



RESULTS MALE CALL / WAEA MAI TANE MA

Men in relationships with men

★ Half of men who have sex with men are in relationships.

★ The average length of all male relationships is 4 years 3 months.

★ Some men in relationships are not taking up the safe sex message of 'use a condom every time'.

★ Some monogamous men are not aware that their partner has casual sex.

★ Many men do not have a clear agreement about using condoms together or about sex outside their relationship.

★ A lot of men who think their relationships are safe from HIV are at risk—either from their own unprotected sex or unprotected sex their partner is having.

Men with men

Prior to Male Call, there was little research about men's relationships. Stereotypes of gay men presented them as single and promiscuous, or lonely and unable to form relationships. Male Call recorded a large number of men forming long-term relationships.

Compared with surveys from the late-1980s, more men are getting together nowadays.

Just over half of the participants in Male Call were in a regular relationship. They described their partners in a variety of ways, but the most common were; boyfriend, husband, partner, lover or de facto.¹

The average length of gay relationships was 4 years and 3 months.² Most commonly relationships lasted either for less than six months or for between two and five years. Those over 40 years old had longer relationships but all types of men were forming relationships: all ages, from all backgrounds and jobs and right across the country. A higher proportion of men from rural areas and Maori men were in relationships.

Sex in relationships

Male Call recorded the sort of sex between men in relationships of six months or more. Surprisingly these men—particularly those aged over 20 and in relationships for longer than a year—are not taking up the safe sex message of 'use a condom every time'.

Men in relationships had all types of sex and almost all masturbated, kissed or stroked their partners. Four in every five were into oral sex but most men didn't cum in their partner's mouth.

Anal sex was much more common inside than outside a relationship. Three quarters of all men, monogamous or not, had anal sex with their regular partner.³ Fucking and being fucked were roughly as common as each other and couples were more likely to cum inside their partners than they were to pull out before cumming.⁴

Monogamy or not?

The types of relationships men were having seemed to fall into two broad categories; 'open' relationships where one or both partners had sex outside the relationship, or relationships which men felt were 'monogamous'. Monogamy meant different things to different men. Some men took it to mean not having sex outside the relationship while others felt it meant emotional rather than sexual faithfulness.

Male Call found, however, that over half of the men had sex with casual partners.⁵ *Surprisingly, one in five men stated that they had casual sex but their partner did not, while only a very small percentage said the reverse—some men were not aware that their partners had casual sex.*

Men in open relationships were more likely to be over 35 years old, and were significantly more likely to see themselves as part of a gay community.⁶

Men had different types of sex with their regular partner and with a casual partner. With their regular partner, they were much more likely to engage in fucking, rimming, using sex toys, having oral sex with cum and deep kissing.⁷

Male Call/Waea Mai, Tane Ma was a nationwide survey of men who have sex with men in New Zealand. 1852 men dialled an 0800-freephone number to take part in the survey in May and June of 1996.

Male Call/Waea Mai, Tane Ma aimed to:

—describe the sex that men have with men, whether they are having safe sex and how much they know about AIDS and HIV.

—see how knowledge about AIDS and safe sex related to how men described themselves, where they came from, what they did etc.

—develop some questions which could be used in future surveys (to act as indications of change or progress).

—give information about sex between men which will help to plan new HIV prevention programmes.

Condom use

Although anal sex is more likely between men in relationships than with casual partners, men in relationships are less likely to use condoms for it. Over half of the men who had anal sex with their regular partners never used condoms. For men in relationships 'never' or 'rarely' using condoms for anal sex was the most common response.⁸

Male Call found that 7.9% of men in relationships never use condoms for anal sex with

more ... ➔

This fact sheet is a summary of some of the results of the *Male Call* nationwide survey of men who have sex with men. The full results are available from:

New Zealand AIDS Foundation,
P O Box 6663, Wellesley Street,
Auckland.

Telephone 09 / 303 3124.

For more results on the internet, you can contact <http://www.gayrelationships.org.nz>

casual partners and a small but significant number of men have unprotected sex in their relationships *and* with casual partners.⁹ This means that some men are placing themselves at risk of infection from unprotected sex and are allowing that risk to enter the relationship by having unprotected sex with a casual partner. *If this is you or your partner, your risk of HIV is high.*

Talking about sex

While men in open relationships tended to use condoms inside their relationships more often than those who were monogamous, they were also less likely to have an agreement about anal sex outside their relationship. In fact, couples with clear agreements about casual sex were a minority.

Almost half of the men in monogamous relationships had agreed to stop using condoms with their regular partner, compared to just over a quarter of non-monogamous men.

Safety from HIV

The Male Call data supports information which researchers at NZAF are gathering from in-depth interviews with male couples. In many cases, men think that their relationship protects them from the risk of being infected with HIV.

Most men in this couples' study had problems talking about casual sex with their partner. They were afraid of their partner's reactions to the topic; of feeling or causing jealousy or hurt; of losing trust in the relationship; and they were afraid that the topic of safe sex and casual sex could cause the relationship to break up.

Some men had talked about safe sex and also about sex outside their relationship and had reached a clear agreement. Sometimes these agreements were more of a general understanding about how their partner might feel about the issue.

Highly unsafe sex

Male Call not only asked men about condom use, but also if they had anal intercourse, in the last six months, with a man whose HIV status was unknown to them or different from their own. 83 men in relationships had done so—43 with their regular partners and 49 with casual partners. Eleven men had highly unsafe sex with both regular and casual partners.¹⁰

Within this group of men who had highly unsafe sex, there was an over-representation of: —men who were in a relationship of between one and two years, & —men who did not have an agreement with their partner about anal sex and condom use.

If this is you or your partner, your risk of HIV is high.

Notes

- 1 50.8% (940 out of 1852) men were in a regular relationship with a man. The study defined a 'regular partner' as; 'one with whom you have had sex more than once and with whom you plan to have sex in the near future.'
- 2 The average length of relationships was 4.2 years. Almost all of the men under 20 were in relationships for less than one year and none had been with their partner for more than five years. The same tended to be true for men aged 20–29 years. The majority of men who had been a couple for at least ten years were over 40.
- 3 75.8% (562 out of 741) of men in relationship for six months or more have anal sex with a regular partner. 37.6% (228 out of 562) of these have anal sex with a casual partner. Only a third said anal sex was the most physically and emotionally satisfying sex act.
- 4 54.7% (216 out of 400) of men in open relationships had come while fucking within the six months before the survey. 52.3% had sex with a partner who came inside them. 56.2% of monogamous men had come while fucking their partner and 55.7% had sex with their partner cumming. Pulling out before cumming was less popular with both monogamous and non-monogamous men.
- 5 54% (400 out of 741) of men in relationships of longer than six months had sex with at least one casual partner within that six month period.
- 6 Monogamous men were more likely to live in rural areas, were less likely to be attached to a gay community and were less likely to have told anyone about their attraction to men.
- 7 While 75.8% of men in open relationships had anal sex with a regular partner, only 57% had anal sex with casual partners.
- 8 248 monogamous men had anal sex with their regular partner. 134 (54%) never used a condom. 314 non-monogamous men had anal sex with their regular partner. 124 (39.%) never used a condom.
- 9 46% (258 out of 562) of those who had anal sex with a regular partner only, never used a condom. 7.9% 9.3% (18 out of 228) of those who had sex with casual partners never used a condom for casual sex. 5.5% (10 out of 183) who anal sex with both regular and casual partners never used a condom at all.
- 10 19.4% (67 out of 345) of non-monogamous men who had anal sex in the previous six months had highly unsafe sex. 5.6% (14 out of 248) of monogamous men who had anal sex were in this high-risk category.