

# THE DURATION AND BODY POSITIONING OF TONGUE-KISSING AMONG HETEROSEXUAL MEN AND WOMEN

## Authors:

Tran J<sup>1,2</sup>, Fairley CK<sup>1,2</sup>, Ong JJ<sup>1,2</sup>, Bradshaw CS<sup>1,2</sup>, Phillips TR<sup>1,2</sup>, Hocking JS<sup>1,2</sup>, Maddaford K<sup>1</sup>, Chen MY<sup>1,2</sup>, Chow EPF<sup>1,2,3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Melbourne Sexual Health Centre, Alfred Health, Melbourne, Victoria, Australia

<sup>2</sup> Central Clinical School, Monash University, Melbourne, Victoria, Australia

<sup>3</sup> Melbourne School of Population and Global Health, The University of Melbourne, Melbourne, Victoria, Australia

**Background:** Oropharyngeal gonorrhoea is common among heterosexuals who are sexual contacts of individuals with gonorrhoea. Generally, heterosexual women are more commonly infected at the oropharynx than heterosexual men, attributed to fellatio being a more efficient transmission route than cunnilingus. Tongue-kissing may also transmit gonorrhoea, but very little data exists which describe the kissing duration and body positioning while kissing among heterosexual men and women.

**Methods:** We conducted a cross-sectional survey of heterosexual men and women attending the Melbourne Sexual Health Centre in Australia between May 2019 and March 2020. Heterosexuals were defined as individuals who reported oral, anal and/or vaginal sex only with opposite-sex partners in the previous 12 months. This survey focused on their tongue-kissing duration, their body position (i.e. partner-on-bottom or partner-on-top) during their most recent kiss and whether sex was involved with their most recent kissing partner in the previous 3 months. Mean and standard deviation (SD) of the kissing duration, were calculated.

**Results:** Of the 1342 (50.1%) men and 1341 (49.9%) women surveyed (mean age=29.4, SD=8.4), all reported having a kissing partner in the previous 3 months and 87.2% (n=2339) reported having sex with their most recent opposite-sex kissing partner. Kissing duration when sex was involved (mean=12.1 minutes, SD=13.8) was similar to when sex was not involved (mean=10.5 minutes, SD=13.8). While kissing their most recent opposite-sex partner a longer time was spent by men being on top than women being on top (7.4 minutes vs. 6.0 minutes,  $p < 0.001$ ).

**Conclusion:** The duration of men being vertically above women during kissing and sex could allow saliva to transmit gonorrhoea more commonly to women than the reverse. If kissing transmitted gonorrhoea, then kissing duration and body position during sex would provide an alternative to the notion that fellatio transmits gonorrhoea more commonly than cunnilingus.

## Disclosure of Interest Statement:

EPFC and JJO are supported by an Australian National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) Emerging Leadership Investigator Grant (GNT1172873, GNT1193955). CKF is supported by an Australian NHMRC Leadership Investigator Grant (GNT1172900). JT is supported by a Research Training Program (RTP) and PhD scholarship from Melbourne Sexual Health Centre, Clinical School, Monash University. All other authors have no conflicts of interest to declare.

