

# ENGAGING MIGRANT GAY AND BISEXUAL MEN IN SEXUAL HEALTHCARE: QUALITATIVE INSIGHTS FROM SOCIAL AND SEXUAL NETWORKS IN AUSTRALIA

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## Background:

Migrant gay, bisexual, and other men who have sex with men (GBM) are often characterised as disconnected from LGBTQ+ community, and this disconnection exacerbates disparities in HIV outcomes through disconnection from HIV-related services. Yet, there are many migrant GBM who are well-connected to both community and sexual healthcare. This analysis seeks to identify how social networks influence sexual health behaviours and exposure to health information.

## Methods:

Semi-structured interviews were conducted between November 2022-September 2023. Participants were eligible if they were GBM, aged ≥18 years, were born in Asia, Latin America, Africa, the Middle East, or Eastern Europe, lived in New South Wales, and had arrived from 2017 onward. Interviews were analysed thematically.

## Results:

Among the 29 participants, the median age was 29. Most were born in Asia (n=16) or Latin America (n=8), and 11 were on a student visa. Many participants described other GBM in their social and sexual networks as important sources of health-related information, including locations of sexual health clinics and information about preexposure prophylaxis (PrEP) and HIV treatment. Some indicated that partner notification, HIV testing and PrEP use became normalised for them from their friends and sexual partners. While some connected with community groups that targeted their intersecting identities (e.g. a South Asian LGBTQ+ group), others did not actively pursue friendships with LGBTQ+ people and preferred having a mix of friends from different sexualities and backgrounds. Other networks beyond LGBTQ+ community were important for these GBM, including university groups and diaspora communities.

## Conclusion:

We found social networks substantially impact sexual health related behaviours and are potential avenues for health information for migrant GBM. Networks beyond

LGBTQ+ community groups are common but are not yet effectively leveraged for health promotion. To target migrant GBM in HIV prevention, engaging with broader community groups beyond LGBTIQ+ communities may be useful.

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