

SEXUAL & REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH IMPACT OF COVID-19 SURVEY 3: RESULTS

Who completed the survey and what did we ask them?

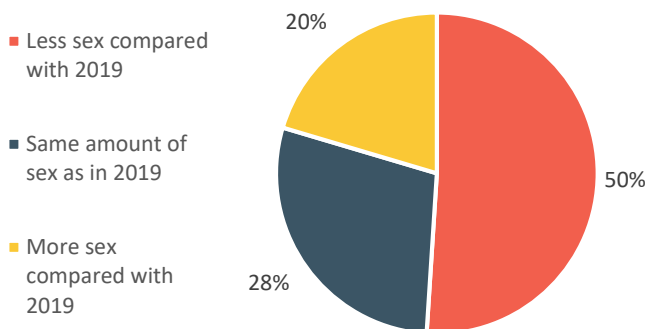
From the 13th to 31st August 2020, we conducted an online survey exploring the sexual and reproductive health impact of COVID-19. Nearly 900 people completed Survey 3. Most participants identified as female and heterosexual, were aged between 18-30 years and were born in Australia. Many participants reported living in Victoria.

COVID-19 restrictions during Survey 3

On the 2nd of August 2020, amid widespread community transmission of COVID-19, a state of disaster was declared in Victoria and the state went into lockdown. Like the Australia-wide lockdown earlier in the year, Victorians were asked to remain in their homes except for four reasons: to shop for essential goods, to provide or seek care, to exercise, or to attend work or education where these could not take place in the home. Those living in Melbourne were subject to additional restrictions including: a nightly curfew, a limit on the amount of time that could be spent exercising, mandatory mask wearing outside the home and a limit on how far people could travel from home. Survey 3 captured the experiences of Victorians during this time. The rest of Australia remained largely restriction free during this time.

Were people still having sex?

Yes, 60% of participants said that they had had partnered sex in the past four weeks. However, half of the participants said that they were having less sex compared with 2019.



Who were participants having sex with?

Most participants reported having sex with spouses, partners, boyfriends and girlfriends.

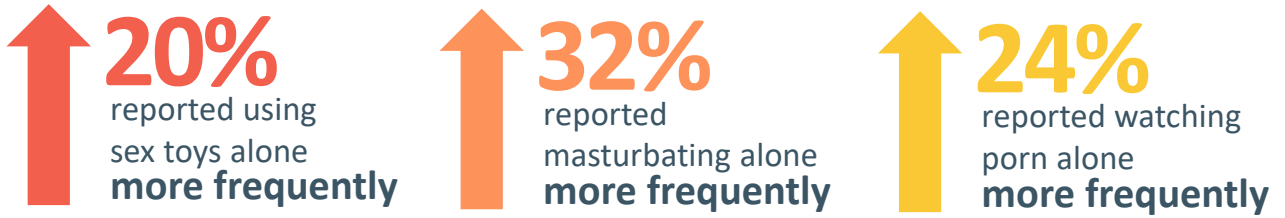
Less than 15% of participants said that their recent partners were casual or occasional partners.





What happened to solo sex activities?

Many participants reported an increase in solo sex activities compared with 2019:



What happened to dating app use during Survey 3?

Dating app use was common; nearly 30% said they had used a dating app in the past four weeks. Over 80% of dating app users said that they were using apps to fill the time, or for chatting/texting.

32% of participants used apps for face to face dates or hook ups



Only **11%** of participants used apps to organise virtual dates



What did participants tell us about access to contraception and other sexual and reproductive health products?

Few people said they experienced difficulty when accessing contraception (9%), sexual and reproductive health products (3%) and period products (11%).

Were there differences between the responses of Victorians and non-Victorians? Yes. There were clear differences in sexual activity and reasons for using dating apps between Victorians (in lockdown) and the rest of Australia (not in lockdown).

We conducted four surveys across 2020 during key phases of the pandemic:

- **Survey 1:** April-May 2020, during the first nation-wide lockdown
- **Survey 2:** June 2020, during the period of easing restrictions
- **Survey 3:** August 2020, during the Victorian hard lockdown
- **Survey 4:** November-December 2020, when restrictions were eased across the country

Do you want more information?

Visit our website: <http://go.unimelb.edu.au/9paj>

Or contact us: sexualhealth-research@unimelb.edu.au

This project has been approved by the University of Melbourne Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) ID: 2056693

