respondents who answered the questions about their attitude related to PrEP and PEP use, 73% agreed with the statement that using PrEP before sex could stop HIV transmission; 60% agreed that using PEP after sex could stop HIV transmission; and 58% reported being less worried about having condomless sex because of PrEP. (Figure 4)

Figure 4. Attitude related to PrEP and PEP use



3 STI-related health-seeking practices

3.1 Self-reported STI diagnosis in past 12 months

Among all respondents, 64 (11%) reported having had been diagnosed with chlamydia, 65 (11%) gonorrhoea, 16 (3%) syphilis, and 9 (2%) other STIs in the past 12 months.

A few (n=36, 6%) respondents reported having had been diagnosed with at least two STIs in the past 12 months.

3.2 STI testing pattern

About half (n=316, 53%) of respondents had tested for STI in accordance to the STIGMA guidelines (i.e. a combination of throat swab, anal swab, urine and blood test) at least once in the past 12 months.

The most reported STI testing services that had been used by respondents in the past 12 months were Sydney Sexual Health Centre (n=114, 19%), GP (n=109, 18%) and a[Test] (n=107, 18%).

3.3 Hepatitis testing

Among all respondents, 50% (n=229) had ever had a test for hepatitis A, 54% (n=321) hepatitis B, and 40% (n=242) hepatitis C. This survey did not ask respondents to report on their hepatitis status.

About one-fourth (n=125, 21%) of all respondents had never had a hepatitis test.

4 Sexual practices in the past six months

4.1 Regular anal sex partners (n=268)

Among all respondents, 268 (45%) had anal sex with regular partner(s) in the past six months.

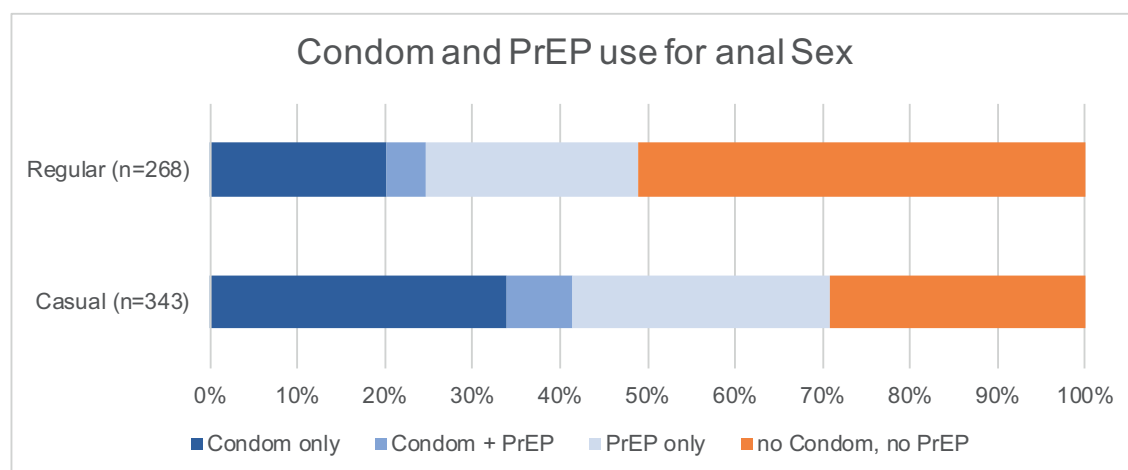
Of these 268 participants, 77 (29%) were PrEP users and 66 (25%) used a condom every time with their regular partner(s). A total of 137 (51%) respondents did not use a condom or PrEP with their regular partners. (Figure 5)

4.2 Casual anal sex partners (n=343)

Among all respondents, 343 (57%) had anal sex with casual partner(s) in the past six months.

Of these 343 participants, 127 (37%) were PrEP users and 142 (41%) used a condom every time with their casual partner(s). A total of 100 (29%) respondents did not use a condom or PrEP with their casual partners. (Figure 5)

Figure 5. Condom and PrEP use with regular and casual partners for anal sex in the past 6 months



4.3 Channels for finding sex partners

Mobile apps (n=327, 55%), gay saunas (n=201, 34%), and websites (n=147, 25%) were the most reported channels for finding sex partners. Noteworthy, 11% (n=64) of respondents reported they had looked for sex partners overseas.

4.4 Sex work, group sex and sex with women

In the past six months, a few participants had received cash or gifts in exchange for sex (n=69, 12%), and/or had sex with women (n=50, 8%). About one-third of respondents (n=187, 31%) had group sex involving at least two other men.

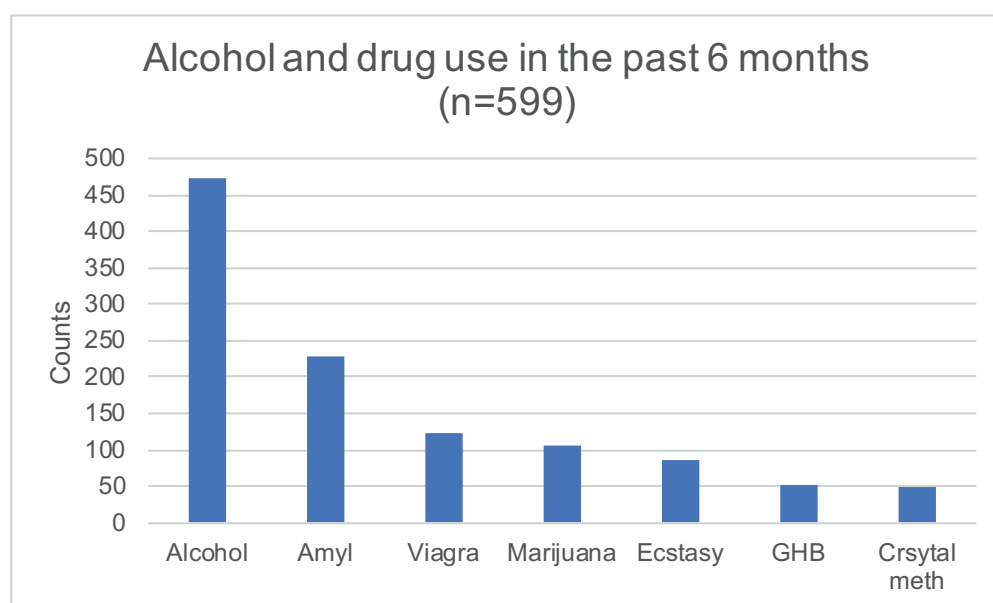
5 Alcohol and substance use

Overall, 56% (n=335) of respondents had used recreational substances (except alcohol) in the past 6 months. The most reported substances (other than alcohol) used were amyl (n=228, 38%), Viagra (n=122, 20%) and marijuana (n=106, 18%). (Figure 6)

Among all respondents, in the past 6 months, 25% (n=148) had used drug for sex, 13% (n=75) had used drugs for group sex involving at least two other men.

A few (n=24, 4%) of respondents had injected drugs in the past 6 months.

Figure 6. Alcohol and drug use in the past six months (n=599).



6 Gay community attachment, social networking, channel of health information and social experiences

6.1 Gay community attachment and social networking

In the past 12 months, 20% (n=121) had some involvements in gay community organisations, services or groups in Sydney.

About one-third of respondents reported that most of their friends were gay (n=218, 36%), and they always spent their free time with other gay friends (n=186, 31%).

About one-fourth (n=156, 26%) of respondents always spent their free time with other Asian friends.

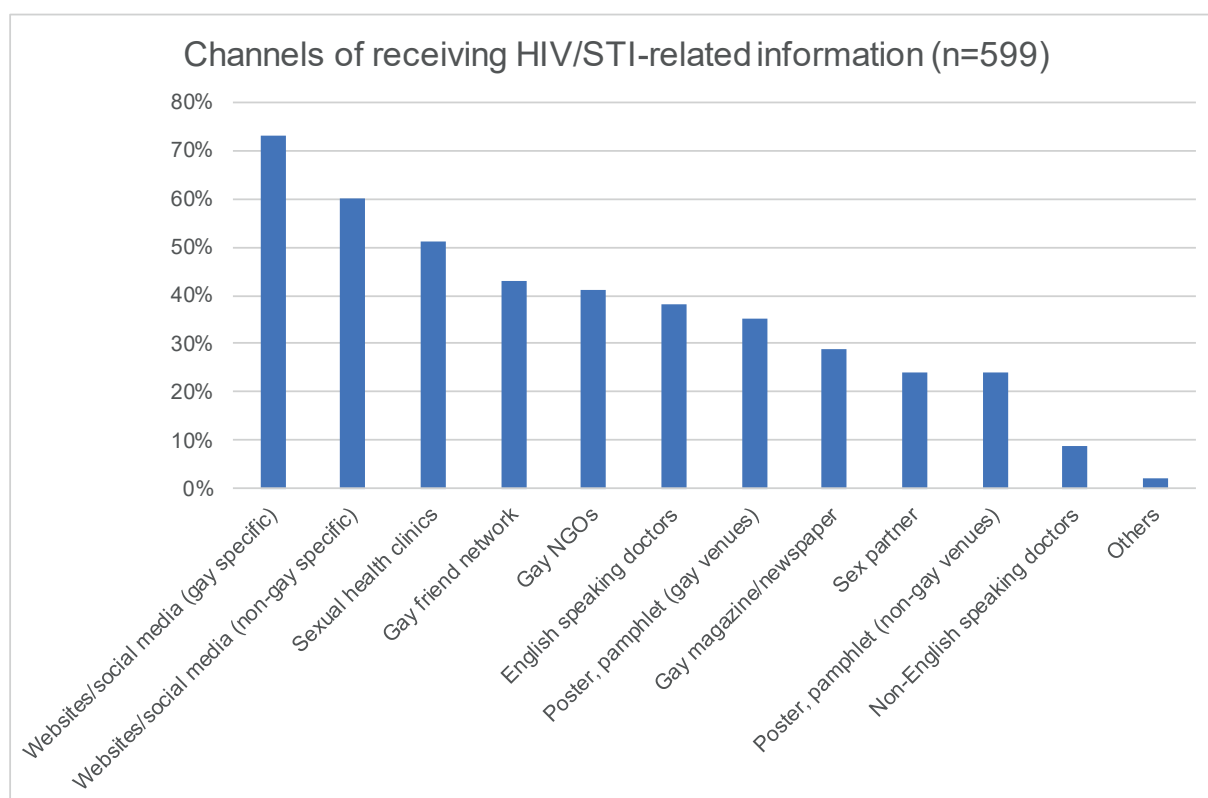
6.2 Channels of receiving HIV/STI-related information

The internet (gay specific website/social media: n=438, 73%; non-gay specific websites/social media: n=362, 60%) was the most reported channel for respondents to receive HIV/STI-related information.

Some respondents had received HIV/STI information through sexual health clinics (n=308, 51%) from their gay friends (n=258, 43%), and/or gay NGOs (n=246, 41%).

A few (n=55, 9%) respondents had received HIV/STI information from non-English speaking doctors. (Figure 7)

Figure 7. Channels of receiving HIV/STI related information



6.3 Negative social experiences

Compared to overseas-born respondents, Australian-born respondents were more likely to report having had negative experiences in the past 12 months in relation to their race/ethnicity (70% vs 38%, $\chi^2=33.829$, $p<.001$), skin colour or body size (38% vs 22%, $\chi^2=31.121$, $p<.001$) sexual attraction to men (54% to 25%, $\chi^2=11.924$, $p=.001$).

On the other hand, overseas-born respondents were more likely to report having negative experience with their English proficiency (14% vs 1%, $\chi^2=12.851$, $p<.001$). These differences remained statistically significant even after adjusting the respondents' length of time living in Australia. (Figure 8)

Figure 8. Negative experiences in relation to the following factors in the past 12 months (n=599)

