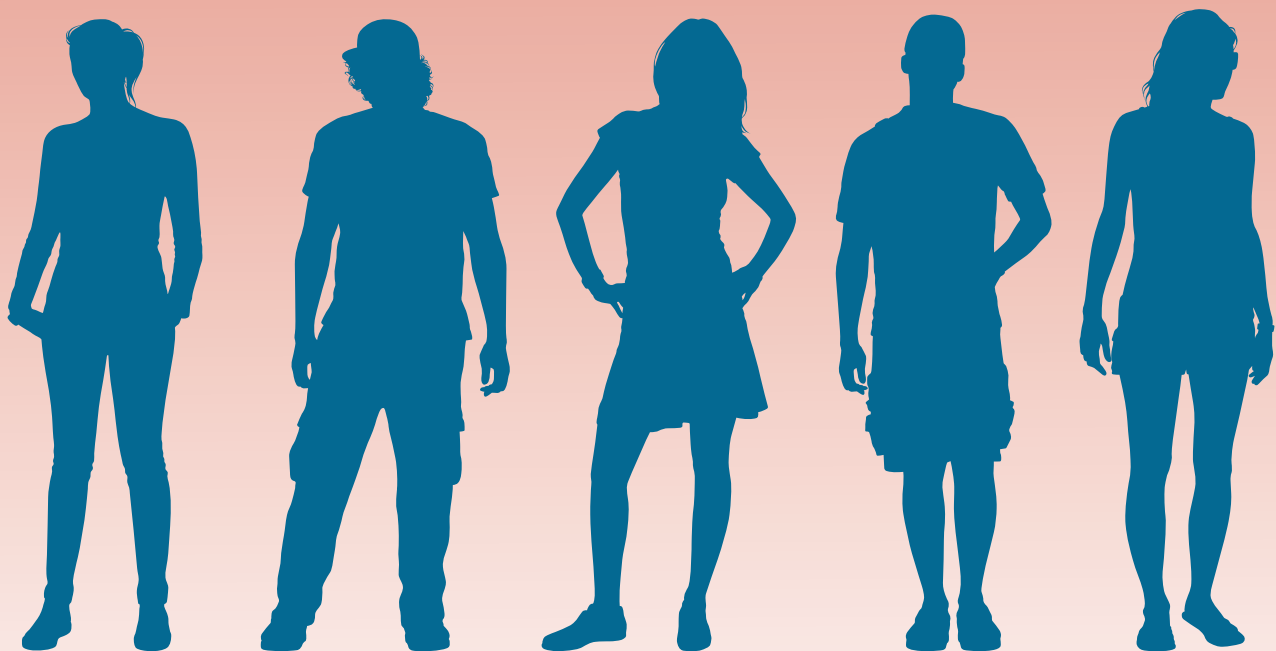


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# The National Survey

of Sexual Attitudes and Lifestyles



The project is being managed by a multi-disciplinary team of researchers from **University College London (UCL)**, the **London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine (LSHTM)** and **NatCen Social Research (NatCen)**.



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# Who was this work conducted with and for what reason?

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## **The British National Surveys of Sexual Attitudes and Lifestyles, or NATSAL, are among the largest and most detailed studies of sexual behaviour in the world.**

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Three Natsal surveys have taken place: Natsal-1 in 1990-1991, Natsal-2 in 1999-2001 and Natsal-3 in 2010-2012.

The third survey covers an age range of 16 to 74. The survey interviewed 15,162 men and women aged 16-74 between September 2010 and August 2012. They provided valuable information about their

experiences, behaviours, and views which will shape our understanding of sexual health in Britain.

The following summary is drawn only from the initial findings published in the Lancet in 2014, however many additional publications from the survey are planned.

**We have included this important UK study in the summary reports as it provides useful contextual factors which need to be taken into consideration of young people's sexual health and wellbeing.**



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# What are the key findings of this report?

- Overall there has been an increase in the number of opposite sex partners for women since the last survey
- 5% of men have had same sex sexual experiences with men, the same as in the previous survey
- 8% of women have had same sex experience with women, an increase of 3%.
- The proportion of the population who has had their first sexual intercourse before the age of 16 has continued to rise, with 31% of males aged 16-24 and 29% of females aged 16-24 reporting first experience before 16.
- 74% of 16-24 year old males and 75% of 16-24 year old females have had vaginal sex in the last year with an opposite sex partner
- 71% of all 16-24 year olds have given or received oral sex in the last year
- 19% of 16-24 year old males and 17% of females aged 16-24 have experienced anal sex with an opposite sex partner in the last year. Likelihood of having had anal sex decreases with age meaning that young people now are much more likely to have experience of anal sex than previous generations.
- HPV is the most common STI detected in survey respondents followed by Chlamydia.
- 1 in 100 people aged 16-44 had Chlamydia rising to 1 in 20 women aged 18-19 and one in thirty men aged 20-24.
- Reports of non volitional sex described as “since the age of 13, has anyone made you have sex with them against your will” were reported by 9.8% of all female respondents and 1.4% of all male respondents. Non volitional sex was more common among younger people with median age being 16 for males and 18 for females.
- For females the responsible person for this was most likely to be a partner (41%) followed by someone known to them but not a family member or friend (21%) followed by a friend or family member (20%). Strangers accounted for 15%.
- For males the most common responsible person was a family member or friend (30%) or a person known to them but not a family member or friend (30%) followed by a partner (23%) and then a stranger (15%)
- 10% of 16-44 year old women had a conception in the last year. This includes 5% of 16-19 year olds and 11% of 20-24 year olds.
- Almost all conceptions in 16-19 year olds were unplanned or ambivalent.



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# What are the implications of the findings?

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**The major new findings which have greatest relevance for sexual health improvement with young people are the very large numbers of young people that have experienced anal sex with an opposite sex partner and the extent to which people have experienced non-volitional sex.**

It is notable that the reports of anal sex are matched by findings from our own consultation with young people who have requested greater information about anal sex. Subsequent research has been conducted which explores the circumstances in which anal sex takes place among opposite sex partners and there are indications that this activity is one many young women feel coerced into participating in.

**As anal sex is a particular taboo in society, equipping staff or parents and carers with the knowledge, skills and confidence to discuss anal sex will be a challenge.**

Yet given the circumstances in which anal sex is occurring and the risk of transmission of sexually transmitted infections that anal sex poses, this is a process which needs to be undertaken.

The findings relating to non volitional sex offer an additional context to other UK studies undertaken in recent years which have raised awareness of the extent of intimate partner violence in teenage relationships. The profile of perpetrators which this study offers is particularly useful and one which needs to be included in interventions aimed at addressing consent and healthy relationships.