

Seasonal variations in kissing and sexual activities among men who have sex with men in Melbourne, Australia: implications for seasonal sexually transmissible infection preventions and interventions

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Background:

Previous studies have shown that there is a peak in sexually transmissible infection (STI) cases and sexual activities around summer, but there has been no study examining whether kissing also follows a similar seasonal pattern. The aim of this study was to examine the seasonal patterns of kissing and sex partners among gay, bisexual and other men who have sex with men (MSM).

Methods:

A short cross-sectional study was conducted among MSM attending the Melbourne Sexual Health Centre between March 2016 and February 2017. Participants were asked to report the number of kissing-only, sex-only and kissing-with-sex male partners in the last 3 months. The mean number of male partners was calculated and stratified by Australia's seasons. The seasonal trend in the number of partners was assessed by negative binomial regression models.

Results:

In total, 4391 MSM were included in the analysis. The number of kissing-only and sex-only partners increased significantly from autumn to summer among MSM in Melbourne ($P_{\text{trend}} < 0.001$). MSM reported the highest number of male partners for kissing-only (mean: 4.91; 95% CI: 4.78–5.04) and sex-only (mean: 1.91; 95% CI: 1.83–1.99) around summer compared with other seasons. However, the number of kissing-with-sex partners remained stable across seasons.

Conclusion:

The study data suggest that there is a peak in kissing-only and sex-only partners among MSM around summer and holiday seasons.

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