



SEXUAL & REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH IMPACT OF COVID-19 SURVEY 2: RESULTS

Who completed the survey and what did we ask them?

From the 11th to 29th June 2020, we conducted an online survey exploring the sexual and reproductive health impact of COVID-19. More than 700 people completed Survey 2. Most participants identified as female and heterosexual, were aged less than 30 years, and were born in Australia. Lots of the participants reported living in Victoria.

COVID-19 restrictions during Survey 2

Although restrictions varied across the country, Australia was largely not in lockdown during this time and most people were able to return to their usual activities. Despite reporting no new COVID-19 cases in early June, by the end of the month restrictions were gradually re-introduced in Victoria as community transmission rose. Survey 2 asked about participants experiences in the previous four weeks; that is in the weeks prior to the re-introduction of restrictions in Victoria.

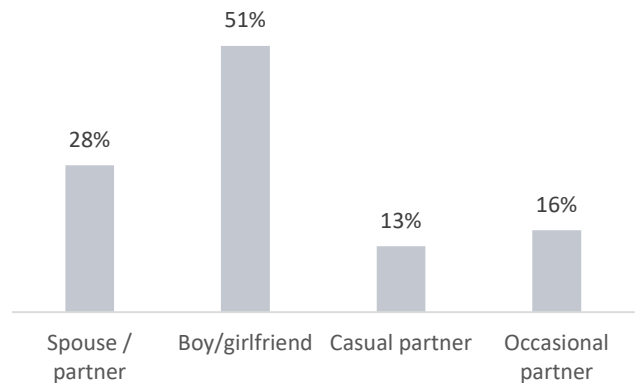
How did the pandemic impact on sexual activity?

Most participants said they had sex in the past four weeks. However, despite there being few restrictions in place, around 40% of participants reported less partnered sex compared with 2019. Half of those who reported recent sex said this was with their boy or girlfriend.

Were people masturbating more?

Many participants reported an increase in solo sex activities compared with 2019. Nearly one third said they were masturbating more often, and more than 20% said they were watching porn alone more often compared with 2019.

Recent sex partner type



21% of sexually active participants said they were washing their hands more frequently before and/or after sex due to COVID-19





Were people having difficulty accessing contraception and period products?

Although some people reported difficulty accessing their usual period products and contraceptive method, fewer people reported having these difficulties in Survey 2 compared with earlier in the pandemic.

The oral contraceptive pill was the most common contraceptive method people were having difficulty accessing.

Were people accessing sexual and reproductive health services?

Nearly a quarter of our participants said they had delayed, or put off seeking health care for a sexual and reproductive health issue since the beginning of the pandemic in March, 2020.

Were people using dating apps, and what were they using them for?

Nearly a quarter of participants said that they used dating apps in the past four weeks. Most app users said that they used them to fill the time and for chatting/texting.

Dating apps were the most commonly used method of meeting a new sex partner. Just over half of the participants who reported sex with a new partner said that they had met them using an app.

15%

Reported difficulty accessing period products



5%

Reported difficulty accessing contraception



12%

said they used apps to organise **virtual dates**

50%

said they used apps to organise **face-to-face dates** and/or **hook-ups**

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

