



Self-perceived problematic relationship with drugs and the use of alcohol and other drug (AOD) services among gay and bisexual men

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4. Victorian AIDS Council, Melbourne

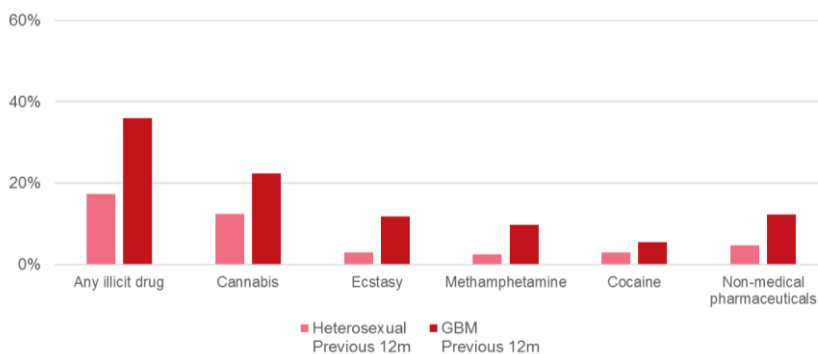
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Outline

- Patterns and profile of drug use among gay and bisexual men
- The FLUX study aims and methods
- Prevalence of drug use in the sample
- Engagement with professional AOD services
- Implications for service promotion and delivery



Drug use among gay & bi men



Roxburgh et al, 2016

Drug use and HIV

• Drug use and sexual risk taking

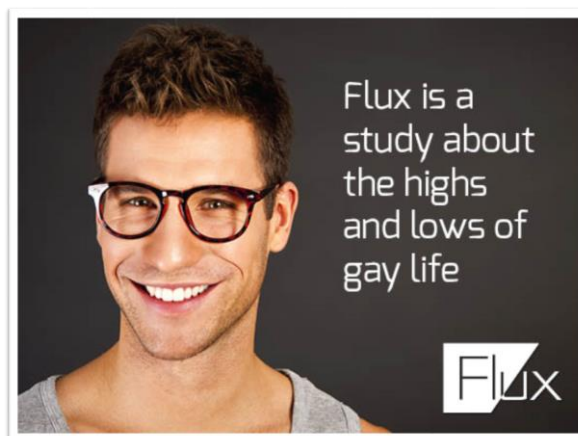
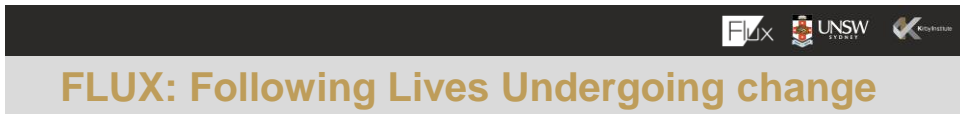
- Broad level associations between the use of illicit substances and increased likelihood of reporting HIV or STI transmission risk sexual behaviour
- Strongest associations between crystal meth and unprotected anal intercourse (UAI) and binge alcohol use
- Methamphetamine and erectile dysfunction medication associated with increased odds of HIV infection
- Drug use associated with increased odds of UAI during group sex

Prestage, Jin, Kippax, Zablotska, Imrine, & Drulich, 2009;
Melendez-Torres & Bourne, 2016

Drug use and other harms

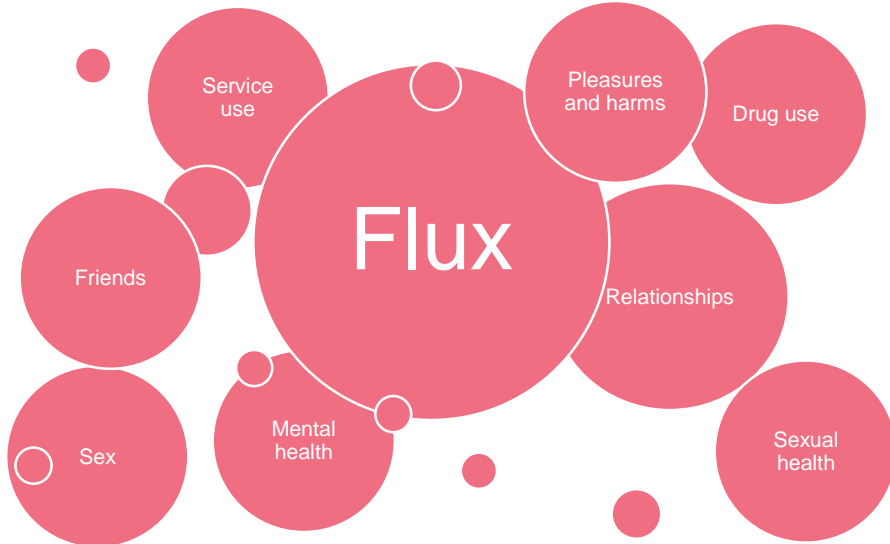
- **GHB/GBL**
 - Propensity for overdose
 - 119% rise in number of deaths in London 2014 - 2015 (1 death every 12 days)
- **Crystal methamphetamine**
 - Anxiety, paranoia, hallucinations,
 - Negative association with adherence to HIV antiretroviral therapy
- **AIM:** To establish whether and where gay and bisexual men who self-report a problematic relationship with drugs access professional alcohol and drug (AOD) services

Hockenhull et al, 2017; Rajasingham et al, 2012; Bourne et al, 2015; Heibronn et al, 2013



FLUX UNSW SYDNEY Kiro Institute

What data does Flux capture?

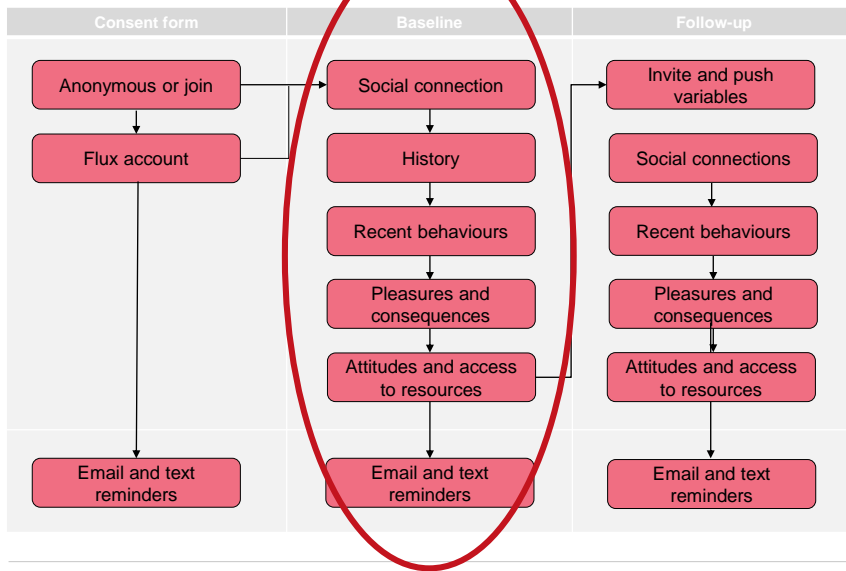


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FLUX Symposium UNSW SYDNEY Kiro Institute

Flux outline



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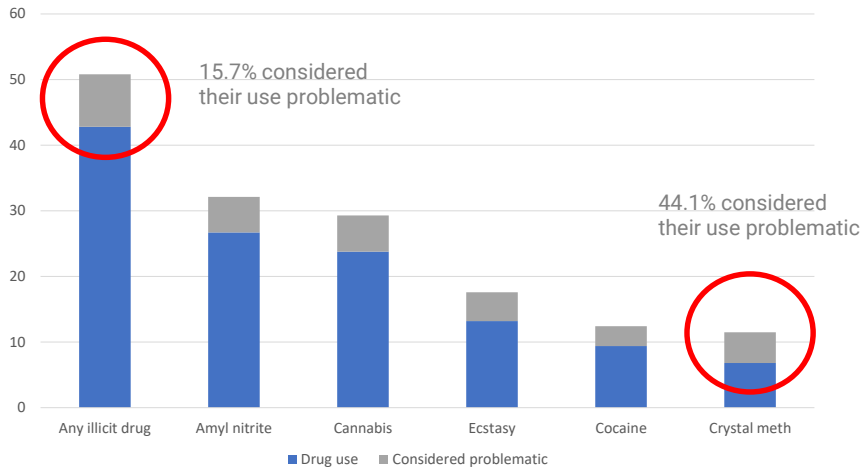
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FLUX Sample

Total FLUX baseline sample	2251	Included in AOD analysis	2051
Employment	%	HIV Status	%
Professional	27.1	Diagnosed HIV positive	7.9
Managerial	15.6	Never tested	18.1
Sexual Identity	%	Ethnicity	%
Gay/homosexual	88.4%	Anglo-Celtic	72.7
Bisexual	8.7	Other	27.3



Use of drugs in previous 6 months and whether use was considered problematic



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Use of drugs and self-perception of problematic drug relationship

Characteristic	Did not use drugs in previous 6 months (n=1010)	Used illicit drugs in previous 6 months (n=1041)	
		Not considered problematic (n=878)	Considered problematic (n=163)
HIV Status	% (n)		
HIV-positive	34.0 (55)	46.9 (76)	19.1 (31)
HIV-negative	46.6 (693)	45.3 (674)	8.1 (121)
Unknown/untested	65.3 (262)	31.9 (128)	2.7 (11)
Number of gay friends who use drugs	% (n)	Not considered problematic (n=878)	Considered problematic (n=163)
None	76.9 (320)	21.9 (91)	1.2 (5)
A few	52.8 (470)	43.3 (385)	3.9 (35)
About half	32.9 (92)	53.6 (150)	13.6 (38)
Most	21.2 (66)	58.3 (182)	20.5 (64)
All	18.1 (13)	54.2 (39)	27.8 (20)

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Perceived level of comfort using AOD services

Mean comfortability score (SD)	Did not use drugs in previous 6 months (n=1010)	Used illicit drugs in previous 6 months (n=1041)	
		Not considered problematic (n=878)	Considered problematic (n=163)
Type of AOD service	% (n)		
12-step programs	2.28	2.13	2.20
Detox or rehab centre	2.43	2.33	2.49
Doctor	3.73	3.64	3.75
Drug & alcohol support group	2.45	2.36	2.62
Group therapy	2.28	2.22	2.42
Methadone clinic	2.00	1.78	1.58
Telephone helpline	3.06	3.00	3.09
Psychologist	3.69	3.73	3.94
Other counsellor	3.43	3.49	3.63

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Use of AOD service according to whether drug use considered problematic

Type of AOD service	Obtained information % (n)		Used service % (n)	
	Did not consider drug use problematic (n=878)	Drug use considered problematic (n=163)	Did not consider drug use problematic (n=878)	Drug use considered problematic (n=163)
Any agency or service	31.8 (279)	58.9 (96)	14.4 (126)	42.9 (70)
12-step programs	2.1 (18)	8.0 (13)	0.5 (4)	4.3 (7)
Drug use agency	7.0 (61)	30.1 (49)	0.5 (4)	6.1 (10)
Doctor/health care staff	14.9 (130)	24.5 (40)	11.7 (103)	31.3 (51)
Gay organisation	17.2 (150)	28.8 (47)	N/A	N/A
HIV organisation	16.1 (141)	32.5 (5)	N/A	N/A
Psychologist	N/A	N/A	5.8 (51)	20.2 (33)
Other counsellor	N/A	N/A	3.2 (28)	14.1 (23)
Detox or rehab centre	N/A	N/A	0.6 (5)	3.7 (6)
Drug & alcohol support group	N/A	N/A	0.5 (4)	6.1 (10)

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Conclusions and implications

- High proportion of GBM in FLUX use illicit drugs, highest among HIV positive men
- One in seven consider their use problematic – highest among men who use crystal
- Low uptake of traditional AOD services among those who consider use problematic
- Qualitative research indicates GBM often fear judgement or lack of understanding in traditional AOD services
- High proportion of GBM obtaining information about drug use from gay and HIV organisations (potential role for wider service delivery)



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Acknowledgements

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All 3253 participants

- **Project coordinator**

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