

Proportion and size of group sex events and condom use among heterosexual men and women in Melbourne, Australia

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Background:

Few studies investigate group sex among heterosexuals. The aim of this study was to provide an in-depth exploration of characteristics and practices among heterosexual men and women who engage in group sex.

Methods:

We conducted a cross-sectional survey between May 2019 and March 2020 among heterosexual men and women attending a sexual health clinic in Melbourne, Australia. Participants were asked whether they had participated in group sex (sex involving more than two participants) within the past three months, size of the most recent event, sexual activities they engaged in and condom use.

Results:

Of 3277 heterosexuals surveyed (1509 women and 1768 men), mean age was 29.9 years (SD: 8.8) and more than half (56.0%, n=1834) were born outside Australia. One in twenty (5.4%) had engaged in group sex in the past three months with the number of events ranging from 1-10 times. Kissing was the most common activity in group sex, and women were significantly more likely to kiss a same-sex partner than men. Overall, of 165 participants who engaged in vaginal sex, only 57 (34.5%) both used condoms consistently and changed condoms between consecutive partners. Of 100 men and women who had condomless vaginal sex, 79 (79.0%) received or performed fellatio after condomless vaginal sex.

Conclusion:

About two-thirds of heterosexuals who engaged in group sex neither used condoms nor changed condoms between partners in the most recent group sex event. Safe sex messages on changing condoms between partners and between sexual activities should be reinforced for STI.

Disclosure of Interest Statement:

The authors declare that the research was conducted in the absence of any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.