

Wednesday, 16 November 2016

# Recreational drug use among NZ gay and bisexual men and its association with HIV and STI risk

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Australasian Sexual Health Conference, 14-16 Nov 2016, Adelaide



**MEDICAL AND  
HEALTH SCIENCES**



## Prevalence among GBM

- Flux: 51% of Australian GBM reported any drug use <6mths 2014/15 (Hammoud et al 2016)
- Prahran clinic: Recent methamphetamine reported by 40% of HIV+ vs 16.4% HIV- (Eu et al 2015)
- UK HIV+ cohort: 29% "chemsex"; 10% "slamsex" (Pufall et al 2016)
- UK NATSAL study: Gay identified men vs exclusively heterosexual OR 4.2 drug use in <12 mths (32.8% vs 6.7%) (Mercer et al 2016)



## Why do gay men take drugs?

Same reasons anyone does. But also:

- More **exposure** via gay social spaces (bars, clubs)
- **Minority** stress (heterosexism/HIV stigma)
- **Sexual** sensation seeking

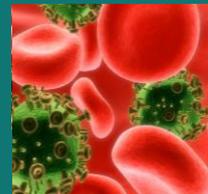
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## Drug use for gay men invites excess risk

- Unsafe sex and unsafe injecting due to drug use has different **consequences** (HIV, STIs, BBIs)
- Impair **adherence** to HIV treatment / PrEP
- "Chemsex" **concentrates** risks

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Home Features LiveStream Contact Watch on

## 'Chemsex': Drug-fuelled sex binges

Wednesday 3 Feb 2016 12:23 p.m.



0:43 / 4:08

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By Kim Vinnell

**WARNING: This video contains adult content and is not suitable for younger viewers.**

## Methamphetamine use on the rise

7:00 AM Friday Jul 22, 2016

SHARE:

### Percentage of positive drug tests with traces of methamphetamine

#### Bay of Plenty/Lakes regions

- 2014 10.57% • 2015 12.78% • 2016 14.84%

#### National

- 2014 7.5% • 2015 10.84% • 2016 12.82% - *Supplied by TDDA. Figures for the first six months of each year.*



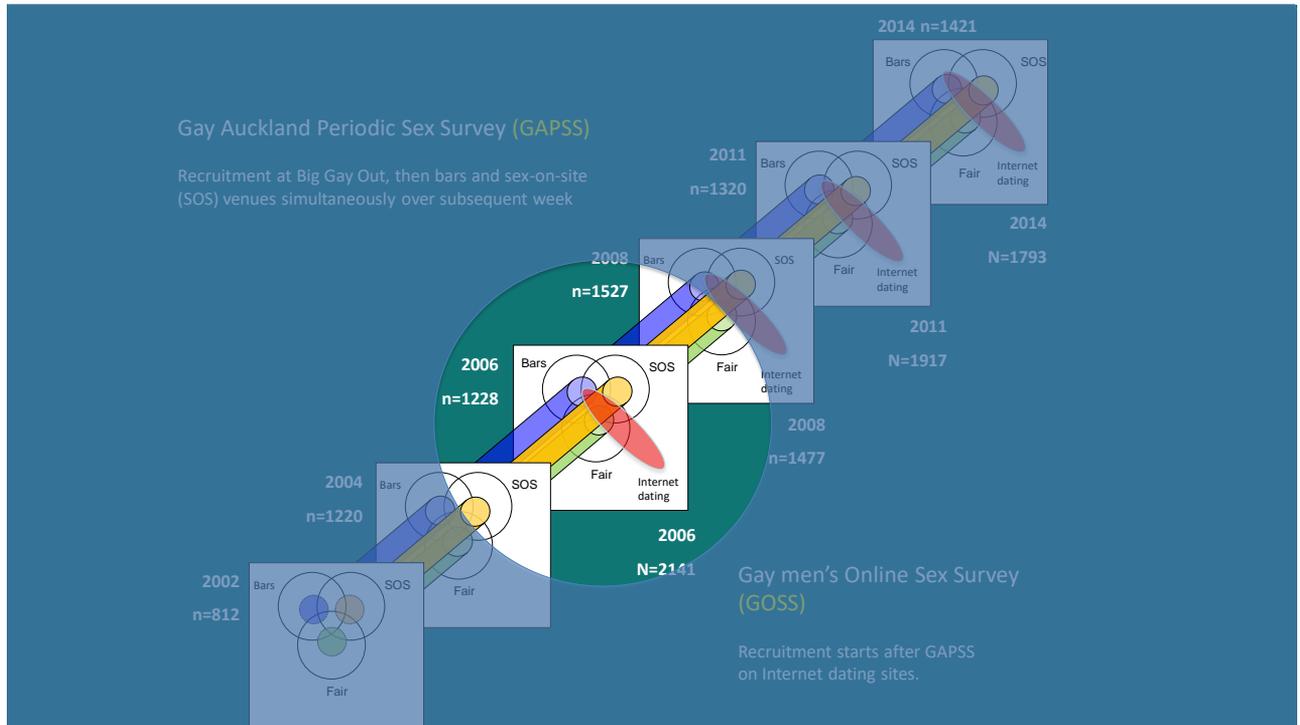
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## Aims

- Obtain baseline prevalence of drug use among GBM in New Zealand
- Examine characteristics of GBM reporting drug use
- Explore associations with HIV and STI risk



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## Substances

- Cannabis
- Volatile nitrates/poppers
- Ecstasy
- Amphetamine
- Methamphetamine
- LSD
- Cocaine
- GHB
- Ketamine
- Frequency of use <6 months



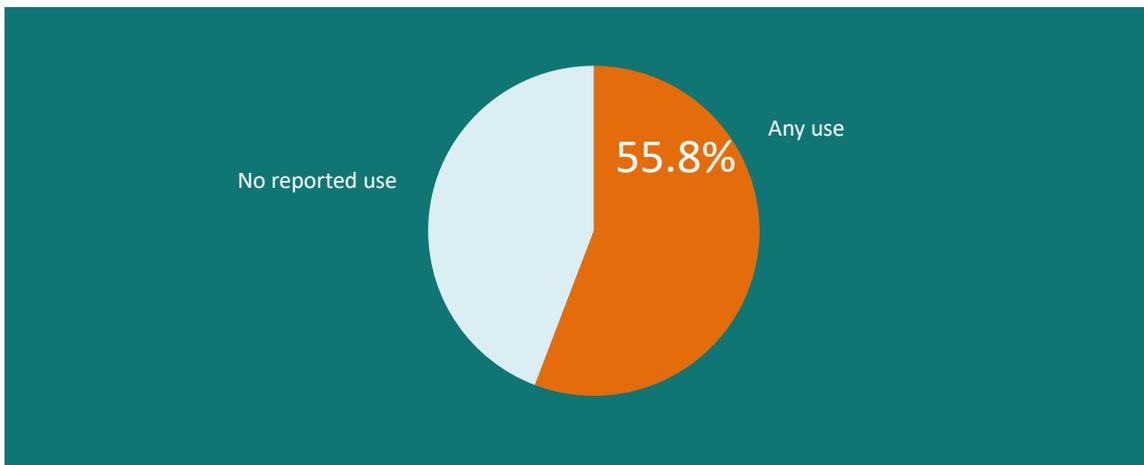
## Sample

- N=3211
- 69% gay identified, 24% bisexual
- 80% European, 9% Maori, 3% Pacific, 4% Asian
- 25% Fair day, 11% gay bars/ saunas, 64% online dating



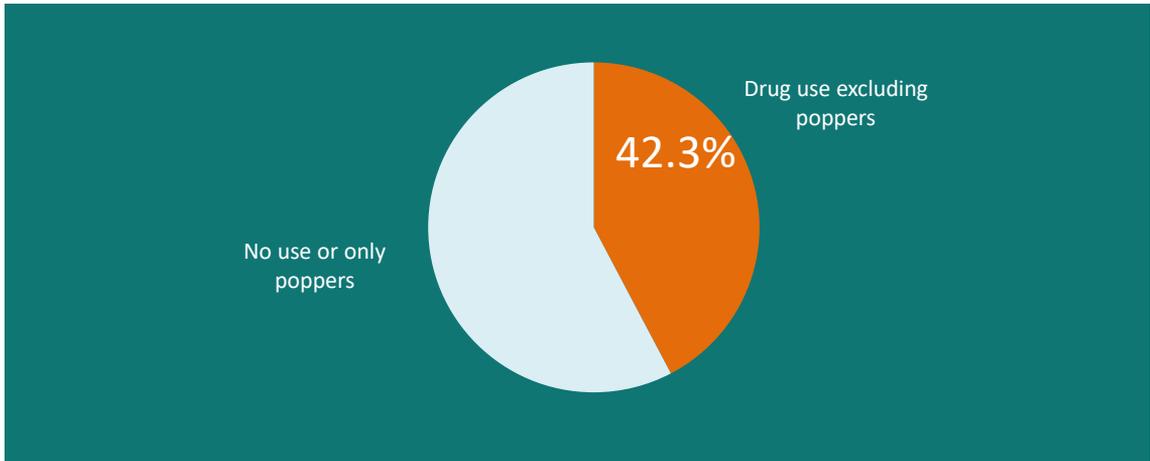
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## Any substance use



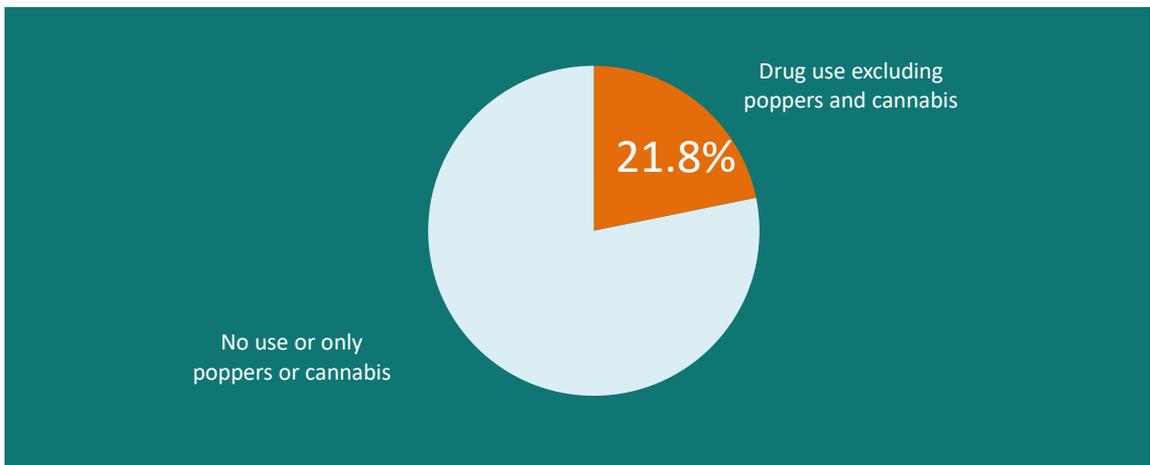
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## Any but poppers



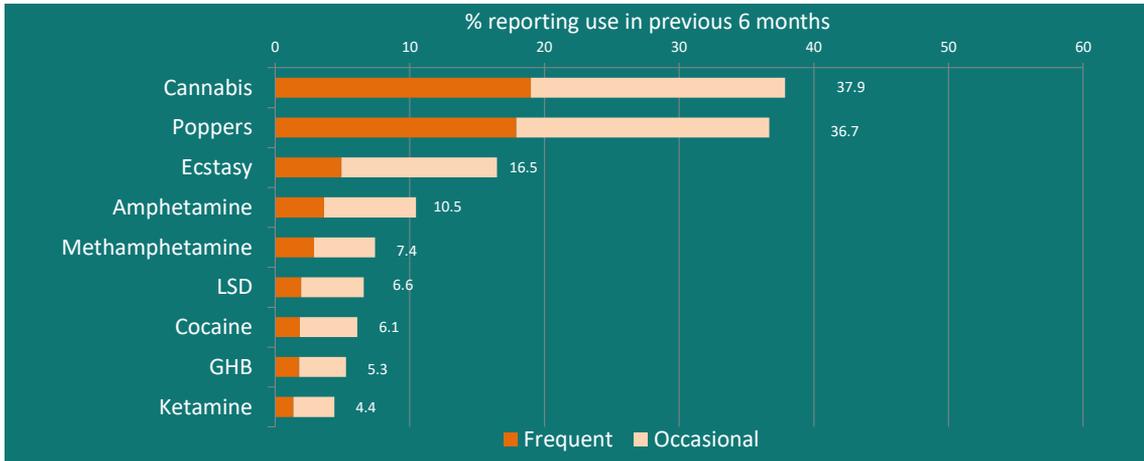
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## Any but poppers, cannabis



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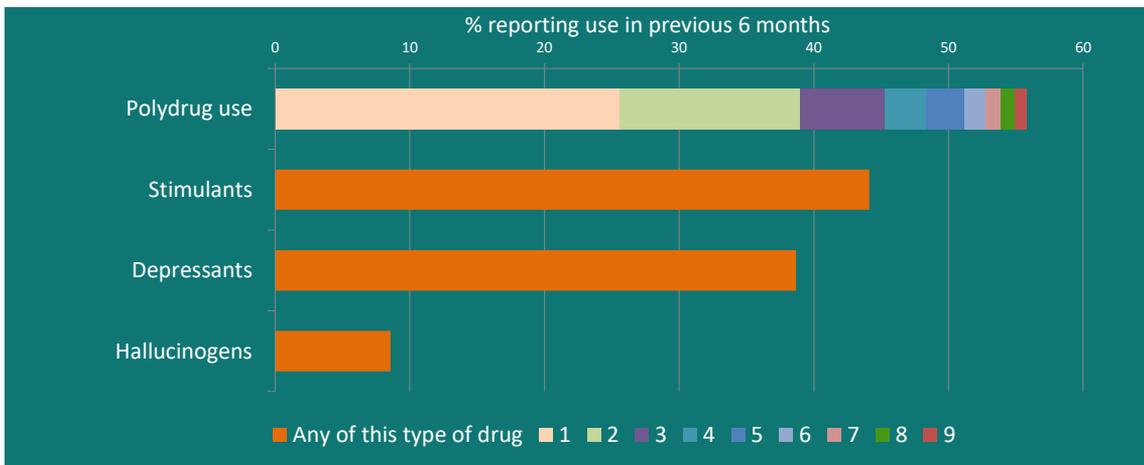
## Proportion and frequency using drug



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Frequent use = once or more a month; occasional use = once in 6 months to less than once a month

## Type and number of drugs



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## Any drug use by characteristics

Characteristic	Any drug use (%)
Recruitment site	<i>P&lt;0.001</i>
Fair day	59
Gay bars	74
Saunas	58
Online dating	53
Residence	<i>P&lt;0.001</i>
Akl/Wgn/Chc	59
Other NZ/os	48
Age group	<i>P&lt;0.001</i>
16-29	60
30-44	57
45+	45

Characteristic	Any drug use (%)
HIV test status	<i>P&lt;0.001</i>
HIV negative	60
HIV positive	73
Never tested	49
Ethnicity	<i>P&lt;0.001</i>
European	56
Maori	69
Pacific	56
Asian	35
Other	53
Sexual identity	<i>P&lt;0.001</i>
Gay	58
Bisexual	50
Other	57

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## Drug use and sexual behaviour

Drug use measure	> 20 partners <sup>a</sup>		Any condomless sex with casual <sup>b</sup>	
	%	AOR (95% CI)	%	AOR (95% CI)
Any drug use				
No	5.3	1	17.5	1
Yes	16.4***	<b>3.7 (2.8-2.9)</b>	31.4***	<b>2.0 (1.7-2.4)</b>
Cannabis				
No	9.0	1	21.1	1
Yes	15.5***	<b>2.1 (1.7-2.6)</b>	32.0***	<b>1.7 (1.4-2.0)</b>
Methamphetamine				
No	10.5	1	23.9	1
Yes	24.4***	<b>3.0 (2.2-4.3)</b>	43.0***	<b>2.2 (1.7-3.0)</b>
Polydrug				
No	5.3	1	17.5	1
1-4 drugs	15.1	<b>3.4 (2.6-4.5)</b>	29.9	<b>1.9 (1.6-2.3)</b>
5 + drugs	24.6***	<b>7.0 (4.7-10.5)</b>	41.2***	<b>3.2 (2.3-4.4)</b>

\*\*\*Univariate  $p<0.001$ . <sup>a</sup>AOR controlling for site of recruitment and age group. <sup>b</sup>AOR controlling for number of partners, recruitment site and age.



## Drug use and STI and HIV screening

Drug use measure	STI diagnosed <12 months <sup>a</sup>		HIV test < 12 months <sup>b</sup>	
	%	AOR (95% CI)	%	AOR (95% CI)
Any drug use				
No	5.2	1	29.3	1
Yes	11.0***	<b>2.0 (1.5-2.7)</b>	41.4***	<b>1.4 (1.3-1.7)</b>
Cannabis				
No	6.4	1	33.0	1
Yes	11.9***	<b>2.0 (1.5-2.6)</b>	40.9***	<b>1.3 (1.1-1.5)</b>
Methamphetamine				
No	7.4	1	36.0	1
Yes	21.4***	<b>2.9 (2.0-4.2)</b>	36.0 <sup>ns</sup>	1.1 (0.8-1.5)
Polydrug				
No	5.2	1	29.3	1
1-4 drugs	9.3	<b>1.7 (1.3-2.1)</b>	41.2	<b>1.5 (1.3-1.8)</b>
5 + drugs	21.8***	<b>4.3 (2.8-6.4)</b>	42.3***	<b>1.5 (1.1-2.0)</b>

\*\*\*Univariate p<0.001. <sup>b</sup>AOR controlling for number of partners, recruitment site and age. <sup>c</sup>AOR controlling for number of partners, site of recruitment, age group and urbanicity.



## Strengths and limitations

### Strengths

- Large and diverse sample
- Explore drug use and sexual behaviours
- 2006 baseline, repeat survey can monitor change

### Limitations

- Not generaliseable to all GBM
- Cannot attribute causality (drug use ⇔ behaviour)
- No data on chemsex, injecting (but 2011), alcohol



## Conclusion

- Drug use was **common**
- **Half** any drug use, **fifth** “hard drugs”
- Most used drugs **occasionally**, minority polydrug use
  - are addiction services **responsive** to GBM?
  - **harms** poorly described (Holt 2014)
- Drug use universally associated with risk behaviours and STIs
  - consistent with behavioural disinhibition
  - or marker for risk taking generally
  - Network effect: does sex with/between GBM who use drugs concentrate STI & HIV risk?

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## Acknowledgements

Participants and venues

Team

- David Newcombe, Arslan Ahmed, Nigel Dickson, Tony Hughes

Funding

- Ministry of Health
- NZAF Fellowship

Collaborators at University of Auckland, University of Otago, NZAF  
ASHM conference organisers and sponsors