



# Sexual identity development in behaviourally bisexual married men

Implications for essentialist theories of sexual orientation

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## Abstract

There is confusion in research and clinical practice about married men who have sex with other men. They are seen variously as bisexuals, defensive homosexuals, or sex addicts. A series of survey-based investigations with 355 participants recruited through self-help groups, advertising, gay community contacts, and electronically via the Internet, explored processes of homosexual identity formation and psychological adjustment in these men. The population was found to have distinct subgroups, and processes of homosexual identity formation appeared understandable only by recourse to an underlying essentialist construct of sexual orientation. More homosexually oriented men manifested improved psychological adjustment following marital separation and this has implications for theoretical models of homosexuality and for prospective interventions with these men.

**Keywords:** homosexuality, bisexuality, social constructivism, marriage, essentialism, evolution, sexual orientation, sexual identity, sexual behaviour

## Introduction

Essentialist theoretical models of male homosexuality, including those that have posited the potential adaptive significance of homosexuality (McKnight 1997), have generally not focused specifically on explanations of bisexuality but have tended to assume equivalence in the broad

antecedents of same-sex sexual interests and behaviours across subpopulations of gay and bisexual men. Recent constructivist theorizing has explained bisexuality as an expression of natural diversity in sexual behaviour (Garber 1995) or used bisexuality to question the nature of traditional binary notions of sexuality (Dowsett 1996).

Indeed, the bulk of published research in the last decade on bisexuality has been conducted within a broad constructivist framework and the phenomenon of bisexuality has been utilized to critique essentialist theorizing (e.g. Firestein 1996; Fox 1995; Weinberg, Williams and Pryor 1994). The current paper examines behavioural bisexuality among heterosexually married men and by developing a series of 'ideal types' demonstrates that a full understanding of bisexual behaviour supports essentialist rather than constructivist theoretical models of homosexuality.

Some homosexual men marry and father children. While some of these men remain married and manage their homosexual desire within the confines of their heterosexual relationships, many others find their heterosexual relationships unsatisfactory and exit the relationship. These men who transit from a heterosexual to a gay identity represent a potentially critical subpopulation of men in further advancing understanding of the antecedents of sexual object choice.

Within both the psychological and sexuality literature there are few explorations of this phenomenon. Ross (1983) published the most comprehensive study of the married homosexual man and has subsequently observed that between 1.3 and 1.9 per cent of married men report ongoing homosexual behaviour, and approximately 20 per cent of self-identified gay men report a previous heterosexual primary relationship (Ross 1990).

There has been little subsequent research focusing *specifically* upon married homosexual men. Ross's (1983) research focused upon 'homosexual males' who were currently, or had been, married and a comparative sample of never-married homosexual males. The predominant outcome of his work was that one of the principal antecedents of homosexual men's marriages was that they reported higher anticipated negative reaction by others to their homosexuality than did homosexual males who did not marry. Ross found few indicators of problems in psychological adjustment within his still-married subjects.

Married men who have sex with other men (MMSMs) are told, often by helping professionals, that they are 'really gay', or 'really bisexual', or 'really a sex addict'; that they should leave/stay in their marriages; get therapy/get over it; tell their wives/not tell their wives; come out/stay in the closet. They find little, either in popular discourse or the academic literature on sexuality, that enables them to decide between these various alternatives. Preying on their confusion, there is an entire therapeutic industry in the USA, based on Christian ministry concerned with 'curing' homosexuals.

Much of the academic literature on MMSMs is essentially descriptive (e.g. Wolf 1985; Matteson 1985, 1988; Dixon 1985; Coleman 1985) and has tended to be life history analyses of small, usually clinical, convenience samples. There is little consistency in the literature. One research strand suggests that MMSMs are principally bisexual and that, with an accepting and tolerant spouse, adjustment within the marriage is possible (Matteson 1985). There is the further suggestion that in the absence of wives' knowledge or approval the process of compartmentalization facilitates the psychological well-being of those who remain within their heterosexual relationship (Brownfain 1985). The other research strand suggests such marriages are inevitably doomed, and that psychological well-being of homosexual husbands tends to increase following the dissolution of the marriage (Miller 1978; Bozett 1982). This confusion stems principally from a lack of precision in defining the target population. *A priori*, it would seem that there are at least two groups of MMSMs, one of which has an essentially bisexual alignment and the other essentially homosexual. As Crawford, Kippax and Prestage (1996), citing Buchbinder and Waddell (1992) observe:

the problematic fact of male bisexuality is accounted for in two ways by both the culture and the dominant model of masculinity. The first is consistent with a view of masculinity that is part of the sociobiological discourse of a strong male sex drive, that is, that male bisexuality is regarded as evidence of a potent male sexuality. . . . The second view . . . is to see the bisexually active man as in fact gay but pretending to be heterosexual.

(Crawford et al. 1996: 56)

Studies of MMSMs have not managed adequately to differentiate these groups and some have captured members of their target population in identity transition, potentially confusing the research outcomes.

### **Perspectives on male bisexuality**

Fox (1995) suggests that there have been significant shifts in perspective on bisexuality, which in part have paralleled shifting perspectives on homosexuality. The fundamental shifts have been from a heterocentric illness model to a more affirmative approach, and a subsequent move from a dichotomous to a multi-dimensional view of sexual orientation. Much of the literature on bisexuality in the early 1990s was HIV/AIDS based. Driven by epidemiological considerations, it did not focus on identity differentials but on behaviour. There developed the notion of two types of men who had sex with men: those attached to the gay community and those who were not (Crawford et al. 1996).

Dowsett (1996), in his review of a series of ethnographic studies conducted in Sydney through the early 1990s, suggested that '[the] masculine sexual [dis]order that beats represent so clearly must disturb any pretence that the homosexual/heterosexual binary has any status at all' (p. 281). The sheer potency of male sexuality and the ease with which apparently heterosexual men enter into homosexual liaisons, may create the impression that any man, given the appropriate circumstances, will behave homosexually. Fox (1995), in reviewing anthropological evidence, also supports the presence of broadly based bisexual desires within the human population, which may be expressed given appropriate cultural circumstances.

However, the perspective of Dowsett (1996), Fox (1995) and other recent writers in the bisexuality literature (e.g. Firestein 1996) suggests a distorted view of sexuality. Any sexual act may be inherently reinforcing. The *meaning* of a sexual act, however, may be simple pleasure seeking or it may be an expression of intimacy and attachment. The fundamental question is not whether human beings differ in their capacity to derive sexual pleasure from one gender rather than another, but rather the extent to which they seek, and are able to form, intimate bonds which they find inherently satisfying. Alexander Portnoy was, after all, only fleetingly satisfied with a piece of liver as a sexual partner, due in part to the limitations of conducting a relationship with a piece of meat.

For many MMSMs sex with other men is no more than just 'another piece of meat', and is devoid of any meaning other than direct sexual satisfaction. This behaviour does not imply pathology nor does it require complex symbolic explanations or differential identity labelling. Nevertheless, for many other MMSMs sex with men represents a search for a connectedness they are unable to find within heterosexual relationships.

The problem these men face is how to construct and understand their sexual desires and relationship concerns when there are few intra-individual or social-contextual signposts to enable resolution of the inherent confusion regarding the relationship between sexual behaviour and identity. Among gay and lesbian communities the prevailing constructivist notion that sexual identity represents choice is an extraordinarily powerful polemic that is driven by the dominance of this position within much of the mainstream homosexual and bisexual academic literature. The prevailing politic has been made acutely aware to us as we have encountered significant community resistance to our continuing familial incidence studies among gay men (see McKnight 1997). Our position that sexual identity and sexual orientation represent quite separate constructs that are too often confused within both public and academic discourse on homosexuality has emerged in part from these studies of MMSMs.

The constructivist and essentialist theoretical paradigms have important implications for considering the behaviour of behaviourally bisexual married

men, especially that proportion of the population that exit marriages and subsequently adopt private if not public homosexual identity labels. That is, these men are either attempting to resurrect a core aspect of their essential selves that was buried as a result of the conscious or unconscious consequences of stigmatization, or else they must be manifesting homosexual 'conversion' or a homosexual fetish. The significant struggle that many experience in attempting to resolve the disjunction between private desire and public identity and the enormous personal, social and financial implications of marital separation suggest the former explanation; however, there is little in the existing literature to support this position.

The investigation reported here had two principal aims. The first of these was a more comprehensive mapping of the population of MMSM than had been previously attempted to identify the existence of subpopulations and their defining characteristics including differing motivations for marriage and marital separation among these men. The second aim was to investigate questions of psychological and emotional adjustment within the population and to determine whether psychological adjustment was related to sexual behaviour and marital status among any subpopulations identified. This paper will focus on questions of sexual identity development and the issues of psychological adjustment will be reported elsewhere.

## **Method**

### **Overview**

The entire investigation was conducted over five years from 1993 to 1998. It involved the administration of three separate questionnaires, identified as the Preliminary Questionnaire, the Adjustment Questionnaire, and the Extended Sexual History Questionnaire, to distinct populations of behaviourally bisexual married men recruited through self-help groups, newspaper advertising and via the Internet. The questionnaires, while developed sequentially, did not represent a neat developmental series, and were administered in overlapping waves to a number of distinctly recruited populations. The Preliminary Questionnaire was administered in 1993/4 to men attending self-help groups for married homosexual men in both Sydney and Melbourne, Australia. A revised and extended version of this questionnaire (Adjustment Questionnaire) together with a further instrument (Extended Sexual History Questionnaire) which allowed for qualitative responses was subsequently administered to another cohort of men from these groups in 1997/8. The latter questionnaires were placed on an Internet website in mid-1997 and participants recruited through e-mail and Internet-based discussion groups for married homosexual men. Also in 1997, versions of these questionnaires were administered by telephone

interview to bisexual men recruited through newspaper advertisements placed in suburban newspapers in Sydney and also to a comparison group of never-married gay-identified men.

### Research instruments

The Preliminary Questionnaire was intended to elicit demographic and brief sexual and relationship history information. At the time this instrument was designed, the focus of the investigation was on identifying the reasons for transition into and out of marriage among the target population. The purpose of the questionnaire was first to identify whether there were patterns among the demographic variables and sexual and relationship histories of behaviourally bisexual married men. The second aim was to determine whether any such patterns were related to reasons they provided for entering and leaving heterosexual relationships.

This questionnaire contained eight subsections. The first section consisted of 26 items which sought demographic information and information on age of awareness of homosexual feelings, ages of first sexual contacts with males and females, and number of male and female sexual partners before, during and after marriage. In Section 2 respondents were asked to complete a series of Kinsey-type rating scales for their sexual feelings and behaviour before and during marriage and, if applicable, after separation.

Sections 3–6 sought information on respondents' reasons for marriage, reasons for remaining married, reasons for separation if applicable, and problems experienced. These sections contained items generated by the researcher based on ongoing clinical experience with the population and the existing literature. Respondents were required to indicate the extent to which each item applied to them on five-point Likert scales.

Section 7 consisted of Ross and Rosser's (1996),<sup>1</sup> *Internalised Homophobia Scale* (IHS). Section 8 was compiled for the study, and derived from measures of attachment to the gay community designed by the Macquarie University Unit of the National Centre for HIV Social Research (Kippax, Crawford, Rodden and Benton 1994). It included subscales measuring attachment to the gay community, sexual involvement with other men, gay identity disclosure and contact with the HIV epidemic.

The Adjustment Questionnaire sought similar demographic and sexual history information as did the Preliminary Questionnaire but included items omitted from the earlier instrument. These included questions on preferred sexual identity labels, additional Kinsey-type scales on emotional and romantic feelings and more detailed information on sexual behaviour. This questionnaire also included the IHS and measures of gay community attachment. In addition, the instrument contained a number of further discrete instruments to index psychological adjustment. These instruments

included a measure of sex role conformity designed by the author, the Multidimensional Coping Inventory (MCI) (Endler and Parker 1990); the Nott and Vedhara (1995) version of Rosser and Ross's (1989) Gay Affect and Life Events Scale (GALES); the Gay Identity Development Questionnaire (Brady and Busse 1994); a self-esteem measure derived from the Self-Description Questionnaire III (SDQ III, Marsh 1991); the Perception of Repressive Environment Scale (PRES) (Rowen 1996); and the Symptom Checklist-90-R (SCL-90-R) (Derogatis 1994).

The Extended Sexual History Questionnaire contained open-ended questions concerning the circumstances of first homosexual contact; changes in sexual feelings after marriage; problems experienced by the respondent and others that could be attributed to his sexual feelings and behaviour; and reasons for leaving or remaining in heterosexual relationships. Additional items sought information on the quality of respondents' heterosexual relationships, whether respondents had sought assistance from mental health professionals, whether they had ever felt their sexual behaviour was 'out of control', whether they had ever engaged in self-harm and how they saw their future.

## **Participants**

The complete investigation included four distinct subpopulations, three of which were married or formerly married gay and bisexual men, and the fourth, a sample of never-married gay men.

### *GAMMA sample*

Two samples of men attending meetings of the Gay and Married Men's Association groups in Sydney and Melbourne participated in the study group during two time periods in 1993/4 ( $n = 83$ ) and 1996/7 ( $n = 64$ ). Men attending the group were asked to participate anonymously in the study, with the earlier sample completing the Preliminary Questionnaire and the later sample completing the Adjustment Questionnaire. Participants either completed questionnaires immediately following the meeting or were provided with reply-paid envelopes to return questionnaires.

### *Internet sample*

The Internet sample responded to a questionnaire that was posted on a website housed at UWS Macarthur. The website was promoted through existing e-mail groups of bisexual men and gay fathers based principally in the USA and through other general gay e-mail and news groups. The website was registered with Internet search engines, so that individuals who

attempted searches on the keywords of 'gay and married men', 'gay fathers' or 'bisexual men' would locate the site.

A number of strategies were employed to maintain the integrity of the data. First, the research instrument was demanding and required dedication and interest to complete appropriately. Second, completed questionnaires were inspected regularly and those that contained grossly inconsistent response sets were removed. Third, the numerical Internet addresses of all respondents were collected when replies to each section of the questionnaire were submitted, thus enabling a check that each response set had a unique source. From August 1997 until the website was closed down in late December 1997, a total of 214 useable response sets were received.

### *The community samples*

Recruitment for this sample was conducted through newspaper advertisements in the personal columns of suburban newspapers in Western Sydney inviting 'married men who had sex with men' to participate in a telephone interview. Within the greater Sydney Metropolitan area these suburbs represent a complex demographic mix, including some suburbs which have large migrant populations from various regions including Southeast Asian and Arabic countries. While there are a number of pockets of high-income households, much of the region is composed of dormitory residential suburbs that tend to contain middle- and working-class populations. Over a three-week period of advertising, 144 calls were taken, from which 35 useable interviews were completed. The final protocol used for the telephone interviews required about 30–35 minutes to administer.

### *Gay comparison group*

The data for the gay comparison group were derived from a separate study using a slightly modified form of the Adjustment Questionnaire. This separate investigation (Turner 1997) was focused upon an examination of coping styles among gay-identified men.

The gay comparison group was recruited from various gay men's social groups in Sydney. Potential participants were approached either individually or in groups and informed of the nature of the study. Individuals who expressed interest were provided with the questionnaire and a reply-paid envelope. One hundred and ten questionnaires were distributed, with 42 (38 per cent) returned. For inclusion in the study, respondents had to be male, over 18 years of age, identify as exclusively homosexual and be in regular contact with the Sydney gay community. Although all respondents indicated that they had had no sexual contact with females in the last 12 months, one respondent self-defined as bisexual and was excluded from the analysis.

## Results and discussion

Results presented here will focus on the identification of subgroups within the target population.

### Preliminary study

Eighty-three men participated in the initial study. Their ages ranged from 26 to 65 years ( $M = 44.66$ ,  $SD = 9.18$ ). Close to half the total sample (47 per cent) had a university education with only 14.5 per cent reporting less than four years high school. The majority (86.7 per cent) were in full-time employment, with most (68.7 per cent) indicating they worked in professional occupations. The religious affiliation reported most often during childhood was Catholic (36.1 per cent). Only 6 per cent of the sample reported no early religious affiliation. In contrast, close to half the sample (47 per cent) reported no current religion. Among those who reported a current religion, the most frequent response was again Roman Catholic (19.3 per cent).

Slightly more than one-third of the sample were still married and continued to live with their heterosexual partner. One participant reported being widowed, but the majority (62.7 per cent) were separated or divorced.

The majority of respondents ( $n = 62$ , 74.7 per cent) indicated that their wives had no knowledge of their homosexual concerns before marriage. However, 59 men (71 per cent) reported that their wives now knew of their sexual interest in men with approximately the same proportion of still-married and formerly-married respondents reporting wives' knowledge. Some 13 respondents (15.7 per cent) reported being childless. The remainder reported between one and five children.

Most of the men who participated in the study ( $n = 72$ , 86.7 per cent) reported that they had been tested for HIV, but only three participants reported positive antibody status.

Statistics available from the 1996 census indicate a much greater proportion of the sample were in professional occupations (17.1 per cent v. 68.7 per cent) and had a university education (10.4 v. 47 per cent) than the population as a whole. The majority of respondents also reported earning considerably more than the mean 1996 household income of \$33,124. A greater percentage of the sample also reports no current religion (47 per cent) than does the general population (16.6 per cent) (Australian Bureau of Statistics 1996).

Table 1 Reported age of sexual milestones

	<i>n</i>	<i>Min.</i>	<i>Max.</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Std dev.</i>
Age of homosexual feelings	83	5	42	14.88	6.57
Age of first homosexual contact (to orgasm)	80	8	50	19.91	9.31
Age of first heterosexual contact (to orgasm)	83	12	32	21.46	4.37

### Sexual milestones

The mean age of first homosexual contact among respondents ( $M = 19.91$ ) was younger than the mean age of their first heterosexual contact ( $M = 21.46$ ). The differences between the two means, using a paired samples  $t$ -test was not significant  $t(79) = -1.42, p > 0.05$ . However, the two variables were significantly correlated ( $r = 0.28, p < 0.05$ ). The mean age at which these men first report homosexual feelings ( $M = 14.88$ ) significantly preceded the age at which they reported their first homosexual contact occurred ( $M = 19.91$ )  $t(79) = -5.50, p < 0.001$ , and again these two variables were significantly correlated ( $r = 0.41, p < 0.001$ ). The range of ages at which respondents reported experiencing these sexual milestones indicates that initial heterosexual contacts occurred in a much narrower band than did either the age at which awareness of homosexual feelings, or age of first homosexual contact, were reported (See Table 1).

### Relationship between demographic variables and sexual milestones

To ascertain whether the transition of these sexual milestones was influenced by demographic variables, separate ANOVAs were conducted on each of the three variables assessing the impact of education<sup>2</sup> and religiosity<sup>3</sup> on each variable. In each analysis, respondents' age was used as a covariate to investigate the influence of changing social mores on these variables. Means and standard deviations for the three sexual milestones for the two main grouping variables is provided in Table 2.

Factorial ANCOVA with current religion and level of education as factors and current age as a covariate, failed to demonstrate significant relationships between these variables and either age of first homosexual feelings  $F(4, 78) = 0.07, p > 0.05$ , or age of first homosexual contact  $F(4, 75) = 1.00, p > 0.05$ . However, a relationship did emerge between the demographic variables and age of first heterosexual contact. Both education  $F(1, 78) = 6.72, p < 0.01$  and current age  $F(1, 78) = 26.64, p < 0.001$  were significantly related to the age at which respondents first experienced heterosexual contact. Current

Table 2 Means and standard deviations for sexual milestones across demographic variables

	Current religion				Education			
	Yes		No		Non-university		University	
	Mean	Std dev.	Mean	Std dev.	Mean	Std dev.	Mean	Std dev.
Age became aware of homosexual feelings	14.82	6.56	14.93	6.66	14.72	6.57	15.05	6.66
Age of first homosexual contact (to orgasm)	20.53	8.66	19.36	9.93	18.73	7.94	21.15	10.53
Age first heterosexual contact	21.54	4.48	21.39	4.33	19.93	4.02	23.10	4.18

age and age of first heterosexual contact were positively correlated ( $r = 0.547$ ) indicating that older respondents tended to have their first heterosexual experiences later than did younger respondents. More highly educated respondents also reported their first heterosexual contact at a significantly later mean age ( $M = 23.10$ ) than the less highly educated ( $M = 19.93$ ).

### Ratings of sexual orientation

Descriptive statistics for Kinsey scale ratings<sup>4</sup> of sexual behaviour and sexual feelings are provided in Table 3. The table indicates considerable variability in these indicators of orientation. A series of repeated measures  $t$ -tests was conducted to test for significant differences between sexual feelings and behaviour prior to and during marriage.

There were no significant differences between the mean ratings reported for sexual feelings prior to ( $M = 3.52$ ) and during ( $M = 3.75$ ) marriage  $t(82) = -1.54$ ,  $p > 0.05$ . Respondents did rate their sexual *feelings* significantly more homosexual than their sexual *behaviour* both prior to  $t(82) = -6.15$ ,  $p < 0.001$  and during marriage  $t(82) = -10.656$ ,  $p < 0.001$ . Mean Kinsey ratings, however, indicate that respondents perceived their sexual behaviour during marriage as significantly less homosexual than their sexual behaviour before marriage,  $t(82) = 2.227$ ,  $p < 0.05$ .

Table 3 Descriptive statistics for Kinsey ratings of sexual behaviour and feelings, before, during and after marriage

	<i>n</i>	<i>Min.</i>	<i>Max.</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Std dev.</i>
Sexual behaviour before marriage	83	0.00	6.00	2.14	1.98
Sexual feelings before marriage	83	0.00	6.00	3.52	1.74
Sexual behaviour during marriage	83	0.00	5.00	1.66	1.49
Sexual feelings during marriage	83	1.00	6.00	3.75	1.46
Sexual behaviour since separation	52	3.00	6.00	5.62	0.75
Sexual feelings since separation	52	2.00	6.00	5.46	0.92

Still-married and formerly-married respondents' reports of sexual behaviour and feelings prior to, and during marriage, were analysed separately and the means for each group on these variables are provided in Table 4. Independent samples *t*-tests indicated no differences for any of these mean ratings between still-married and formerly-married respondents.

For those respondents who were no longer married, further analyses were conducted on the interrelationships among mean Kinsey ratings of sexual feelings and behaviour (Table 5) during and after marriage.<sup>5</sup>

Wilcoxon signed rank tests show that reported mean Kinsey ratings after marriage indicate significantly greater homosexual feelings ( $Z = -5.63$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) and behaviour ( $Z = -6.19$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) than during marriage.

Table 4 Descriptive statistics for Kinsey ratings of feelings and behaviour before and during marriage for still-married and formerly-married respondents

	<i>Marital status</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Std dev.</i>
Sexual behaviour before marriage	Currently married	30	2.13	2.00
	Formerly married	53	2.15	1.99
Sexual feelings before marriage	Currently married	30	3.50	1.61
	Formerly married	53	3.53	1.83
Sexual behaviour during marriage	Currently married	30	1.87	1.41
	Formerly married	53	1.55	1.54
Sexual feelings during marriage	Currently married	30	3.93	1.17
	Formerly married	53	3.64	1.59

Table 5 Mean Kinsey-scale ratings of sexual feelings and behaviour during and after marriage for formerly-married respondents

	<i>n</i>	<i>Min.</i>	<i>Max.</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Std dev.</i>
Sexual behaviour during marriage	53	0.00	5.00	1.55	1.54
Sexual feelings during marriage	53	1.00	6.00	3.64	1.59
Sexual behaviour since separation	52	3.00	6.00	5.62	0.75
Sexual feelings since separation	52	2.00	6.00	5.46	0.92

### Identifying subpopulations

Perusal of the self-reported Kinsey ratings indicated participants evidenced considerable variability in their ratings of sexual feelings and behaviour, especially prior to and during marriage. This preliminary study did not require respondents to indicate a preferred sexual identity label, which would have allowed further investigation of the relationship of sexual identity to other variables investigated in the study.

The data indicated that, while ratings of homosexual behaviour evidenced significant variation across time periods and suggested this variable was subject to notable inhibition during marriage, self-reports of sexual feelings remained reasonably stable prior to and during marriage. The stability of this variable suggested it to be a more valid indicator of underlying sexual orientation than ratings of sexual behaviour.

The mean score of respondents' ratings of their sexual feelings prior to and during marriage was computed to create a new variable. This variable was normally distributed ( $M = 3.63$ ,  $SD = 1.45$ ), and measures of skew ( $-0.22$ ) and kurtosis ( $0.52$ ) were within acceptable limits (SPSS 1997).

The frequency distribution (Table 6) shows that 13 participants (15.7 per cent) reported their mean sexual feelings before and during marriage to be no more than incidentally homosexual (a Kinsey rating of less than 2): that is, they reported only minor levels of homosexual feelings. Mean ratings for 36 participants (43.3 per cent) were between 2 and 4: that is, within a mid-range for homosexual and heterosexual feelings. A third group of 34 men (41 per cent) reported predominant homosexual feelings (ratings of 4.5 or above).

While all of these men were 'homosexual' by either self-reported feelings or behaviour, the degree of homosexual behaviour and feelings they reported was variable. To facilitate further analysis the respondents were separated into three homosexual types: *minor-*, *mid-* and *major-homosexual* based on their mean scores on these two Kinsey ratings.

Table 6 Frequency distribution of computed mean of Kinsey ratings of sexual feelings prior to and during marriage

	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Per cent</i>	<i>Cumulative per cent</i>
1.00	4	4.8	4.8
1.50	9	10.8	15.7
2.00	6	7.2	22.9
2.50	5	6.0	28.9
3.00	8	9.6	38.6
3.50	8	9.6	48.2
4.00	9	10.8	59.0
4.50	14	16.9	75.9
5.00	8	9.6	85.5
5.50	7	8.4	94.0
6.00	5	6.0	100.0
Total	83	100.0	

### Relationship between homosexual type and sexual milestones

Descriptive statistics for the three sexual milestones across homosexual types are provided in Table 7. ANOVAs revealed significant differences between the groups for both age of first homosexual feelings  $F(2, 80) = 21.89, p < 0.001$  and age of first homosexual contact  $F(2, 77) = 3.22, p < 0.05$ .<sup>6</sup> *Post-hoc* analysis<sup>7</sup> indicated that the minor homosexual-type group reported experiencing first homosexual feelings at a significantly later mean age than both the mid- and major-homosexual type, which did not differ significantly with one another. For age of first homosexual contact, despite the significance of the ANOVA, *post-hoc* tests did not indicate significant differences between any of the pairs of means.

### Implications of preliminary study

Despite a number of limitations, this preliminary study provided revealing insights into the relationships between demographic, sexual history and relationships of behaviourally bisexual married men.

There were two significant outcomes. The first is that, within this sample, respondents' homosexual behaviour appeared considerably less influenced by demographic variables than was their heterosexual behaviour. Both the age of respondents and their level of education were significant influences on their transition of heterosexual milestones, but not their transition of homosexual ones. Although, as might be expected, there was a strong correlation between first heterosexual and homosexual experiences, initial homosexual experience appeared to be consequent upon a quite different set of influences to heterosexual experiences.

Table 7 Descriptive statistics for sexual milestones for three homosexual types

			<i>n</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Std dev.</i>	<i>Std error</i>	<i>Min.</i>	<i>Max.</i>
Age homosexual feelings	Homosexual type	Minor	13	23.77	9.28	2.57	10	42
		Mid	36	13.92	5.16	0.86	5	32
		Major	34	12.50	3.13	0.54	6	20
		Total	83	14.88	6.57	0.72	5	42
Age first homosexual contact	Homosexual type	Minor	12	24.75	11.38	3.28	10	46
		Mid	35	17.40	7.20	1.22	8	44
		Major	33	20.82	9.90	1.72	12	50
		Total	80	19.91	9.31	1.04	8	50
Age first heterosexual contact	Homosexual type	Minor	13	21.23	3.61	1.00	17	28
		Mid	36	21.00	4.04	0.67	12	30
		Major	34	22.03	4.99	0.86	13	32
		Total	83	21.46	4.37	0.48	12	32

The second observation, linked to the first, is that there appeared to be quite different types of behaviourally bisexual men in this study. These 'types', identified on the basis of their mean scores on two Kinsey-type scales of homosexual feelings at different time points, report significantly different sexual histories and quite divergent motivations for marriage.

The sample generally evidenced considerable variability in homosexual behaviour across time, with Kinsey-type ratings of homosexual behaviour during marriage showing significant variation from ratings before marriage. Homosexual feelings, however, tended to be rated considerably more consistently and more 'homosexual' than behaviour both before and during marriage. This finding suggests repression of homosexual expression generally among the sample, both before and during marriage. The minor homosexual group tends to have more heterosexual partners, experience their first homosexual contact later and subsequent to their initial heterosexual experience, and have fewer male sexual partners overall, than men in the other two groups.

Within the minor group, there is also generally more internal group consistency concerning homosexual behaviour. In both of the other groups there appeared to be subgroups of men who exhibited considerable variability in homosexual expression. The minor group tends to experience initial homosexual feelings much later than the other two groups and generally reports fewer homosexual contacts. The major homosexual group, while experiencing homosexual feelings on average earlier than either of the other two groups, contains subgroups of highly sexually active and less

sexually active men. Nevertheless, across the entire sample *age of first homosexual contact* tends to be a better predictor of number of homosexual partners than does homosexual type.

While tentative subgroups have been identified, the overall sample size and cell size in some parts of the analyses limited the conclusions that can be drawn. Moreover, the failure to ask respondents to indicate a preferred identity label and the omission of a question asking for age of first *heterosexual* feelings particularly limited the investigation of subtypes. Other investigations (e.g. Weinberg et al. 1994) have sought Kinsey scale ratings of *emotional* feelings in addition to ratings of sexual behaviour and sexual feelings. This third set of ratings was not considered for the pilot study, and again limited further mapping of the characteristics of the subtypes tentatively identified here.

## Second study

Three hundred and fourteen ever-married men participated in the second study, with the majority (214) completing the website-based research instrument. These men were drawn from the three sample sources discussed above. The three samples of ever-married men were deliberately recruited using diverse methods to ensure a broad range of sexual motivations among the total sample of behaviourally bisexual married men. It was anticipated that the particular participant recruitment strategies used would also extend the demographic mix of the total married sample. Thus, it was not expected that the three ever-married samples would be demographically similar.

Respondents' ages ranged from 20 to 71 years and the mean age of the Internet sample ( $M = 41.0$ ) was significantly younger than the GAMMA sample ( $M = 45.4$ ). The majority of men in the Internet sample (68.7 per cent) were born in the USA, with around 80 per cent of men in each of the other samples indicating they were born in Australia. A small proportion of men in each sample was born in non-Western countries.

While about half the total sample (50.4 per cent) reported some tertiary education, there was a significant relationship between the sample source and respondents' level of education,  $\chi^2(8) = 41.13$ ,  $p < 0.001$ . The telephone sample contained a higher proportion of men with only high school education, than were present in the other two ever-married samples. Since the telephone sample was recruited in part to balance the known bias toward the better-educated present within the GAMMA sample, and anticipated in the Internet sample, this difference was interpreted as indicating the success of this recruitment strategy. The relationship between sample type and occupation was significant,  $\chi^2(6) = 23.95$ ,  $p < 0.01$ , with a smaller proportion of the telephone sample (20.6 per cent,  $n = 7$ ) reporting they were in professional occupations than the GAMMA (67.7 per cent,  $n = 44$ )

or the Internet (60.1 per cent,  $n = 122$ ) samples. This difference is a further indication that the telephone-sampling strategy was selecting a somewhat broader population of homosexually concerned married men than had been recruited in the other samples.

### Identity labels of respondents

All respondents were provided with three separate questions which asked what sexual identity label they were most comfortable applying to themselves and how they would describe their sexual identities to others who either knew, or did not know, of their sexual interest in men.

A small proportion of the total ever-married sample (8.6 per cent,  $n = 27$ ) described themselves as heterosexual. The community telephone-sampling strategy was successful in obtaining a higher proportion of behaviourally bisexual men who identified as heterosexual (38.2 per cent,  $n = 13$ ) than the other two groups. Generally, the non-GAMMA samples provided a broader sample of behaviourally bisexual men with more than 50 per cent of both of these groups identifying as bisexual. A small number of men specified their identity as 'other'. Within the GAMMA and community samples these men indicated that they were unable to specify an identity label, as they were unsure of their identity. There was no provision within the website-based questionnaire for respondents to specify a particular 'other' label.

Table 8 Self-identity labels of ever-married respondents

		<i>Subject type</i>			
		<i>Telephone sample</i>	<i>Gamma sample</i>	<i>Internet sample</i>	<i>Total</i>
Heterosexual (straight)	<i>n</i>	13	1	13	27
	%	38.2%	1.5%	6.1%	8.6%
Bisexual	<i>n</i>	20	7	113	140
	%	58.8%	10.6%	52.8%	44.6%
Homosexual (gay)	<i>n</i>		56	80	136
	%		84.8%	37.4%	43.3%
Other	<i>n</i>	1	2	8	11
	%	2.9%	3.0%	3.7%	3.5%
Total	<i>n</i>	34	66	214	314
	%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Respondents were asked to indicate the sexual identity label they were most comfortable using to describe themselves to others who did or did not know of their sexual interest in men. Although 43.3 per cent of the total sample indicated that they thought of themselves as homosexual, only 15.6 per cent were comfortable revealing this orientation to others that did not know of their sexual interest in men. Similarly, few men who thought of themselves as bisexual were comfortable communicating this to others who were unaware of their sexuality. However, men who had adopted either a homosexual or bisexual identity were generally comfortable describing themselves as such to others who were aware of their sexuality.

### **Kinsey ratings of behaviour, sexual feelings and romantic feelings**

As in the preliminary study, respondents were again asked to rate their sexual behaviour and sexual feelings on standard seven-point Kinsey scales before, during and after marriage. In addition, in this second series of studies, respondents were asked to rate their romantic/emotional feelings on the same scales. As in the earlier study, it was expected that there would be a significant decrease in sexual behaviour during marriage, but that ratings of sexual and romantic feelings would remain relatively stable before and during marriage. Mean scores for the three Kinsey scales, before and during marriage, are provided in Table 9.

Paired samples *t*-tests indicated that while there were no significant differences between either sexual feelings  $t(299) = -0.695$ ,  $p > 0.05$  or romantic feelings  $t(299) = -0.246$ ,  $p > 0.05$  feelings before and during marriage, respondents rated their sexual behaviour significantly more heterosexual during marriage than before  $t(300) = 3.43$ ,  $p < 0.01$ .

*Table 9* Mean Kinsey ratings of sexual behaviour, sexual feeling and romantic/emotional feelings before and during marriage for ever-married respondents

		<i>Mean</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>Std dev.</i>
Pair 1	Sexual behaviour before marriage	2.24	301	2.08
	Sexual behaviour during marriage	1.82	301	1.55
Pair 2	Sexual feelings before marriage	3.51	300	1.85
	Sexual feelings during marriage	3.57	300	1.63
Pair 3	Romantic feelings before marriage	2.37	300	2.00
	Romantic feelings during marriage	2.40	300	1.83

### Relationship of Kinsey scales to sexual identity labels.

Respondents' sexual identity labels provided clear differentiation for Kinsey ratings of sexual feelings and romantic feelings before and during marriage with successively greater mean 'homosexuality' ratings across the three identity labels. Ratings of sexual behaviour, especially during marriage, were not as clearly differentiated among the three groups (Table 10).

The relationship between sexual identity labels and overall Kinsey ratings, is far from clear-cut and there are two serious impediments to the use of identity labels to further analyse the data for these investigations. The first of these impediments relates to analysis of the 'other' category. Mean ratings for the men who placed themselves in this category were difficult to interpret. While individual scale ratings were more 'homosexual' for some of these men, for others their Kinsey scales scores were more towards the heterosexual end of the continuum. This problem was reflected across all the identity labels. That is, as is indicated by the minimum and maximum scores in each scale in Table 10, within each identity label there were respondents whose responses on one or more of the Kinsey scales was contradictory to their identity label.

Neither behaviour nor identity label then seems to provide a consistent mechanism for identifying different types among this population of men. As was apparent in the preliminary study, there was consistency in Kinsey ratings of sexual *feelings* across time periods. In addition, the three samples of men in this study also demonstrate consistency in Kinsey ratings of *romantic* feelings before and during marriage, although mean ratings of *sexual* feelings are significantly more homosexual than *romantic* feelings (see Table 9 for mean ratings) both before  $t(298) = 12.96, p < 0.001$  and during  $t(300) = 13.09, p < 0.001$  marriage.

*Sexual orientation* as an enduring personal characteristic among this population of behaviourally bisexual married men, seems to be poorly indicated either by preferred sexual identity label or by sexual behaviour. There is some suggestion in this data that it *is* indicated by ratings of *sexual* feelings and of *romantic* feelings, which individually seem to demonstrate consistency over time, although these two sets of ratings tend to be different from one another.

These data suggest that sexual orientation is a complex motivational–emotional state that has both a sexual arousal component, and an emotional–attachment component. Thus, preliminary identification of subtypes within the overall population and assessment of the impact of 'degree of homosexuality' on sexual behaviour, marital outcomes and psychological adjustment, seems to be best provided by the calculation of respondents' mean scores on their ratings of sexual feelings and romantic feelings before and during marriage.

Table 10 Sexual identity labels and mean Kinsey ratings for ever-married respondents before and during marriage

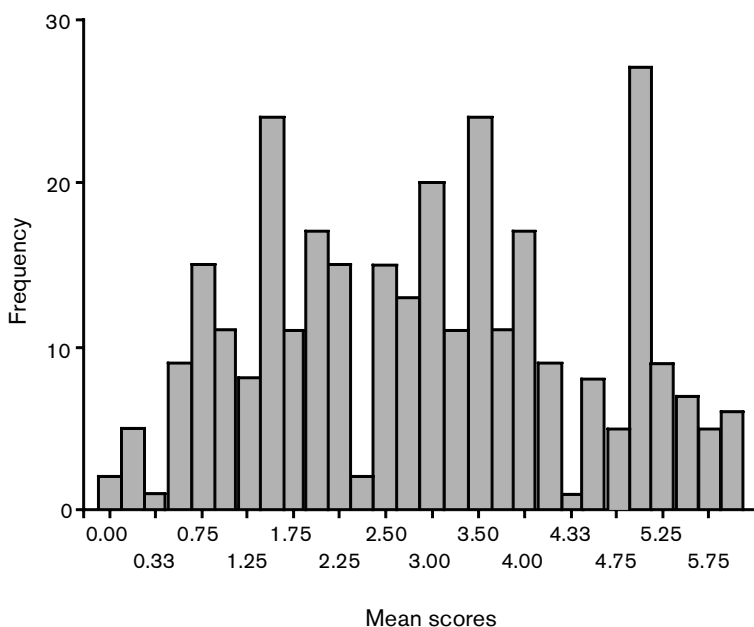
	<i>n</i>	<i>Sexual behaviour before marriage</i>	<i>Sexual feelings before marriage</i>	<i>Romantic feelings before marriage</i>	<i>Sexual behaviour during marriage</i>	<i>Sexual feelings during marriage</i>	<i>Romantic feelings during marriage</i>
Heterosexual (straight)	<i>n</i>	27	27	27	27	27	27
	Mean	1.41	1.89	0.96	1.63	2.19	0.85
	Std dev.	1.60	1.76	1.79	1.28	1.33	1.32
	Min.	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Max.	6	6	5	5	5	5
Bisexual	<i>n</i>	140	140	140	140	140	140
	Mean	2.12	2.93	1.85	1.83	3.30	2.08
	Std dev.	1.90	1.74	1.73	1.40	1.50	1.66
	Min.	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Max.	6	6	6	6	6	6
Homosexual (gay)	<i>n</i>	136	136	136	136	136	136
	Mean	2.54	4.43	3.28	1.85	4.20	3.16
	Std dev.	2.32	1.54	2.00	1.76	1.56	1.81
	Min.	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Max.	6	6	6	6	6	6
Other	<i>n</i>	11	11	11	11	11	11
	Mean	2.70	3.56	2.40	1.20	2.60	1.22
	Std dev.	1.77	1.59	1.58	1.14	1.71	1.09
	Min.	1	1	0	0	1	0
	Max.	5	5	5	3	5	3

## Identification of subtypes

The distribution of respondents' mean scores on the four Kinsey-type scales of sexual feelings and romantic/emotional feelings before and during marriage are provided in Table 11. This distribution has a mean of 2.97 ( $SD = 1.55$ ) and a median score of 3. The relationship of measures of skewness (0.09,  $SE = 0.139$ ) and kurtosis ( $-0.99$ ,  $SE = 0.277$ ) indicates that the distribution does not fit the pattern of a normal curve (SPSS 1997). Inspection of a bar chart of the distribution (Figure 1) is suggestive of at least

Table 11 Distribution of mean scores on four Kinsey scales of sexual feelings and romantic/emotional feelings before and during marriage

		<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Per cent</i>	<i>Valid per cent</i>	<i>Cumulative per cent</i>
Valid cases	0.00	2	0.6	0.6	0.6
	0.25	5	1.6	1.6	2.3
	0.33	1	0.3	0.3	2.6
	0.50	9	2.9	2.9	5.5
	0.75	15	4.8	4.9	10.4
	1.00	11	3.5	3.6	14.0
	1.25	8	2.5	2.6	16.6
	1.50	24	7.6	7.8	24.4
	1.75	11	3.5	3.6	27.9
	2.00	17	5.4	5.5	33.4
	2.25	15	4.8	4.9	38.3
	2.33	2	0.6	0.6	39.0
	2.50	15	4.8	4.9	43.8
	2.75	13	4.1	4.2	48.1
	3.00	20	6.4	6.5	54.5
	3.25	11	3.5	3.6	58.1
	3.50	24	7.6	7.8	65.9
	3.75	11	3.5	3.6	69.5
	4.00	17	5.4	5.5	75.0
	4.25	9	2.9	2.9	77.9
	4.33	1	0.3	0.3	78.2
	4.50	8	2.5	2.6	80.8
	4.75	5	1.6	1.6	82.5
	5.00	27	8.6	8.8	91.2
5.25	9	2.9	2.9	94.2	
5.50	7	2.2	2.3	96.4	
5.75	5	1.6	1.6	98.1	
6.00	6	1.9	1.9	100.0	
	Total	308	98.1	100.0	
Missing		6	1.9		
Total		314	100.0		



*Figure 1* Bar chart of distribution of mean scores of Kinsey ratings of sexual feelings and romantic/emotional feelings before and during marriage

three underlying distributions of mean scores that are consistent with the specification of types in the preliminary study. In the preliminary study the minor homosexual group comprised those who report their sexual and romantic feelings before and during marriage to be no more than incidentally homosexual (Kinsey rating of less than 2), a major homosexual group who reported homosexual feelings to be predominant or major (Kinsey ratings of 4.5 or above), and a mid-group whose mean Kinsey scores were between 2 and 4.

To maintain consistency with the earlier study, the same cut-points were maintained to divide the sample into three groups of minor (Kinsey score: 0–1.99), mid (Kinsey: 2–4) and major (Kinsey: 4.01–2.6) homosexual. The minor group comprised 86 respondents (27.9 per cent), the mid-group 145 (47.1 per cent) and the major group 77 (25 per cent).

### **Homosexual type and sexual identity labels**

As indicated in Table 12 there was only partial correspondence between the ‘homosexual type’ identified by Kinsey ratings and preferred identity label.<sup>8</sup> Twenty-two respondents (25.6 per cent) who were classified as minor homosexuals identified themselves as ‘heterosexual’ and were thus concordant for type and identity label. Of the remaining minor group, 47 men (54.7 per

Table 12 Cross-tabulation of homosexual type and sexual identity label

			<i>Types based on Kinsey ratings</i>			
			<i>1.00</i>	<i>2.00</i>	<i>3.00</i>	<i>Total</i>
Self-identity label	Heterosexual (straight)	Count	22	3	2	27
		Column %	25.6%	2.1%	2.6%	8.8%
		Total %	7.2%	1.0%	0.7%	8.8%
	Bisexual	Count	47	75	18	140
		Column %	54.7%	52.1%	23.7%	45.8%
		Total %	15.4%	24.5%	5.9%	45.8%
	Homosexual (gay)	Count	17	66	56	139
		Column %	19.8%	45.8%	73.7%	45.4%
		Total %	5.6%	21.6%	18.3%	45.4%
Total	Count	86	144	76	306	
	Column %	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	
	Total %	28.1%	47.1%	24.8%	100.0%	

cent) identified as bisexual and the remaining 17 men (19.8 per cent) identified as homosexual. Within the mid-type 75 men (52.1 per cent) were concordant for type and identity label, three (2.1 per cent) were negatively discordant (heterosexual identity label) and 66 (45.8 per cent) were positively discordant (homosexual identity label). Within the major homosexual group the majority (56 men or 73.7 per cent of this group) were concordant for type and identity label. Eighteen respondents within this major group (23.7 per cent indicated they identified as bisexual, and two respondents (2.6 per cent) stated that they considered themselves heterosexual.

Within this sample of 306<sup>9</sup> behaviourally bisexual men 50 per cent (153 respondents) demonstrated consistency between Kinsey-type ratings of sexual and romantic feelings before and during marriage and sexual identity labels. Of these men, all of whom it must be remembered were exhibiting homosexual interest or behaviour, some were consistently rated by two separate indicators as heterosexual, some as bisexual and some as homosexual.

Few of the men reported identity labels that were negatively discordant to their 'type' classification. That is only 23 men (7.6 per cent) of the total sample indicated their preferred identity label as heterosexual when their type classification was *mid* or either bisexual or heterosexual when their type classification was *major*. The phenomenon of *defensive bisexuality* (or *defensive heterosexuality*) would seem to be represented by only a small proportion of this population.

A larger proportion of respondents reported positively discordant identity labels. That is, 47 of the minor group (54.7 per cent) reported their identity label as bisexual and 15 (19.8 per cent) self-identified as homosexual. Within the mid-group 66 men (45.8 per cent) identified as homosexual.

There are three immediately apparent potential explanations for this phenomenon of positive discordance between homosexual type and identity labels. As has been argued by others (Garber 1995) this inconsistency may simply be an indication of the fluidity of sexual interest across the life span. It may also represent a 'conversion' reaction to minimize dissonance between a heterosexual orientation and homosexual behaviour. Finally, it may represent an 'awakening' of previously repressed homosexuality. Differentiating among these three alternatives is one of the primary aims of this work and the issue will be explored further below. It will be helpful before proceeding, however, to further explore the relationships between homosexual type, identity labels and marital status.

### Relationship between type, identity labels and marital status

The relationship between homosexual type, self-identity labels and marital status is presented in Table 13. Separate analyses for nominal data indicated a significant relationship between marital status and identity label  $\chi^2(2) = 70.11$ ,  $p < 0.001$ , but no relationship between marital status and homosexual type  $\chi^2(2) = 1.00$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ).

As indicated in Table 13, those respondents who have transited to a more 'homosexual' identity than suggested by their *type* classification,

Table 13 Cross-tabulation of number of married respondents for homosexual type and self-identity label

		Marital status	Types based on Kinsey ratings			
			Minor	Mid	Major	Total
Sexual identity label	Heterosexual (straight)	Still married ( <i>n</i> )	21	3	2	26
		Formerly married ( <i>n</i> )	1			1
	Bisexual	Still married ( <i>n</i> )	38	70	16	124
		Formerly married ( <i>n</i> )	9	5	2	16
	Homosexual (gay)	Still married ( <i>n</i> )	2	29	31	62
		Formerly married ( <i>n</i> )	15	37	25	77
Total		Still married ( <i>n</i> )	61	102	49	212
		Formerly married ( <i>n</i> )	25	42	27	94

demonstrate an increased likelihood of marital separation. Among the homosexually identified men who were classified as 'minor homosexuals' on the basis of their reported sexual and romantic feelings prior to and during marriage 15 out of 17 (88 per cent) respondents had separated. Within the homosexually identified men who were classified as mid-homosexuals 37 out of 66 (56 per cent) were no longer married. Among the identity-type concordant homosexuals, however, only 25 out of 66 (37 per cent) had separated.

### **Relationship between sexual identity labels, homosexual type and sexual milestones**

A cross-tabulation of mean age of achievement of sexual milestones for self-identified heterosexual, bisexual and homosexual respondents for each of the three homosexual types is provided in Table 14. A series of multi-factorial ANOVAs for each of the five sexual milestones was conducted with identity label and homosexual type as factors.

#### *Age reached puberty*

No effect was found for the age at which respondents reached puberty for either identity label  $F(2, 292) = 0.05, p > 0.05$  or homosexual type  $F(2, 292) = 0.82, p > 0.05$ .

#### *Age of homosexual feelings*

The age at which respondents reported experiencing their first homosexual feelings was significant for both self-identity  $F(2, 292) = 3.83, p < 0.05$  and homosexual type  $F(2, 292) = 18.10, p < 0.001$ .

*Post-hoc* comparisons using Tambane's  $T^2$  test revealed that homosexually identified respondents reported experiencing homosexual feelings at a significantly younger age than bisexually identified respondents ( $p < 0.001$ ), who in turn experienced homosexual feelings at a significantly younger age than heterosexually identified respondents ( $p < 0.01$ ).

The *major-type* homosexual group reported a mean onset of homosexual feelings at age 11.11 which was significantly younger than both the *mid-type* ( $M = 12.58, p < 0.05$ ) and the *minor-type* ( $M = 20.00, p < 0.001$ ). Mean differences between the mid and minor groups were also significant ( $p < 0.001$ ).

**Table 14** Mean age of achievement of sexual milestones for heterosexual, bisexual and homosexually-identified respondents for each homosexual type

Self-label	Types based on Kinsey ratings												
	Minor			Mid			Major			Total			
	n	Mean	Std dev.	n	Mean	Std dev.	n	Mean	Std dev.	n	Mean	Std dev.	
Heterosexual (straight)	Age puberty	20	13.45	1.50	3	12.33	0.58	2	12.50	2.12	25	13.24	1.48
	Age Hx feel <sup>a</sup>	22	25.14	12.98	3	15.33	3.06	2	11.50	0.71	27	23.04	12.55
	Age Hx con <sup>b</sup>	20	25.55	13.27	3	19.33	1.15	2	13.50	2.12	25	23.84	12.39
	Age Ht feel <sup>c</sup>	22	13.91	3.77	3	15.00	4.36	2	17.00	1.41	27	14.26	3.71
	Age Ht con <sup>d</sup>	22	17.45	3.62	3	18.33	1.53	2	21.00	0.00	27	17.81	3.42
Bisexual	Age puberty	45	12.98	1.64	74	12.82	1.24	18	12.89	1.45	137	12.88	1.40
	Age Hx feel <sup>a</sup>	45	19.31	9.58	74	12.97	4.69	18	11.72	3.18	137	14.89	7.25
	Age Hx con <sup>b</sup>	45	24.11	12.48	72	17.82	6.85	17	14.65	4.05	134	19.53	9.50
	Age Ht feel <sup>c</sup>	45	13.09	2.98	75	13.21	2.77	17	14.71	4.19	137	13.36	3.06
	Age Ht con <sup>d</sup>	46	18.48	3.54	75	18.68	3.51	18	19.94	3.99	139	18.78	3.59
Homosexual (gay)	Age puberty	18	12.78	1.17	64	13.13	1.24	57	12.70	1.18	139	12.91	1.22
	Age Hx feel <sup>a</sup>	18	15.44	6.01	64	12.00	4.28	55	10.89	2.98	137	12.01	4.31
	Age Hx con <sup>b</sup>	15	23.67	14.92	64	23.78	11.68	55	19.98	10.68	134	22.21	11.74
	Age Ht feel <sup>c</sup>	18	15.22	4.94	59	15.59	3.97	40	16.78	5.19	117	15.94	4.57
	Age Ht con <sup>d</sup>	18	19.67	3.96	67	21.04	4.35	57	21.74	4.37	142	21.15	4.33
Total	Age puberty	83	13.05	1.52	141	12.95	1.24	77	12.74	1.25	301	12.92	1.33
	Age Hx feel <sup>a</sup>	85	20.00	10.45	141	12.58	4.50	75	11.11	2.99	301	14.31	7.44
	Age Hx con <sup>b</sup>	80	24.39	13.00	139	20.60	9.75	74	18.58	9.69	293	21.12	10.90
	Age Ht feel <sup>c</sup>	85	13.75	3.72	137	14.28	3.54	59	16.19	4.89	281	14.52	4.00
	Age Ht con <sup>d</sup>	86	18.47	3.68	145	19.77	4.06	77	21.30	4.27	308	19.79	4.13

<sup>a</sup> Age first homosexual feelings; <sup>b</sup> Age first homosexual contact; <sup>c</sup> Age first heterosexual feelings; <sup>d</sup> Age first heterosexual contact.

### *Age of homosexual contact*

The mean age of first homosexual contact did not differ significantly among respondents who identified as heterosexual, bisexual and homosexual,  $F(2, 284) = 2.76, p > 0.05$ .

However, age of homosexual contact was significant for homosexual type  $F(2, 284) = 4.51, p < 0.05$ . *Post-hoc* comparisons using Tamhane's test indicated that the minor-type group reported mean homosexual contact at a significantly older age ( $M = 24.39$ ) than the major-type group ( $M = 18.58, p < 0.01$ ). While the mid-type group reported a mean age of first contact (20.60) that was between the other two groups, it was not significantly different from either.

### *Age of heterosexual feelings*

Analysis for this variable revealed significant effects for identity label  $F(2, 272) = 7.87, p < 0.001$ , but not for homosexual type  $F(2, 272) = 1.92, p > 0.05$ .

Bisexually identified respondents reported a younger mean age of first heterosexual feelings ( $M = 13.36$ ) than either the heterosexually identified ( $M = 14.26$ ) or homosexually identified respondents ( $M = 15.94$ ); however, only the difference between the bisexual and homosexual groups was significant ( $p < 0.001$ ).

### *Age of first heterosexual contact*

The differences between mean age of first heterosexual contact were also significant for identity label  $F(2, 299) = 5.51, p < 0.01$  but not for homosexual type  $F(2, 229) = 2.44, p < 0.05$ .

Homosexually identified respondents reported a significantly later age of first heterosexual contact ( $M = 21.15$ ), than either bisexual ( $M = 18.78, p < 0.001$ ) or heterosexual respondents ( $M = 17.81, p < 0.001$ ).

### *Accounting for positive discordance*

The pattern of relationships among the sexual milestone variables can be used to shed some light on the apparent lack of correspondence between the derived *homosexual type* variable and respondents' sexual identity label. It is apparent, however, that the lack of correspondence is not unidirectional or evenly spread across the cells of the cross-tabulation between homosexual type and identity label. There are a number of phenomena in the matrix of relationships outlined in Tables 12 and 13 that require explanation.

The first of these was alluded to above, and is the problem of discordance between identity labels and the self-reported homosexual feelings from

which the *type* variable was derived. That is, there appears to be a considerable movement among respondents towards more homosexuality and some, although much less, movement towards heterosexuality. Why do some of these men appear to become 'more homosexual'?

This is problematic, as it is likely that many men within this sample are still transiting through both marital status and identity labels, and there is no immediate mechanism for distinguishing those who will transit from those who will not. The middle cells of the matrix then are likely to contain numbers of respondents who have not yet, but are none the less likely, to adopt a homosexual identity with concomitant consequences for their marriage. The clear and substantial differences among sexual milestones among the extreme cells of the matrix are suggestive of population differences that are qualitative rather than quantitative. That is, the clear differences in sexual milestones between the minor-type heterosexual group and the major-type homosexual group are suggestive of quite different motivations for engaging in homosexual behaviours. The sexual milestone patterns themselves provide considerable insight into these potential motivations.

For example, it would be expected that if the homosexually identified/minor-type respondents were exhibiting discovery of sexual orientation rather than conversion, then they would most likely exhibit a sexual milestone pattern that was more like the major-type homosexuals than the heterosexually identified minor-type homosexuals.

Descriptive statistics for sexual milestones of age of first heterosexual and homosexual feelings and contact for the homosexually identified and heterosexually identified minor-type homosexuals are presented in Table 14. Independent sample *t*-tests revealed significant differences between the two groups for age of homosexual feelings  $t(30.56) = 3.29$ ,  $p < 0.01$ <sup>10</sup> and age of heterosexual contact  $t(37) = -2.21$ ,  $p < 0.05$ .

Examination of the means indicates that among these *minor-type* homosexuals the homosexually identified group reported experiencing their first homosexual feelings at a significantly younger mean age than did the heterosexually identified group (15.44 v. 24.14), but their age of first homosexual contact was similar (23.67 v. 25.55). This finding supports the proposition that for the homosexually identified men among this group, their homosexual identity emerges from underlying homosexual feelings, rather than being consequent upon their homosexual behaviour. The heterosexually identified *minor-type* men, however, experience similar mean age for first homosexual feelings (25.14) and first homosexual contact (25.55) suggestive of opportunistic homosexual behaviour. The concurrent pattern of later onset of heterosexual behaviour and feelings among the group of homosexually identified men in this subgroup provides further support for enduring underlying homosexual orientation among these men.

A similar pattern is observed between the mid-type bisexually concordant group and the mid-type homosexual group. The mid-type homosexual group reports a similar mean age of homosexual feelings than the mid-type bisexual group (12.97 v. 12.00)  $t(136) = 1.02, p > 0.05$ . However, respondents in the *mid-type* homosexual group report significantly older mean ages for first homosexual contact (23.78 v. 17.82)  $t(99.197)^{11} = -3.58, p < 0.01$ , age of first heterosexual feelings (15.59 v. 13.21)  $t(99.614)^{12} = -3.92, p < 0.001$  and age of heterosexual contact (21.04 v. 18.68),  $t(140) = -3.59, p < 0.001$  than the *mid-type* bisexual group.

This pattern of transition of sexual milestones for both the minor-type homosexual group and the mid-type homosexual group is supportive of the emergence of a repressed identity that has its antecedents in internal characteristics, rather than being consequent upon homosexual behaviour.

The sexual milestone pattern among the minor-type groups suggests the homosexual behaviour of the heterosexually identified men in this group stems from motivations derived from opportunism and adventure, whereas the homosexual behaviour of the homosexually identified men seems related to issues of intimacy and attachment. This issue will be further explored below.

### Progress towards the identification of types

Based on the identity-label/homosexual-type matrix four distinct types of behaviourally bisexual men can be tentatively identified.

- 1 **Adventurers.** A group of heterosexual men, whose homosexual behaviour is most likely opportunistic. These men are concordant for homosexual type and heterosexual identity label, tend to remain married and report onset of homosexual behaviour and feelings in adulthood. For these men their homosexual behaviour and feelings tend to occur simultaneously.
- 2 **Avoiders.** The second group that has been clearly identified comprises men who are concordant for homosexual type and homosexual identity label. These men tend to report onset of homosexual feelings in the very early or pre-adolescent period, although there appears some latency between the onset of feelings and subsequent homosexual behaviour, which typically occurs in late adolescence.
- 3 **Repressors.** A third group comprises men who report onset of homosexual feelings in mid-adolescence but these feelings tend not to be incorporated into their developing sexual schemas during adolescence. There is a long latency between the development of homosexual feelings in mid-adolescence and subsequent homosexual behaviour, which typically does not occur until early adulthood. These men are unlikely to remain within their marital relationship.

- 4 **Defensives.** A final smaller group of men demonstrate negative discordance between their reported sexual feelings prior to and during marriage and their sexual identity label. That is, they identify as heterosexuals or more frequently bisexual while their reported sexual and emotional feelings are homosexual. These men might be best considered as the defensive bisexuals (or heterosexuals). Homosexual milestones tend to be in early to mid-adolescence, and these men are likely to be continuing within their marriages.

The identification of these four types (the adventurous, the avoidant, the repressed and the defensive) is tentative and the distinguishing characteristics of the four groups are yet to be fully explored. Nevertheless, these four groups can be considered to represent the opposing poles of the mapped landscape of behaviourally bisexual married men as indicated in Figure 2. What is yet unclear are the characteristics of the middle ground of this landscape, those men who by identity label and sexual type are bisexual.

A major difficulty in mapping this middle ground is discerning those men who are currently transiting both marital status and identity.

### Locating the bisexuals

While it is possible to discriminate these four archetypes among the broad population of behaviourally bisexual married men, the discussion thus far has not considered those men who are truly dualistic in their sexual object choice.

As discussed above, men with differing sexual identities and presumably divergent motivations engage in sexual contact with both men and women. Men who describe themselves as homosexual have sex with men and women, as do men who describe themselves as heterosexual. A definition

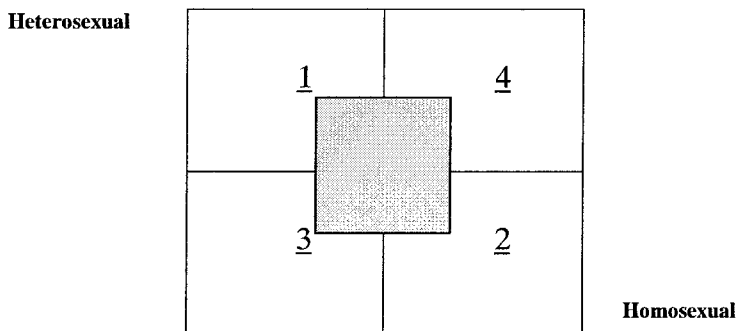


Figure 2 Diagrammatic representation of the tentative landscape of the population of behaviourally bisexual married men

of bisexuality that is focused on behaviour then includes such a broad range of individuals that the categorization is rendered meaningless. What then defines the bisexual? *Sexual orientation* can perhaps best be considered as the desire and the capacity to form intimate sexual attachments with one or the other gender (Malcolm 1998). The true dualists then would be those individuals who share this capacity with both genders.

Within this investigation these men were quite difficult to identify, as it is problematic to differentiate the true dualists from those men whose identity is still in transit; or from those who are utilizing the label as a behavioural descriptor rather than a descriptor of attachment potential.

Among the 140 men who identified themselves as bisexual within this sample, 47 were minor type, 75 mid-type and 19 major type on the basis of their Kinsey ratings before and during marriage. It has already been suggested above that the 19 respondents who fall into the *major-type* bisexual group could be considered as *defensive* bisexuals and will not be further considered here in the search for the 'true' bisexual.

While it is tempting to identify those men who are concordant for type and identity label among this group, that is the *mid-bisexual* group, as the true sexual dualists, it would be possible that not all of these individuals are manifesting a settled sexual identity.

From Table 13 it can be seen that of the 122 men who were classified as *minor-type* bisexual or *mid-type* bisexual, 108 (88.5 per cent) remained within their marital relationships. The maintenance of a bisexual identity then among this population of still-married behaviourally bisexual men is particularly problematic as their identity label may represent a dissonance reduction strategy that facilitates the preservation of the marital relationship. As has already been demonstrated above, men within the *minor type*, that is men who describe their sexual and emotional feelings before and during marriage as primarily heterosexual, may transit to a homosexual identity label. This transition tends to be associated with marital separation.

The maintenance of either a heterosexual or a bisexual identity label among behaviourally bisexual men may indicate an appropriate reflection of individuals' preferred sexual object choice, with homosexual behaviour resulting from incidental opportunity or genuine duality in sexual orientation. However, these self-labels may also represent a distortion that results from difficulties in acknowledging the centrality of homosexual desire to the self.

Alternatively, the adoption of a bisexual identity label should be reflective of sexual behaviour but not emotional attachment. That is, a sexually adventurous man who is only ever emotionally intimate with women may also adopt a bisexual label.

Thus, it is conceivable that both the fundamentally heterosexual and the fundamentally homosexual may adopt a bisexual identity label. It is not

possible from the data collected for this investigation to distinguish these subgroups within the broader population of bisexually identified men reliably. A longitudinal investigation would be needed to identify those who transit to a homosexual identity and in-depth interviewing may well elicit appropriate identification of sexual motivation and differentiation of those men whose adopted a bisexual label as a behavioural, rather than an attachment, self-descriptor.

Thus, while the five categories identified above was used as to analyse the information collected from the basic questionnaire, this analysis was conducted in the context of the limitations imposed by the likely over-inclusiveness of the bisexual category.

These subpopulations and their identifying characteristics remain tentative. To facilitate the analysis of the qualitative data collected in the Extended Sexual History Questionnaire, the groups were collapsed into three, based on current identity labels 'heterosexual, homosexual and bisexual'. The most salient characteristic that differentiated respondents to the items on this questionnaire related to concerns of intimacy and attachment. Those men in the sample who identified as heterosexual clearly indicated relationship and attachment preferences that were unambiguously heterosexual and their homosexual behaviour related to undifferentiated sexual satisfaction associated with opportunity and convenience. The homosexually identified men associate intimacy and attachment to their interactions with other men. Social relationships and a desire for identity congruence tend to figure prominently in their pursuit of homosexual contact. The bisexually identified men tend to report a primacy of intimacy and attachment to their heterosexual relationships and they tend to seek out sexual contact with men for a specific type of sexual satisfaction that they associate with men and masculinity.

## **Conclusions**

This initial reporting of the outcome of these studies suggests a perspective on both homosexuality and bisexuality that does not sit comfortably with much of the constructivist literature that has emerged over the last two decades. There can be little argument that human sexual behaviour is extraordinarily diverse, but this investigation would suggest that there is an inherent order underlying that diversity rather than, as some have suggested, a chaotic fluidity (Garber 1995).

Much of that literature can be interpreted as demeaning to the substantial struggle of many respondents in this investigation to develop congruence between private desires and public identities. The source of this struggle finds its roots in extraordinary levels of internalized homonegativity, the resolution of which is a necessary concomitant of the development of

homosexual identities (Rowen and Malcolm 2000). Among men in these studies the development of a homosexual identity was associated with a number of proximal and distal antecedents. The most prominent of these was association with established homosexual communities and a particular pattern of sexual milestones that indicated homosexual desire was a fundamental and enduring characteristic of the self.

Recently, Stokes, Damon and McKirnan (1997), in a one-year study of bisexual men, found about one-third of their sample moved toward homosexual identities. These men were characterized by fewer overall and current female sexual partners, later age of first heterosexual contact, and greater homoerotic content to sexual fantasies. These findings are quite consistent with those of this investigation and confirm the importance of sexual milestones, ratio of male and female sexual partners and sexual fantasies as indicators of the identity significance of homosexual concerns.

However, while both sexual behaviour and sexual identity labels are clearly influenced by context and culture (Stokes, Miller and Mundhenk 1998), these two constructs appear insufficient to provide a full understanding of sexual motivation. This investigation would suggest that an underlying biological predisposition, that can be inferred from the complex patterns of behaviour, identity labels and reports of emotional attachments of behaviourally bisexual men is critical in understanding both sexual behaviour and identity transitions among these men.

Weinberg et al. (1994), in their benchmark study of bisexuality, suggested that bisexuality was a universal human potential and that bisexuality was facilitated by the presence of 'open gender schemas' which allow the eroticizing of both genders. Weinberg et al. reject the viability of sexual orientation as a useful construct and their focus is on both identity and behaviour. The current study suggests that these constructs alone or in tandem are insufficient for appropriate understanding of sexual object choice. Bisexual behaviour is likely to result from a universal human potential to derive physical satisfaction of sexual motivation from diverse sources, as suggested by Weinberg et al., but this observation does not necessarily call into question the nature of the homosexual/heterosexual binary (Dowsett 1996). The current study suggests that both bisexual behaviours and bisexual identities are often based on a fundamental sexual orientation that may be either homosexual or heterosexual. While bisexuality as identity might result from a defence to internalized homonegativity (a construct not pursued in the Weinberg et al. investigation), enduring male bisexuality appears to be related to a very specific eroticizing of male physicality in the context of primary heterosexual emotional attachment concerns. This phenomenon may well bear little relationship to essentialist theoretical models of homosexuality and points to the necessity of clearly distinguishing between gay and bisexual men in empirical research.

The lack of focus on internalized homonegativity by Weinberg et al. (1994), the inclusion of both men and women and the very specific nature of their sample, drawn from a particular social and geographic catchment in San Francisco, may partially account for the divergent findings reported here. The sample population of this investigation while somewhat more geographically and socially diverse is none the less limited and further investigations need to examine more culturally diverse samples and allow for greater precision in measuring the influence of age-cohort and other sociodemographic variables.

The dominance of the constructivist paradigm in the homosexuality and bisexuality literature has its genesis in the alignment of mainstream academic writing in the area with the social movements of liberation in the 1960s and was given impetus by the writings of Foucault (1978), Hocquenghem (1993), Weeks (1987) and others. This literature, however, seems to have frequently overlooked the necessity for scientific rigour in the development of theoretical models in deference to the political implications of those models. Indeed, the positivist methodology of science is seen by some as anathema (De Cecco and Parker 1995), and antagonistic to the aspirations of homosexual men and women to eradicate the social stigma that continues to be attached to homoerotic desire. However, no matter how frequently it is asserted that homosexual identities represent 'choice', sexual orientation, despite the difficulties inherent in the delineation of the construct, appears to represent a biological given. There is no necessary conflict between essentialist/biological/evolutionary perspectives on homosexuality and the legitimate aspirations of gay men and lesbians for freedom from social oppression. Rather, if it is accepted that the survival of homosexual desire within the population is indicative of its adaptive significance (see McKnight 1997), then, from an evolutionary perspective, the task is to establish its purpose within the human mosaic and further develop understanding of its adaptive functions.

## Notes

- 1 Michael Ross provided a pre-publication copy of the scale for use in the current investigation.
- 2 To simplify the analysis education was recorded as a dichotomous variable between those who had a university education ( $n=39$ ) and those who did not ( $n=43$ ).
- 3 Religiosity was computed as a dichotomous variable from respondents' indication of whether they had any current religious affiliation ( $n=39$ ) or no current religious affiliation ( $n=43$ ).
- 4 Standard seven-point scale: range 0 to 6, where 0 is exclusively heterosexual and 6 is exclusively homosexual.

- 5 These distributions were skewed, thus non-parametric tests were used for the analysis.
- 6 These variables both demonstrate some heterogeneity among the variances for each cell of the grouping variable. However, the cell sizes and ratio between the largest and smallest variance indicate that ANOVA remains a suitable procedure (Tabachnick and Fidell 1996: 328).
- 7 Since Levene's test indicated unequal variances for both age of first homosexual feelings  $F(2, 80)=10.62, p < 0.01$ , and age of first homosexual contact  $F(2, 77)=3.46, p < 0.05$ , Tamhane's  $T^2$  test was used for *post-hoc* comparisons.
- 8 Twelve respondents from the total sample of 355 men had indicated their sexual identity label as 'other'. Five of these indicated that their preferred identity label was 'queer' and were thus counted within the homosexual group. A further five respondents were identified on the basis of their response to question 1 in Section M of the questionnaire. Two respondents who did not have a clear identity label were excluded from the analysis.
- 9 From the original sample of 314 ever-married respondents, six men did not complete the Kinsey scales and two were excluded as their identity label could not be determined.
- 10 Unequal variance: Levene's test  $F = 4.96, p < 0.05$ .
- 11 Unequal variances: Levene's test  $F = 21.87, p < 0.001$ .
- 12 Unequal variances: Levene's test  $F = 7.88, p < 0.01$ .

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