

National Centre in HIV Epidemiology and Clinical Research



Degree of acquaintance between casual partners prior to unprotected anal intercourse in the Health in Men (HIM) Cohort

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The Health in Men (HIM) Study

- Longitudinal (5-year) study of HIV-negative or previously untested men participating in Sydney's gay community.
- Jointly administered by the National Centre in HIV Epidemiology and Clinical Research, the National Centre in HIV Social Research, the Australian Federation of AIDS Organisations, and ACON.
- Interviews & testing commenced mid-2001.
- Involves annual interviews to coincide with serological testing for HIV and other STIs.
- Brief six-monthly update interviews are conducted by telephone.



Casual sex & familiarity

- **Casual sex is not always anonymous sex.**
- **How much of what is described as casual sex includes sex between men who know each other reasonably well?**
- **How much UAIC involves men who know each other well?**



Sample

- 1333 men were interviewed by end of 2003.
- 1186 of these men were interviewed during 2003.

	Total	2003
First interview	1333	430
Second interview	731	407
Third interview	354	349
TOTAL	1333	1186



Casual Sex

- **919 (77.5%) men interviewed in 2003 had sex with casual partners.**
- **A third of these men had UAIC with one in twelve of their partners.**

	Number of Participants	Number of Casual Partners
Any sex	919	23604
UAIC	341 (37.1%)	2021 (8.6%)



HIV-negative Casual Partners

- **240 had HIV-negative casual partners.**
- **Nearly half these men had UAIC with a quarter of their partners.**

	Number of Participants	Number of HIV-negative Partners
Any sex	240	1378
UAIC	98 (40.8%)	329 (23.9%)



HIV-positive Casual Partners

- 116 had HIV-positive casual partners.
- A quarter of these men had UAIC with a third of their partners.

	Number of Participants	Number of HIV-positive Partners
Any sex	116	614
UAIC	28 (24.1%)	204 (33.2%)



HIV-unknown Casual Partners

- 873 had casual partners whose HIV status they did not know.
- A third of these men had UAIC with one in fourteen of their partners.

	Number of Participants	Number of HIV-unknown Partners
Any sex	873	20825
UAIC	273 (31.3%)	1489 (7.2%)



Knowledge of status & UAIC

- They were more likely to have UAI when they knew a casual partner's status.
- Knowing their partner was positive made little difference.
- If they had UAI with a positive casual partner, they were likely to do so more than once.

HIV-negative Casual Partners



- Three quarters previously knew their HIV-negative UAIC partners.
- A third men knew these partners well.
- About 2.5 previously acquainted partners each.

	Number of Participants	Number of HIV-negative Partners
Any UAIC	98	329
Knew previously	75 (76.5%)	180 (54.7%)
Knew well	34 (34.7%)	90 (27.4%)

HIV-positive Casual Partners



- Two thirds previously knew their HIV-positive UAIC partners.
- A third men knew these partners well.
- About 4 previously acquainted partners each.

	Number of Participants	Number of HIV-positive Partners
Any UAIC	28	204
Knew previously	18 (64.3%)	73 (35.8%)
Knew well	9 (32.1%)	40 (19.6%)

HIV-unknown Casual Partners



- Nearly half previously knew their UAIC partners whose HIV status was unknown.
- One in five men knew these partners well.
- About 2.5 previously acquainted partners each.

	Number of Participants	Number of HIV-unknown Partners
Any UAIC	273	1489
Knew previously	123 (45.1%)	353 (23.7%)
Knew well	54 (19.8%)	125 (8.4%)



Summary

- **Gay men often report knowing the HIV status of casual partners with whom they are previously acquainted.**
- **Knowing a partner is positive does not preclude UAIC.**
- **A few HIV-negative men have repeated UAI with HIV-positive casual partners, regardless of how well they know them.**

Discussion



- **Disclosure of sero-status in casual sex is often to enable UAIC.**
- **Knowing one partner is positive probably leads to strategic positioning rather than condom use in many cases.**
- **Some HIV-negative men engage in UAIC because they believe they know some casual partners well enough to make reasoned assessments of their risk.**

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