

UNWANTED SEX WHEN DRUNK OR HIGH: FINDINGS FROM THE FIRST (2001-02) AND SECOND (2012-13) AUSTRALIAN STUDIES OF HEALTH AND RELATIONSHIPS

Carter A¹, Richters J¹, Yeung A², Rissel C³, de Visser R⁴, Grulich A¹, Haire B¹, Bateson D^{5,6}, Newman C⁷, Vaughan C⁸, McGeechan K³, Donovan B^{1,9}, Guy R¹

¹Kirby Institute, UNSW Sydney, Sydney, Australia

²MAP Centre for Urban Health Solutions, St Michael's Hospital, Toronto, Canada

³Sydney School of Public Health, University of Sydney, Sydney, Australia

⁴School of Psychology, University of Sussex, Brighton, United Kingdom

⁵Family Planning New South Wales, Sydney, Australia

⁶Discipline of Obstetrics, Gynaecology and Neonatology, University of Sydney, Sydney, Australia

⁷Centre for Social Research in Health, UNSW Sydney, Australia

⁸Melbourne School of Population and Global Health, University of Melbourne, Melbourne, Australia

⁹Sydney Sexual Health Centre, Sydney Hospital, Sydney, Australia

Background: Combining sex with intoxication, while fun in some contexts, can contribute to unwanted outcomes. The extent of the problem in the general population is unknown, however. We assessed the prevalence, trends, and factors associated with unwanted sex when drunk or high.

Methods: We analyzed nationally representative cross-sectional survey data collected via computer-assisted telephone interviews in the First (2001-02/ASHR1) and Second (2012-13/ASHR2) Australian Studies of Health and Relationships. Women and men (weighted n=19,369) who reported any sexual experiences were asked, "Have you ever had a sexual experience with a male or a female when you didn't want to because you were too drunk or high at the time?" (hereafter 'unwanted sex'). Logistic regression identified correlates in ASHR2, and decade-long trends were estimated vis-à-vis ASHR1.

Results: In 2012-13, unwanted sex was significantly more common among: women than men (16%-vs-11%); 16-19-year-olds (17%-women/11%-men) and 20-29-year-olds (19%-women/14%-men) than older respondents; and bisexuals (35%-women/21%-men) than heterosexuals (13%-women/10%-men). For both women and men, unwanted sex was independently associated with younger age, bisexual experience, history of ever injecting drugs, having experienced sexual coercion (i.e., being forced or frightened into sex), and having had an STI. Among women only, unwanted sex was associated with heavier drinking and ever having terminated a pregnancy. Among men only, it was associated with current tobacco smoking, current psychological distress, and poor general health. Between 2001-02 and 2012-13, unwanted sex declined significantly in men (14%-vs-11%), chiefly 30-39-year-olds (19%-vs-12%), but remained unchanged in women, except 50-59-year-olds (9%-vs-15%).

Conclusion: 1 in 6 women and 1 in 10 men reported unwanted sex while intoxicated, with rates varying by age and sexuality and appearing relatively stable over time in women while declining in men. Understanding the sociocultural contexts in which both women and men navigate and negotiate sex with intoxication is warranted in today's #MeToo movement.

Disclosure of interest:

Nothing to declare.