

James A. Fowler<sup>1</sup> Marini Mendis<sup>1</sup> Sarah Warzywoda<sup>1</sup> Alex Crook<sup>2</sup> UnYoung Chavez-Baldini<sup>2</sup> Judith A. Dean<sup>1</sup>  
<sup>1</sup>The University of Queensland, School of Public Health <sup>2</sup>Aromantic-spectrum Union for Recognition, Education, and Advocacy (AUREA)

## Background:

Aromanticism, as an umbrella term and individual label, refers to people who have a non-normative relationship with romantic attraction [1]. This may be actualized across a wide spectrum of experiences - from lack of interest, repulsion, confusion, or highly conditional romantic attraction. Research into the Aromantic community is sparse - with much of the known knowledge stemming from online community forums and unpublished works [2]. This research, in collaboration with AUREA (Aromantic-spectrum Union for Recognition, Education, and Advocacy - a global online Aromantic community initiative) aimed to conduct some of the first empirical research exploring what Aromanticism means to Aromantic folk.

## Methods:

This research is taken from a wider study called 'AroUQ'. AroUQ was an online survey developed in collaboration with AUREA study partners. This exploratory survey used mostly open-ended questions and was distributed through AUREA's global social media network. Data for this poster were analysed focusing on questions asking participants to define aromanticism, describe societal barriers for aromantic people, and the power of connecting with their aromantic identity. A combination of thematic and descriptive analyses were used for analyses.

## Results:

2052 participants responded to the survey from across the world (see Fig 1) in the span of 48 hours. Participants reported a wide variety of sexual and romantic identities (Fig 3.). The average age of participants was 23.4 (range: 16-56). 80% had never disclosed their aromantic identity to a health practitioners. 62% had experienced discrimination due to their aromantic identity.

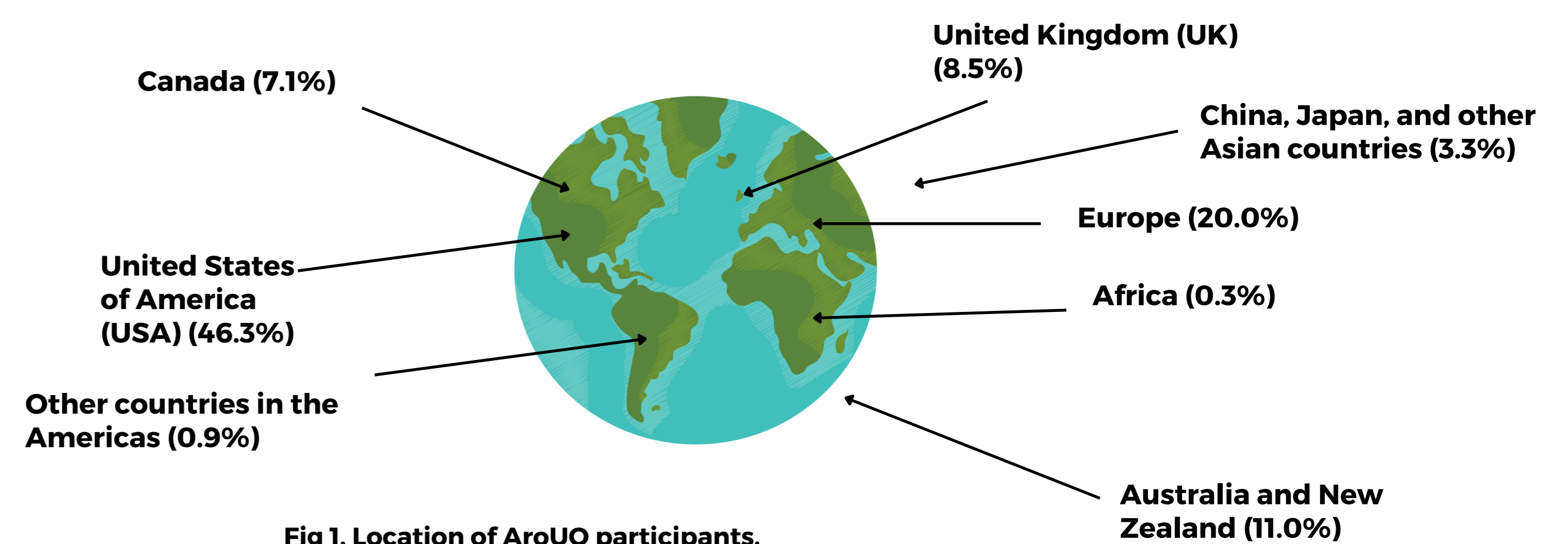


Fig 1. Location of AroUQ participants.

**The aromantic-spectrum is diverse and what it means to be aromantic varied person-to-person.** What underpins all of these conceptualisations is that to be aromantic means your experience with romantic attraction and romantic relationships differs from what society considers "normal". See Fig. 2 for examples of definitions provided by participants.

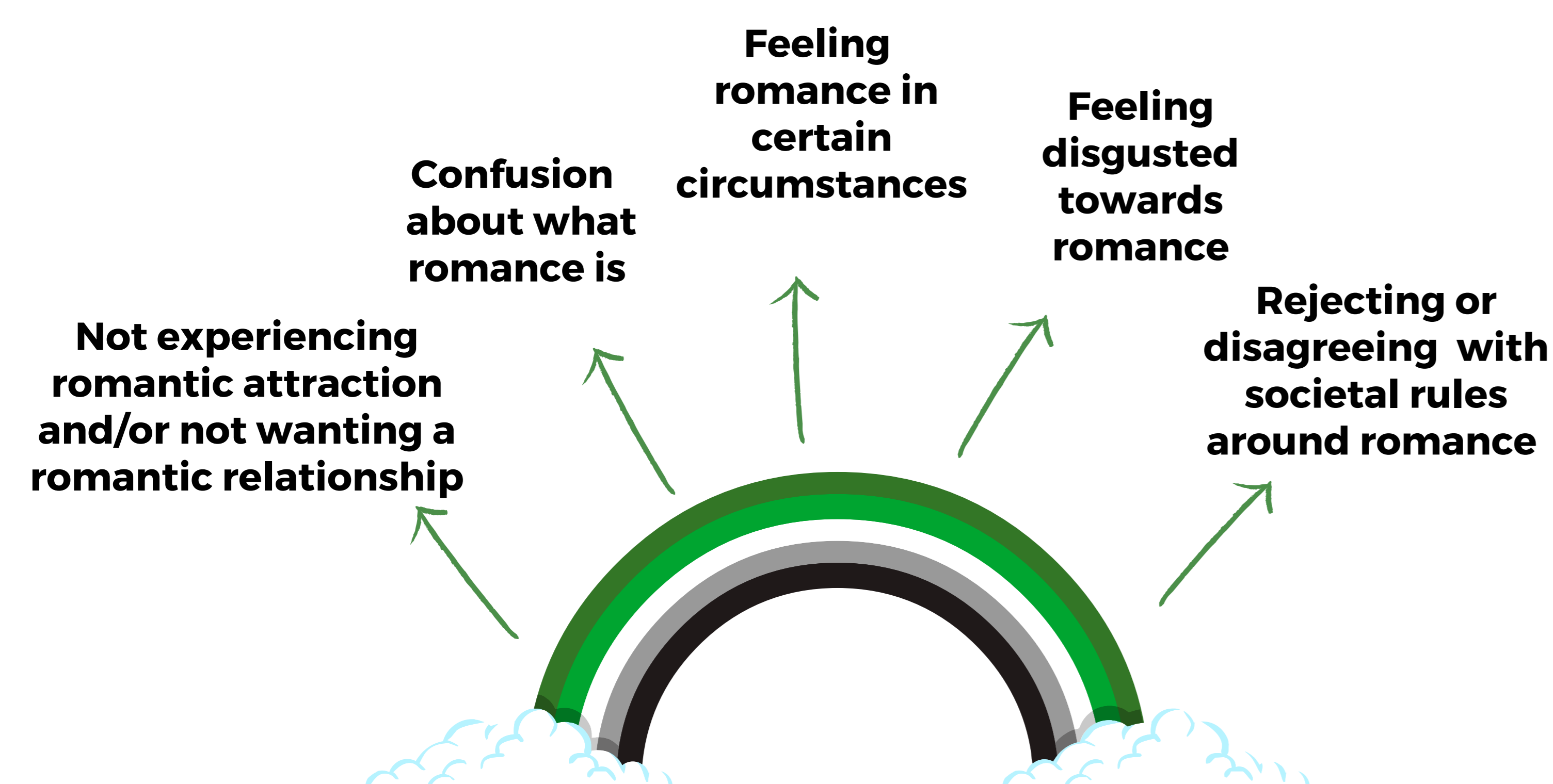


Fig. 2 Participant definitions of aromanticism

**The vast majority of participants (90.3%) stated that their sexual identity was distinct from their romantic identity.** Some aromantic people use the 'Split Attraction Model' to differentiate romantic vs sexual attraction as described in Fig. 3.

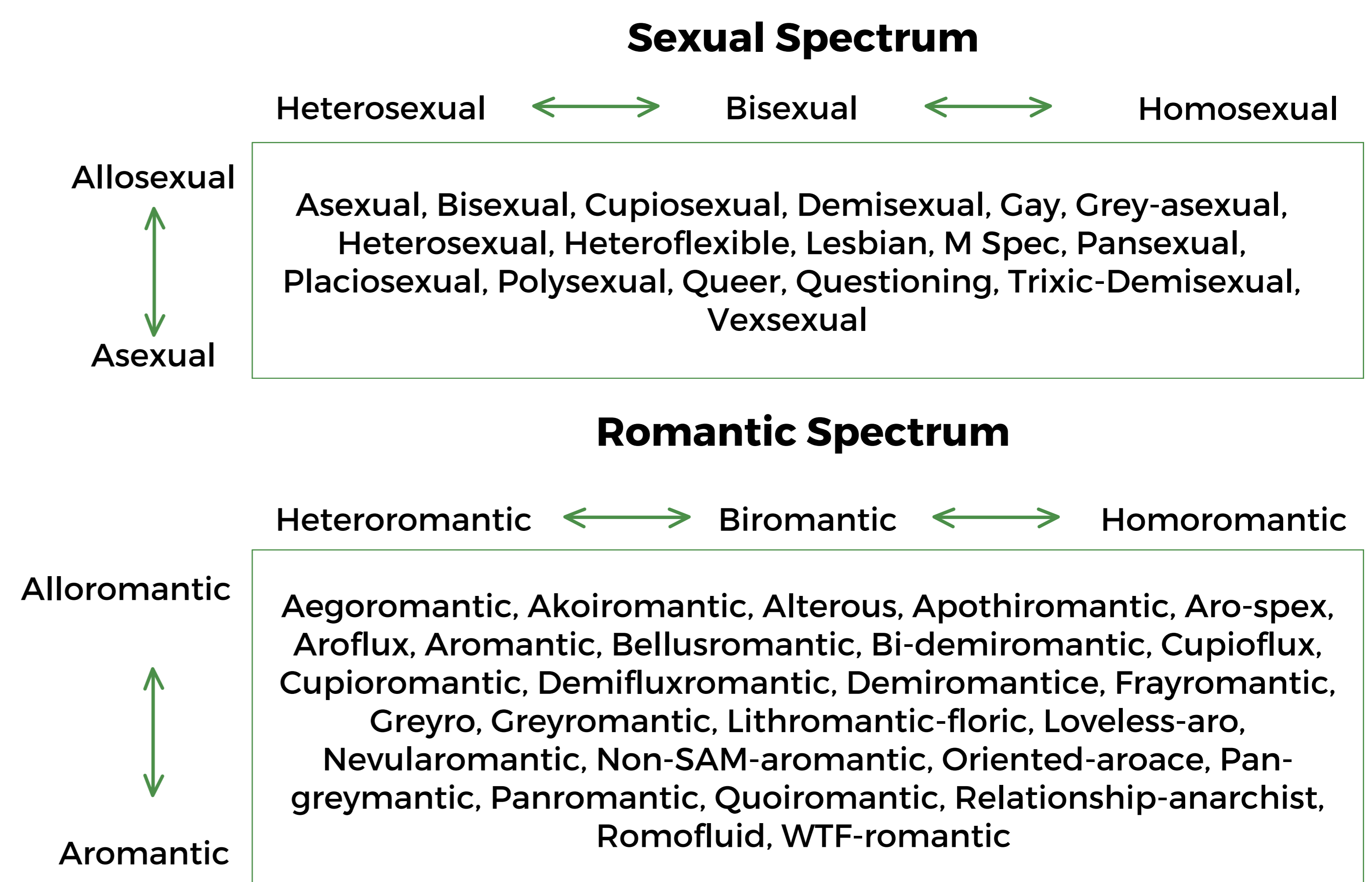


Fig. 3 Split Attraction Model based on an example by LGBT Hero [3].

Identities reported are based on self-reported identities within this study and reported alphabetically. Allosexual = someone who experiences sexual attraction and not on the asexual spectrum, aromantic = someone who experiences romantic attraction and not on the aromantic spectrum.

For many, **connecting with their aromantic identity was liberating** as it helped some people find and accept themselves.

*"[Realising I was aromantic] was like a breath of air when I was suffocating. I felt at ease for the first time."*

17-year-old, nonbinary, asexual, aromantic person from the USA

*"After finding myself, I felt less broken. I was so happy to have a word to describe myself and other people who feel like me I can be in community with"*

20-year-old, non-binary, bisexual, aromantic, polyamorous / nonamarous individual from the USA

## Discussion:

The Aromantic community are diverse, tied together by shared experiences of non-normative relationships with romance. Experiences of romantic attractions can be distinct from sexual attraction and behaviours. Therefore, sexual health practitioners and researchers need to ensure that romantic identity is considered independently from sexual behaviour and in turn sexual health needs. Also reported by participants are forms of attraction outside of sexual and romantic, such as aesthetic and platonic which may also influence sexual health. Building awareness around the nuanced needs of this community and the complexity of attraction as a whole is important to inform development and provision of affirming models of care.

## References

- 1 AUREA. Basic Terms 2021 [Available from: <https://www.aromanticism.org/en/basic-terms>]
- 2 AUREA. Aro Census 2020 Report. 2021. [available from: <https://www.aromanticism.org/aro-census>]
- 3 Hero L. What are romantic orientations? 2021 [Available from: <https://www.lgbthero.org.uk/what-are-romantic-orientations>].

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Contact James (james.fowler@uq.edu.au) or Judith (j.dean4@uq.edu.au)



Or visit the AUREA website: [www.aromanticism.org](http://www.aromanticism.org)

