

# SAFE SUMMER SURVIVAL SEXUAL HEALTH SURVEY

## RESULTS SUMMARY

APRIL 2003

### ABOUT SAFE SUMMER SURVIVAL

Safe Summer Survival (SSS) is a sexual health peer education program that targets young people (12-24 year olds) in the eastern suburbs of Sydney. The paid peer educators are young people themselves who are provided with training on sexual health issues and outreach skills. They visit local beaches, shopping centres, youth centres and youth events to approach other young people with sexual health information. The peer-educators can provide young people with safe-sex packs (condoms / lube); pamphlets related to sexual health, sexuality or drug use; health and youth service information; and can discuss any issues related to sexual health, sexuality or drug use as appropriate. This year the program has placed additional emphasis on raising awareness of the sexually transmitted infection chlamydia, which has a high prevalence among young people.

SSS is coordinated by Waverley Action for Youth Services (WAYS) and ran from December 2002 to February 2003. Funding and support is provided by South East Health (HIV/AIDS & Related Diseases Unit and Sydney Sexual Health Centre), WAYS, The Shack Youth Services, and Waverley, Woollahra, Randwick and Botany Councils. The program has been operating over the summer months for three consecutive years.

### ABOUT THE SURVEY

During the summer 2002-2003 SSS program a sexual health survey was integrated in to the programs outreach activities and was conducted/coordinated by WAYS. The survey question form was provided to young people by the peer educators and was self-administered confidentially. No identifying details are recorded on the form so respondents remain anonymous. The peer educators did not look at the completed surveys as the young people hand them back.

The sexual health survey collected information on demographics of respondents, their sexual behaviours, their attitudes relating to sexual health, and their levels of knowledge about sexual health/blood borne viruses. Once the respondent handed the completed survey form back to the peer educator they were given an information sheet which contained the answers to the knowledge section, some related-educational information, and health service / youth service contact details. The peer educators were available to discuss any issues that may have arisen for the respondents.

This was a self-administered survey and particular variables may have impacted upon the accuracy of the information provided by some of the respondents. Respondents were filling the survey in while in busy public places with possible time constraints, and other distractions such as being with their friends. A small number of surveys (10) were not treated as serious by the respondents due to their comical answers so these were not included in the results.

Survey designed by Grant Malpas (HIV/AIDS & Related Diseases Unit, South East Health) and the SSS management steering committee.

Results were collated and reported by Grant Malpas. (phone 9382 7635 - malpasg@sesahs.nsw.gov.au)

**Appendix 1 : The original sexual health survey form that participants completed.**

**Appendix 2 : The educational / information sheet given to participants after returning the completed survey.**

## THE RESULTS

### 226 surveys were returned.

Presented below is each original question asked within the survey and a collated summary of the responses.

Each question has **SUMMARY POINTS** to highlight any significant trends worthy of note and will ease the review of the results.

### 1/ WHERE RESPONDENTS LIVE

- 217 respondents

Number	General Area	Postcode
15% (33)	Malabar, Matraville, La Perouse	2036
15% (32)	Maroubra	2035
8% (18)	Randwick	2031
8% (17)	Botany	2019
6% (14)	Coogee	2034
5% (10)	Kingsford	2032
5% (10)	Eastlakes	2018
5% (10)	Overseas visitors	
4% (9)	Bondi, North Bondi	2026

5 from postcode 2020 ; 4 from each postcode 2017/2037/2024/2216; 3 from each postcode 2205/2000;

2 from each postcode : 2033/2030/2226/2022/2023/2042

1 from each postcode :

2133/2770/2220/2196/2054/2234/2030/2205/2024/2114/2177/2047/2068/2080/2020/2217/2040/2204/2112.

### 2/ AGE & GENDER

- 226 respondents

AGE	MALE	FEMALE	TRANSGENDER
12-15	8% (18)	12% (29)	-
16-19	16% (36)	19% (44)	2 people
20-25	15% (33)	19% (44)	1 person

Over 25 years old = 8% (19)

#### **SUMMARY POINTS**

- 55% of respondents were aged 12-19 years old. 34% were aged 20-25 years old.
- Approximately half respondents were female and half male.
- 3 respondents identified as transgender.

### 3/ SEXUAL ORIENTATION

- Straight/heterosexual = 188 (90%)
- Gay/lesbian/homosexual = 6 (3 female, 2 male, 1 transgendered)
- Bisexual = 14 (13 female, 1 male)
- Unsure = 2 (2 female)

#### **SUMMARY POINTS**

- 90% identified as heterosexual. 10% as gay, lesbian, homosexual, bisexual or unsure.

### 4/ COUNTRY OF BIRTH

Australia = 65% (143)

Other = 35% (77)

## 5/ ETHNICITY / CULTURAL IDENTITY

- 217 respondents

ETHNICITY	NUMBER	ETHNICITY	NO.	ETHNICITY	NO.	ETHNICITY	NO.
Australian	23% (49)	German	4	Canadian	3	European	2
English	11% (24)	Irish	4	Netherlands	3	Macedonian	2
Don't know	10% (22)	Croatian	4	USA	3	South Africa	2
Greek	4% (9)	Russian	4	Yugoslavian	2	South American	2
Aboriginal	3% (7)	Maltese	3	Maori	2	Chinese	2
Italian	3% (6)	Polish	3	Portugese	3	Vietnamese	2
NZ/Pakeha	3% (6)	Spanish	3	Persian	2	Fijian	2
Lebanese	3% (6)	Indian	3	Egyptian	2		
Turkish	2% (5)						

1 person from each of the following ethnicities :

Moroccan, Filipino, Brazilian, Assyrian, Moldi, African American, Japanese, Israeli, Samoan, American Indian, French, Thai, South Korean, Malaysia, Serbian, Bosnian, Pakistani, Asian, Columbian.

### SUMMARY POINTS

- ➔ Over half of respondents were from a culture other than Anglo-Australian.
- ➔ 3% of the overall sample identified as Aboriginal.

**NOTE – Over 25 year old's survey results (19 in total) excluded hereafter due to non-target group and to avoid skewing youth data.**

6/ SURVEY QUESTION : Where have you got MOST of your information about sex and sexual health from ? (tick most relevant boxes)

- 207 respondents

<input type="checkbox"/> Your parents / caregivers =	26% (54)
<input type="checkbox"/> Other family members =	7% (14)
<input type="checkbox"/> Friends / partners =	61% (126)
<input type="checkbox"/> Taught about it at school =	46% (96)
<input type="checkbox"/> Internet/magazines/TV/movies/videos =	29% (60)
<input type="checkbox"/> Books / pamphlets =	11% (22)
<input type="checkbox"/> Health worker / doctor / youth worker =	7% (15)
<input type="checkbox"/> Other = stated "experience" =	2% (5)

### SUMMARY POINTS

- ➔ Friends and partners are the leading source of sexual health information (61%) - this supports the use of peer-education sexual health promotion interventions such as Safe Summer Survival.
- ➔ School continues to be an active source of information (46%) although this figure is relatively low when considering that sexual health education is supposed to be a compulsory part of the curriculum. The school-targeted 'Talking Sexual Health' initiatives should further improve the capacity of schools to meet the educational and support needs of young people
- ➔ Parents/caregivers as a source of information are accessed at a low level (26%) when considering the high level of support parents/caregivers usually provide to their dependents for other non-sexual health issues.
- ➔ Media (internet/magazines/TV/movies/videos) is a source of information for almost a third of respondents (29%).

7/ SURVEY QUESTION : If you had a question about sex or sexual health where would you PREFER to find info ? (tick most relevant boxes)

- 207 respondents
- Your parents / caregivers = 15% (31)
- Other family members = 5% (10)
- Friends / partner = 57% (117)
- Taught about it at school = 14% (29)
- Internet/magazines/TV/movies/videos = 20% (42)
- Books / pamphlets = 16% (34)
- Health Worker = 10% (21)
- Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_ 0

**SUMMARY POINTS**

- ➔ There is a low willingness to access parents/caregivers for information (15%)
- ➔ Friends /partners are the preferred source of information (57%)
- ➔ Health workers (assuming this could also include doctor/youth worker) is rated as a lower source of information (10%).

8/ SURVEY QUESTION : How many people have you had ANY TYPE of sexual contact with over your lifetime ? (tick 1)

- 196 respondents

	NONE	ONE PARTNER	2-4 PARTNERS	5-10 PARTNERS	11-20 PARTNERS	MORE THAN 20 PARTNERS
12-15 y/o females	17	5	4	3	0	0
12-15 y/o males	5	2	4	3	1	2
16-19 y/o females	3	9	17	8	3	4
16-19 y/o males	7	2	7	8	8	3
20-25 y/o females	0	0	12	13	7	6
20-25 y/o males	2	3	6	6	4	9
<b>All ages combined</b>	<b>18% (35)</b>	<b>11% (22)</b>	<b>26% (50)</b>	<b>21% (41)</b>	<b>12% (24)</b>	<b>12% (24)</b>

**SUMMARY POINTS**

- ➔ The vast majority of young people (78%) are sexually active in some way with almost half having more that 5 sexual partners - The Safe Summer Survival program is effectively reaching sexually active young people.

9/ SURVEY QUESTION : If you have sexual intercourse how OFTEN do you use a condom ? (tick one)

- 195 respondents
- I never use condoms with sex = 8% (16)
- Hardly ever = 8% (15)
- Sometimes = 17% (33)
- Most of the time = 21% (41)
- Always use condoms = 23% (44)
- I've never had sexual intercourse = 24% (46)

**SUMMARY POINT**

- ➔ 70% of young people that have had sexual intercourse are placing themselves at higher risk of sexually transmitted infections by not “always using condoms”.
- ➔ There was no significance difference between male and females.

**10/ SURVEY QUESTION :** What are some reasons you COULD find using condoms difficult ? (tick relevant boxes)

- 195 respondents

- Unsure how to use them = 7% (14)
- Drunk or on drugs = 23% (45)
- Sex doesn't feel as good = 39% (76)
- Difficult to buy them = 4% (7)
- I / partner takes 'Pill' = 24% (46)
- Hard to ask partner = 6% (11)
- Pressure not to use them = 7% (14)
- Other = (not stated why) 18% (35)

**SUMMARY POINTS**

- A significant proportion of young people (23%) state they could find using condoms difficult because of being under the influence of alcohol and other drugs. Over half of them were between 12-19 years old. Female to male ratio = 1:1.
- "sex doesn't feel as good" is the leading reason young people could find using condoms difficult (39%). Female to male ratio = 1:1.
- 24% of young people indicated they or their partner take the contraceptive pill. Over half of them are under 19 years old including five 12-15 years olds, (Note : the contraception pill does not provide protection from STIs)
- 13% of the young people identified difficulties related to safer-sex negotiation with their sexual partners ("hard to ask partner" + "pressure not to use them").

**11/ SURVEY QUESTION :** What are the MAIN reasons you might use condoms during sexual activity ? (tick most relevant boxes)

- 195 respondents

- Avoid pregnancy = 86% (167)
- Protection from HIV/AIDS = 75% (146)
- Because your sexual partner insists = 10% (20)
- Protection from sexual infections = 48% (93)
- Don't know why = 2% (3)
- Other (specify) = 1 female stated she only uses condoms for anal sex
- I don't use condoms for sexual activity = 2 people

**SUMMARY POINTS**

- the vast majority of young people (80%) stated their main reasons for using condoms were to protect themselves from pregnancy and HIV/AIDS.
- "Protection from sexual infections" as a main reason for condom use was indicated by 48%
- There was no significant difference between males and females.

**12/ SURVEY QUESTION :** How likely do you think you are to get a sexually transmitted infection one day in the future? (tick 1)

- 178 respondents

- Very unlikely = 38% (68)
- Unlikely = 14% (25)
- Likely = 15% (27)
- Very likely = 7% (13)
- Don't know = 23% (41)
- I've already had one = 2% (4)

**SUMMARY POINTS**

- One quarter (23%) of the young people believe they are likely or very likely to get an STI one day in the future.
- Over half (54%) believe they are unlikely or very unlikely to get an STI one day in the future.
- One quarter (23%) don't know what their likelihood is.

**13/ SURVEY QUESTION :** If you thought you had a sexually transmitted infection what would you do ?  
(tick the relevant boxes)

- 178 respondents
- Wait for it to go away by itself = 4% (7)
- Talk with the person I had sex with = 26% (47)
- Talk with a friend = 21% (38)
- Talk with a trusted adult = 15% (26)
- Go to a sexual health centre = 22% (39)
- Go to a GP / doctor = 72% (128)
- Go to a youth sexual health clinic = 10% (17)
- I don't know what I would do = 4%
- Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_ = 0

**SUMMARY POINTS**

- ➔ The vast majority of young people (90%) indicated they would respond to an STI by doing something that is likely to result in seeking treatment and reducing the risks of transmission on to others. Under 10% said they would wait for the STI to go away by itself or that they did not know what they would do.
- ➔ 26% intend to discuss their STI with their sexual partner.
- ➔ 21% are likely to turn to peer support or advice from a friend.
- ➔ A high proportion (72%) indicated that they would go to a GP/doctor.
- ➔ A low proportion (22%) said they would go to a sexual health centre.
- ➔ A low proportion (10%) said they would go to a youth sexual health clinic.

**14/ SURVEY QUESTION :** In the past 6 MONTHS how often have you had sex while under the influence of the following drugs ? (tick the relevant boxes)

Alcohol = 112 young people stated they have had sex while under the influence of alcohol. In the past 6 months :

- once = 27% (30)
- sometimes = 43% (48)
- usually = 30% (34)

Pot = 54 young people stated they had sex while under the influence of pot. In the past 6 months :

- once = 31% (17)
- sometimes = 43% (23)
- usually = 26% (14)

Ecstasy = 36 young people stated they had sex while under the influence of ecstasy. In the past 6 months :

- once = 33% (12)
- sometimes = 47% (17)
- usually = 19% (7)

Speed = 21 young people stated they had sex while under the influence of speed: In the past 6 months :

- once = 43% (9)
- sometimes = 48% (10)
- usually = 10% (2)

Cocaine = 16 young people stated they have had sex while under the influence of cocaine.

Trip / acid = 3 young people stated they have had sex while under the influence of acid.

Heroin = 3 young people stated they have had sex while under the influence of heroin.

Prescription drugs = 7 young people stated they have had sex while under the influence of prescription drugs.

Other drugs = none specified

**SUMMARY POINTS**

- ➔ Half (54%) of the overall survey sample of 207 young people have experienced sex while under the influence of alcohol.
- ➔ One quarter (26%) of the overall survey of 207 have experienced sex while under the influence of pot.
- ➔ 17% of overall sample have had sex while under the influence of ecstasy.
- ➔ 10% of overall survey sample have had sex while under the influence of speed.
- ➔ 7% of overall survey sample have had sex while under the influence of cocaine



## KNOWLEDGE SECTION RESULTS

- (a) It is free to visit all Sexual Health Centres = TRUE.  
Of the 78 answers : 47% right; 3% wrong; 23% don't know  
**SUMMARY POINT** → One quarter of young people did not know Sexual Health Centre visits are free.
- (b) All sexually transmitted infections will have obvious symptoms = FALSE.  
Of the 80 answers : 84% right; 16% wrong; 8% don't know  
**SUMMARY POINT** → The overall majority (84%) are aware that STIs don't always have obvious symptoms.
- (c) 'The Pill' contraception also gives protection from sexually transmitted infections = FALSE.  
Of the 74 answers : 84% right; 9% wrong; 7% don't know  
**SUMMARY POINT** → The overall majority (84%) are aware that "the pill" does not protect against STIs.
- (d) There is no minimum age for people to visit Sexual Health Centres = TRUE.  
68% right; 21% wrong; 11% don't know  
**SUMMARY POINT** → 68% are aware that there are no age restrictions at Sexual Health Centres but 32% are unaware.
- (e) A good diet and regular exercise will help protect a person from sexually transmitted infections = FALSE.  
87% right; 5% wrong; 8% don't know.  
**SUMMARY POINT** → The overall majority (87%) aware that diet and exercise will not help protect from STIs.
- (f) People can visit their local GP/doctor for sexual health checks = TRUE  
92% right; 4% wrong; 4% don't know.  
**SUMMARY POINT** → The overall majority (92%) are aware that GPs/doctors can provide sexual health checks.
- (g) Condoms give 100% protection from all sexually transmitted infections = FALSE.  
79% right; 16% wrong; 4% don't know.  
**SUMMARY POINT** → The majority (79%) are aware that condoms do not give 100% protection for all STIs.
- (h) There is no minimum age for buying condoms or possessing them = TRUE  
62% right; 21% wrong; 16% don't know.  
**SUMMARY POINT** → 37% are unaware that there are no age restrictions on buying or possessing condoms.
- (i) People do not need a Medicare card to visit any Sexual Health Centre = TRUE.  
55% right; 19% wrong; 26% don't know.  
**SUMMARY POINT** → Relatively low awareness (55%) that Sexual Health Centres do not require people to have a Medicare card.
- (j) People can get a sexually transmitted infection through oral sex = TRUE  
26% right; 63% wrong; 11% don't know.  
**SUMMARY POINT** → The vast majority (74%) are unaware that there is a risk of STIs from oral sex..
- (k) Using water-based lubricant reduces the chance of condom breakage = TRUE  
61% right; 16% wrong; 23% don't know.  
**SUMMARY POINT** → An average level of awareness (61%) of the benefits of using lube to reduce the chance of condom breakage.
- (l) Chlamydia is easily tested for by giving a urine (piss) sample = TRUE  
48% right; 16% wrong; 42% don't know  
**SUMMARY POINT** → 58% unaware of testing process for chlamydia.
- (m) Hepatitis A can be spread by people not washing their hands after the toilet = TRUE  
43% right; 21% wrong; 36% don't know.  
**SUMMARY POINT** → 57% unaware of hepatitis A transmission risk by people not washing their hands after the toilet.

- (n) There is no vaccination against hepatitis B virus = FALSE  
51% right; 20% wrong; 29% don't know  
**SUMMARY POINT** → 49% are unaware that hepatitis B vaccinations are available.
- (o) There is no vaccination against the hepatitis C virus = TRUE  
23% right; 39% wrong; 38% don't know.  
**SUMMARY POINT** → A low proportion (23%) are aware that there is no hepatitis C vaccination.
- (p) It is possible to get hepatitis C from sharing razors or toothbrushes = TRUE  
52% right; 17% wrong; 31% don't know.  
**SUMMARY POINT** → A high level of young people (48%) are unaware of the hepatitis C transmission risk related to sharing razors or toothbrushes.
- (q) People can get hepatitis C from sharing any injecting equipment, i.e. syringes, swabs, spoons, tourniquets, water = TRUE  
69% right; 6% wrong; 25% don't know.  
**SUMMARY POINT** → 69% are aware of hepatitis C risks through injecting drug equipment, 31% are unaware.
- (r) Clean injecting drug equipment is freely available in this area to people who choose to inject drugs = TRUE  
41% right; 12% wrong; 47% don't know.  
**SUMMARY POINT** → 59% are unaware that there is clean injecting equipment freely available in their area.
- (s) It is illegal for people to ask health services for information about drugs = FALSE  
74% right; 9% wrong; 17% don't know.  
**SUMMARY POINT** → 74% are aware that they can access health services for information about drugs.
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