

# BI+ MEN MORE LIKELY TO RECEIVE SUPPORT FROM BI+ PEERS THAN GAY PEERS: SEXUAL HEALTH AND SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT FINDINGS FROM A NATIONAL SURVEY OF GAY AND BISEXUAL MEN IN AUSTRALIA

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## Background:

Bi+ (bisexual, pansexual and other multi-gender attracted) men have often been grouped with gay men in HIV research and programs, masking key differences in HIV prevention needs. We examined characteristics of bi+ men compared with gay men from a national cross-sectional study on social connection and HIV prevention.

## Methods:

Participants were recruited across Australia through social media and mailing lists to complete an online survey from Nov-2022 to Jan-2023. Analyses were restricted to participants who were men (cis or trans) and identified as either bi+ or gay. Demographic characteristics and sexual health outcomes were compared using chi-square and t-tests.

## Results:

915 responses were included (bi+ men=30.9%, gay men=69.1%). 86.4% of bi+ men and 79.3% of gay men were born in Australia and most were cisgender (bi+=96.6%, gay=99.4%). Among bi+ men, 1.8% were HIV-positive, 71.7% were HIV-negative and 26.5% were untested/unknown, compared to 8.2%, 80.2% and 11.6% of gay men ( $p<0.001$ ). Bi+ men reported less social engagement with gay men (Mean=2.24 versus 3.32,  $p<0.001$ ) and LGBTQ+ people (Mean=2.60 versus 3.50,  $p<0.001$ ), however were more likely to receive social support from other bi+ men (Mean=4.52 versus 2.64,  $p<0.001$ ). Among non-HIV-positive participants ( $n=858$ ), bi+ men were less likely to have ever taken PrEP (23.0% versus 50.5%,  $p<0.001$ ). Bi+ men were less likely than gay men to have recently tested for HIV (51.9% versus 66.1%,  $p<0.001$ ); received comprehensive STI testing (22.3% versus 48.4%,  $p<0.001$ ); and accessed information about sexual health from healthcare providers (47.4% versus 64.7%,  $p<0.001$ ) or community-based organisations (14.1% versus 31.7%,  $p<0.001$ ).

## Conclusion:

There is an opportunity to encourage testing and PrEP use through bi+ men's social networks, which may be different to gay men's networks. Further research is needed to understand the HIV/sexual health and social needs within bi+ communities to develop tailored interventions to reach higher-risk bi+ men in testing and prevention.

## Disclosure of Interest Statement:

The Kirby Institute and Centre for Social Research in Health are supported by the Australian Government Department of Health. This study was supported by funding

from a NHMRC Partnership Project (GNT2002625). No pharmaceutical funding was received for this research.