

## Tracking tobacco and vape use among LBQ women – responding to changing public health needs.

Mooney-Somers J<sup>1</sup>, Deacon, R<sup>2,3</sup> Anderst A<sup>4</sup>, Watson L<sup>5</sup>, Wang L<sup>5</sup>, Gillmore T<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> School of Public Health, University of Sydney, Sydney, Australia, <sup>2</sup> Discipline of Addiction Medicine, Sydney Medical School, University of Sydney, Sydney, Australia, <sup>3</sup> Drug & Alcohol Services, South Eastern Sydney Local Health District, Sydney, Australia, <sup>4</sup> The George Institute for Global Health, Sydney, Australia, <sup>5</sup> ACON, Sydney, Australia

Presenter's email: [julie.mooneysomers@sydney.edu.au](mailto:julie.mooneysomers@sydney.edu.au)

**Introduction:** Lesbian, bisexual, queer and other non-heterosexual (LBQ) women have higher rates of tobacco smoking compared to women in the general population (8%). While use has decreased among LBQ women, this reduction was several years behind the general population. Emerging US data indicates LGBTQ people are more likely to vape. This presentation focused on 2022 data, explores tobacco and vape use among LBQ women in NSW.

**Method:** The SWASH survey, conducted every two years, examines the health of LBQ women. Recruitment (primarily online) took place during the 2022 Sydney Mardi Gras season; 2860 valid surveys were returned.

**Results:** Tobacco smoking has halved (13%) since 2016 (30%), 25% are ex-smokers and 62% have never smoked. Among those younger than 25 years, the rate of initiation has halved since 2020. Vaping is tracking in the opposite direction: 49% of 2022 respondents reported having ever used vapes, compared to 27% in 2020. One in ten now report daily vaping, compared to one in 100 in 2020. Concurrent daily vaping and tobacco use was common (28%). Daily vaping was reported by 20% of ex-smokers and 2.5% of those who had never smoked.

**Discussions and Conclusions:** With 49% having ever used and 10% using daily, vaping appears to be becoming normalised among LBQ women. The swiftness and scale of the change since 2020 is a concern. Qualitative research is needed to understand motivations, including whether vaping is used as a smoking cessation tool, and how women are managing their nicotine intake.

**Implications for Practice or Policy:** Our findings raise questions about how LBQ women's education and support needs are being met. Vaping policy and public health interventions are rapidly developing, we must work to prevent LBQ women being left behind as they were with tobacco control.

**Disclosure of Interest Statement:** *We do not have any interest or conflicts to declare, this research did not receive any funding from pharmaceutical, alcohol or tobacco companies.*