

FIRST HETEROSEXUAL SEX AND SEXUAL ACTIVITY IN THE LAST YEAR IN A LARGE NATIONAL SURVEY OF NEW ZEALAND ADULTS

Murphy B^{*1}, Righarts A,² Dickson N,² Gribben B,³ Saxton P, ⁴ Connor J²

¹ *Ministry of Health, Wellington*

² *University of Otago, Dunedin*

³ *CBG Health Research, Auckland*

⁴ *University of Auckland, Auckland*

Introduction: Understanding sexual behaviours is key to developing policies to improve sexual health.

Methods: In 2014/15, 10,198 adults aged 16–74 years completed the Sexual and Reproductive Health module of the New Zealand Health Survey, which included questions on first **heterosexual** sex and **heterosexual** behaviour in the last year.

Results: At age 17, half of New Zealanders have had sex.

Almost a quarter of 16- to 24-year-olds have had sex under age 16. Sex under the age of consent is more common among Māori than non-Māori, and among Pacific men than non-Pacific; it is less common among Pacific women than non-Pacific, and among Asian than non-Asian.

Adults aged 16–24 were more likely to use condoms at first sex (80%) than older age-groups. Condom use at first sex was less likely among Māori and Pacific than non-Māori and non-Pacific adults.

Sixteen percent of women said their partner was ‘more willing’ than them at first sex, compared to 4.3% of men; Māori were more like to report this than non-Māori.

Eighty-seven percent of 25- to 44-year-olds had had a sexual partner in the last year, compared with 57% of 65- to 74-year-olds.

Over 10% aged 16–44 had had anal sex in the last year, compared with under 5% of those aged 55 and over; this was more common for Māori and Pacific than non-Māori and non-Pacific.

Twenty-seven percent of 16- to 24-year-olds had two or more partners in the last year, compared with under 10% aged 35 years and over. Pacific and Asian adults were less likely to have had multiple partners in the last year than non-Pacific and non-Asian. Over half who had multiple partners in the last year did not use a condom every time.

Conclusion: This is the first national survey of sexual and reproductive health in New Zealand since 1990, and provides valuable information to inform policy development.