



A study about you
and your experiences

Flux Study COVID-19 Diary

Monthly Report

Report 04: Reporting week ending 06 September

Prepared by Daniel Storer

On behalf of the BRISE Reference Group for the Flux Study

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Collaborating Organisations

COVID-19 Diary Study is a collaboration between the Kirby Institute, the National Drug and Alcohol Research Centre (NDARC), the Australian Research Centre in Sex Health and Society (ARCSHS), the Centre for Social Research in Health (CSRH), University of Auckland, Australian Federation of AIDS Organisations (AFAO), National LGBTI Health Alliance, ACON, and Thorne Harbour Health.

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Executive summary

This is a report on the findings from the Flux Study COVID-19 Diary for the period 10th August 2020 to 06th September 2020. The report is a summary of data collected during the COVID-19 pandemic in Australia among gay and bisexual men (GBM). Weekly data are collected on key sexual and other risk behaviours, and monthly data collected on health seeking practices and social connectedness in relation to COVID-19.

Between 492 and 510 GBM completed online diary entries at weekly intervals followed by an extended weekly diary at Week 126. There were 510 responses in Week 15, 492 responses in Week 16, 506 responses in Week 17, and 504 responses in Week 18.

Summary of findings:

- Overall the mean number of sexual partners among GBM remained relatively stable over the four-week period. Men in NSW tended to have higher partner numbers than men in other jurisdictions, including almost double the number of partners compared to men in Victoria.
- NSW respondents were more likely to report sex with multiple non-relationship partners.
- Consistently, just under half of men reported any type of sex each week over this four-week period, peaking in Week 16.
- The proportion of men reporting sex with non-relationship partners remained fairly stable at just over a quarter of men.
- Among men reporting sex with any casual or more than one non-relationship partner, receptive and insertive condomless anal intercourse (CLAI) increased slightly over the four-week period.
- PrEP use among non HIV-positive men has fluctuated throughout the study but has stabilised within recent weeks.
- Between 65.1% and 73.1% of non-HIV-positive men reporting CLAI with any casual or more than one non-relationship partner were protected by PrEP.
- Group sex was uncommon, with around one in 14 men reporting group sex in the previous month at Week 16.
- The proportion of men reporting having tested for COVID-19 peaked in Week 18 at 5.2%.
- Around one in four men indicated they were coping poorly with the current COVID-19 crisis over the four-week period.
- Consistently, men reported spending an hour or more each day communicating with gay male friends.

- About one in five men reported testing for HIV and/or STIs at Week 16.

Previous reports

- [Flux Study COVID-19 Diary Monthly Report 01](#)
- [Flux Study COVID-19 Diary Monthly Report 02](#)
- [Flux Study COVID-19 Diary Monthly Report 03](#)

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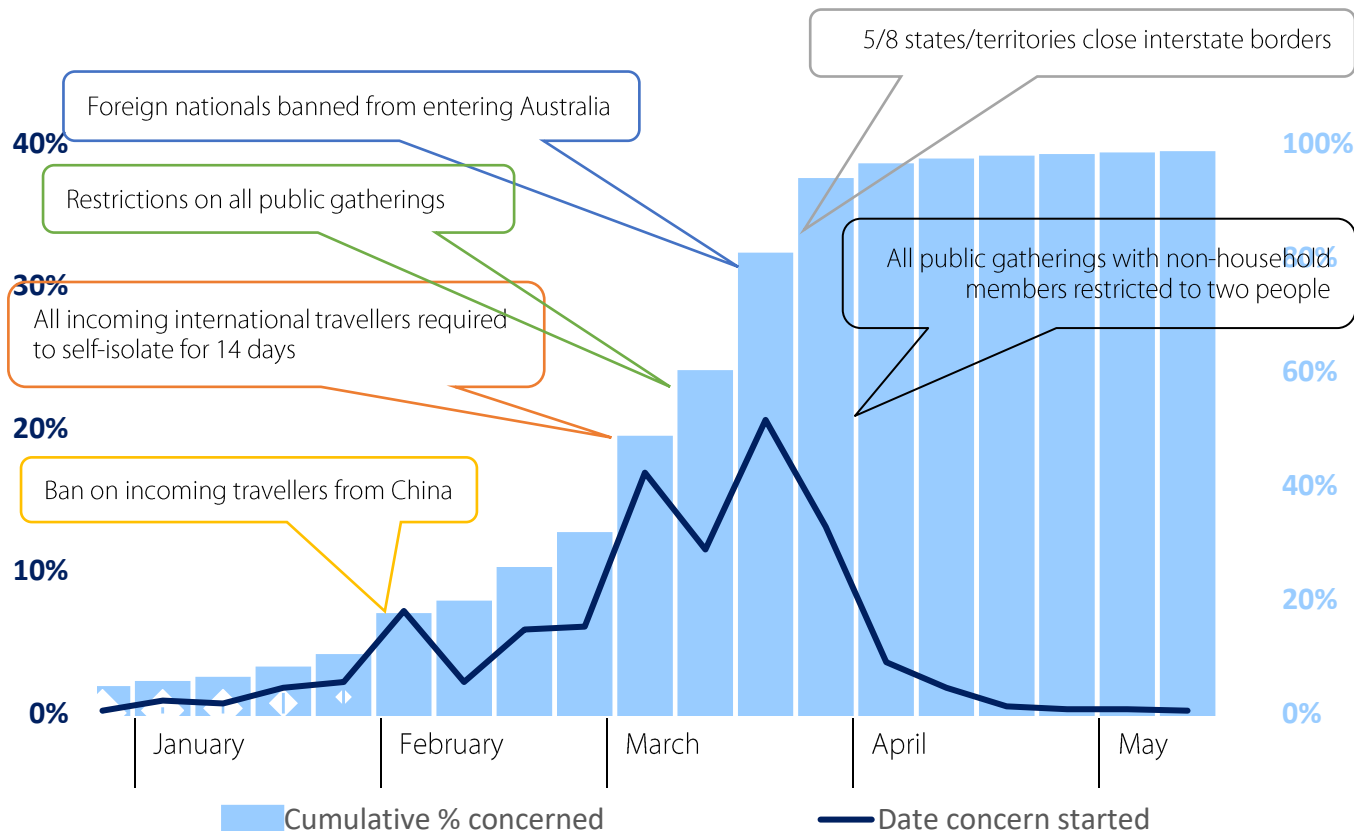
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Background

At baseline, gay and bisexual men reported the date they became concerned about the COVID-19 pandemic. Figure 1 details the cumulative percentage as men became concerned and the date concern started. This is accompanied by implementation of restrictions around the country.

Figure 1. Onset of concern about COVID-19 by date and cumulative frequency



Changes in restriction by study week

The COVID-19 Diary Study commenced collecting weekly diary entries from participants on 10th May 2020. Each Sunday thereafter participants are asked to complete their diary entries within 48 hours of receiving an emailed invitation. Below are the details of restrictions across each jurisdiction from Week 15 to 18 of the study.

Week 15 (10-16 August 2020)

NSW: Hotel quarantine fee waived for NSW residents returning from Victoria until 11 September. This was applied retrospectively to NSW residents already in hotel quarantine and for those travelling until 11 September.

Queensland: Restrictions on visitors to aged care facilities in South-East Queensland lifted.

SA: Gatherings at private residences may not have more than 10 guests to a maximum of 20 people for gathering (including household residents). Gatherings at an indoor or outdoor private place (other than a private residence) restricted to no more than 100 people.

Tasmania: Due to a positive case at North West Regional Hospital, visiting hours are restricted to 2pm-4pm daily and visitor numbers are restricted to one visitor per patient for a maximum of one hour.

ACT: One person per four square metres to a maximum of 100 people in each indoor and outdoor space of venues. Casinos and gaming in clubs, food courts (dine-in), saunas, steam rooms, steam cabinets and bathhouses, strip clubs, brothels and escort agencies can all reopen. 24-hour gyms can also reopen with a maximum of 25 people when unstaffed.

Week 16 (17-23 August)

NSW: Highly Specialised Critical Services (Agriculture) Permit introduced to allow Victorian farmers to enter NSW for work within 100km of the border.

Victoria: State of Emergency extended for four weeks. Ban on evictions and rental increases extended until 31 December.

Queensland: Gatherings across homes in Greater Brisbane limited to a maximum of 10 people. Outdoor gatherings also limited to 10 people. The rest of Queensland has restrictions of a maximum of 30 people.

WA: Phase 4 of WA roadmap extended for two months and a tentative date of 24 October for the start of Phase 5.

SA: COVID Marshals required in places where food and beverages can be purchased (indoors and outdoors), religious or faith-based ceremonies (excluding weddings and funerals), supermarkets and hardware stores, distribution centres, gyms and fitness centres, public swimming pools, sporting clubs, any activity where a COVID Management Plan is required and any operation defined by the state coordinator. Cross border community residents will not be able to enter SA from Victoria unless they reapply under another category of Essential Traveller. New approvals do not apply for students in year 11 and 12, transporting by private vehicle a person who is undertaking year 11 or 12 and agricultural/ primary industry workers with property close to the SA/Victoria border.

Tasmania: Announcement that border restrictions will remain in place until 1 December.

NT: Port Stephens, NSW removed from status of hotspot for purposed of travel to the NT.

Week 17 (24-30 August)

NSW: No changes.

Queensland: People in Greater Brisbane encouraged to wear face masks where social distancing is not possible. Schoolies Week cancelled.

SA: Residential gatherings can be up to a maximum of 50 people. A 40km travel zone for cross border communities in Victoria and SA is reinstated. People transiting through Sydney or Canberra airports from Western Australia, Northern Territory, Queensland or Tasmania are no longer required to self-isolate for 14 days.

Tasmania: Prior to entering Tasmania, people who have spent time in the local government areas of City of Brisbane, City of Ipswich and Logan City in the 14 days prior to arriving in Tasmania must seek approval to enter the state before travelling. Upon approval, it is a requirement that 14 days quarantine in government-designated accommodation must be completed. Tasmanians who return from these affected local government areas will not be required to pay for government-designated quarantine. Standing now allowed in businesses for activities like darts, pool, eight-ball, snooker and karaoke in licensed venues. People can now move about freely at an event in a licensed venue as long as they are not standing and drinking alcohol. Dancing is permitted for prearranged purposed such as dance classes in a separate room of a pub, in a community hall and water, tea, coffee and other non-alcoholic drinks can be consumed in the same room as a dance class or dancing. The exception is a wedding where only the couple, their parents/guardians and other bridal party members can dance. State of Emergency extended until 26 October.

Week 18 (31 August – 6 September)

NSW: New border region at the NSW and Victorian border extended to around 50kms on either side of the border, including a new 'border region resident' permit.

Victoria: State of Disaster extended until 13 September. Ban on evictions extended until 28 March 2021. Roadmap for reopening Victoria announced.

Queensland: COVID-19 Healthcare Support Service setup to support interstate residents who receive healthcare in Queensland.

Tasmania: All travellers arriving in Tasmania will be required to answer health symptom questions and have temperature checks. Celebrations and social events (including school formals) allowed to occur on school sites. Dancing can occur at these events but it must be in a different area to food and beverages.

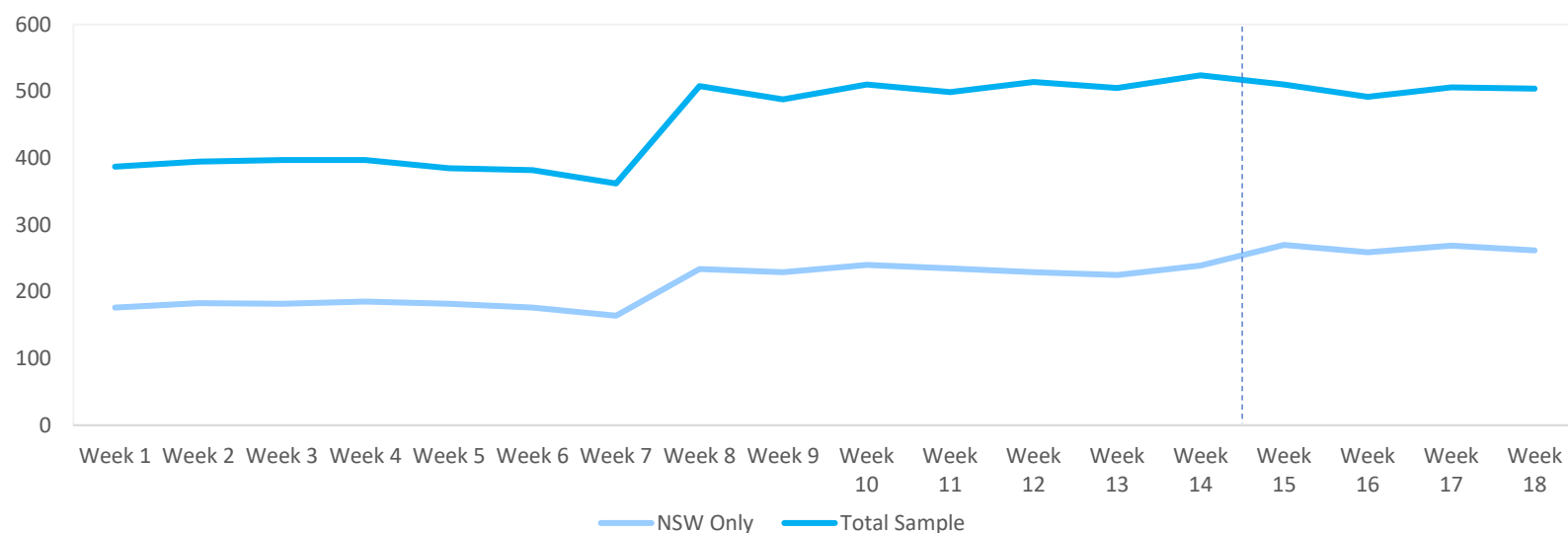
Responses

Responses have been consistent with high retention and remained stable over the four-week period. Men from NSW comprised more than half of participants each week in the period.

Table 1. Responses (for all study weeks see Table 1 in Appendix C)

	Week 15	Week 16	Week 17	Week 18
NSW only	270	259	269	262
Total sample	510	492	506	504
Initial enrolment	2	2	0	2
Previous enrolment	508	490	506	502
Non-response	185	205	191	195
Cumulative total	696	698	698	700

Figure 2. Number of respondents each week (total and NSW)*



*Note: weeks to the right of the dotted line in all figures indicates the period covered by this report

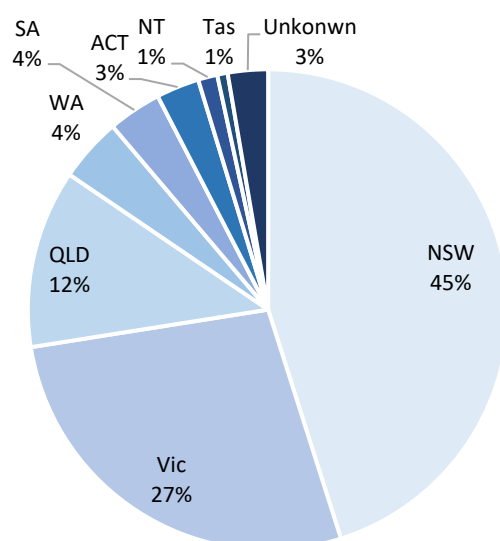
Geographic distribution

Table 2. Geographic distribution of sample (*note: new enrolments began in Week 8)

	Existing Flux cohort	Newly enrolled cohort*	Total
State/Territory			
New South Wales	243 (45.1)	72 (45.3)	315 (45.1)
Victoria	141 (26.2)	50 (31.4)	191 (27.4)
Queensland	73 (13.5)	11 (6.9)	84 (12.0)
Western Australia	28 (5.2)	2 (1.3)	30 (4.3)
South Australia	19 (3.5)	6 (3.8)	25 (3.6)
ACT	17 (3.2)	3 (1.9)	20 (2.9)
Northern Territory	8 (1.5)	1 (0.6)	9 (1.3)
Tasmania	3 (0.6)	2 (1.3)	5 (0.7)
Unknown	7 (1.3)	12 (7.5)	19 (2.7)
Postcode ¹			
Very highly gay populated	49 (9.1)	14 (8.8)	63 (9.0)
Highly gay populated	100 (18.6)	24 (15.1)	124 (17.8)
Moderately gay populated	235 (43.6)	63 (39.6)	298 (42.7)
Sparsely gay populated	130 (24.1)	39 (24.5)	169 (24.2)
Very sparsely gay populated	15 (2.8)	7 (4.4)	22 (3.2)
No response	10 (1.9)	12 (7.5)	22 (3.2)

¹ We draw on Callander et al.'s work estimating the number and prevalence of adult gay men and lesbian women in Australian postcodes. 'Prevalence categories assigned relative to jurisdictionally specific percentiles: very sparse (1st percentile), moderately sparse (1st–50th percentile), moderately populated (50th–95th percentile), highly populated (95th–99th percentile), very highly populated (99th percentile).' Callander D, Mooney-Somers J, Keen P, Guy R, Duck T, Bavinton BR, Grulich AE, Holt M, Prestage G, 2020, 'Australian 'gayborhoods' and 'lesborhoods': a new method for estimating the number and prevalence of adult gay men and lesbian women living in each Australian postcode', *International Journal of Geographical Information Science*, pp. 1 - 17, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/13658816.2019.1709973>

Figure 3. State of residence



Sample characteristics

Table 3a. Sample characteristics

		Existing Flux cohort	New enrolled cohort*	Total
Age				
	Mean (SD)	45.2 (13.9)	45.0 (15.0)	45.2 (14.2)
	Median	45.0	44.0	45.0
	Under 25	32	11	43
HIV Status				
	Positive	65 (12.1)	33 (20.8)	98 (14.0)
	Negative	443 (82.2)	113 (71.1)	556 (79.7)
	Unknown	31 (5.8)	13 (8.2)	44 (6.3)
Sexuality				
	Gay	455 (89.6)	140 (92.1)	595 (90.2)
	Bisexual	36 (7.1)	9 (5.9)	45 (6.8)
	Other/unknown	17 (3.3)	3 (2.0)	20 (3.0)
Country of birth				
	Australia	430 (80.0)	118 (74.2)	548 (78.5)
	Oceania	14 (2.6)	5 (3.1)	19 (2.7)
	Asia	29 (5.4)	1 (0.6)	30 (4.3)
	Other	66 (12.2)	35 (22.0)	101 (14.5)
	Did not answer	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)

*Note: new enrolments began in Week 8

Table 3b. Employment status (for all study weeks where this data is collected see Table 3b in Appendix C)

	Week 16
Laid off temporarily	16 (3.2)
Laid off completely	8 (1.6)
Reduced hours	25 (5.0)
Working from home	74 (14.7)
Redeployed due to COVID-19	5 (1.0)
Commenced new job	11 (2.2)
Returned to workplace	15 (3.0)
Increased hours	31 (6.2)
Began taking payment for sex	0 (0.0)
No changes	352 (70.0)

Sexual Behaviour

Number of sexual partners

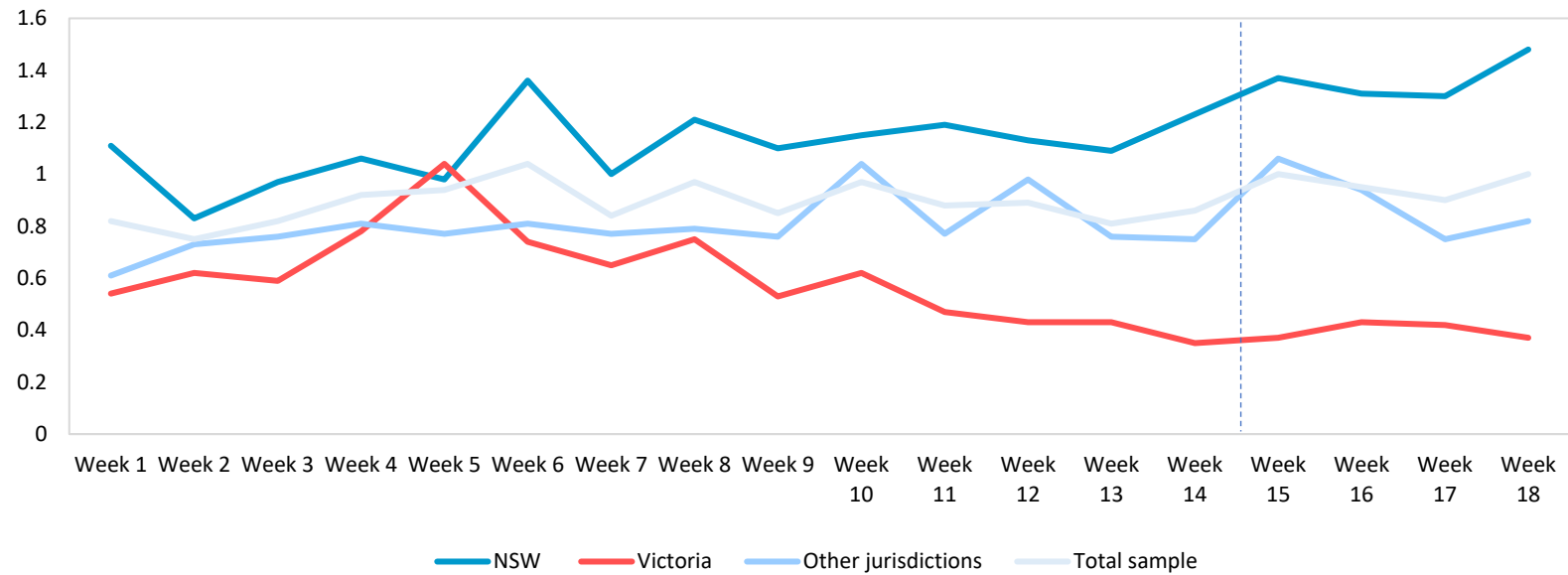
Number of partners remained stable overall for the four-week period. Men in NSW tended to have a higher mean number of partners than men in other jurisdictions and this increased slightly over the period.

Table 4. Weekly number of sexual partners (for all study weeks see Table 4 in Appendix C)

Mean (SD)	Week 15	Week 16	Week 17	Week 18
NSW	1.37 (4.42)	1.31 (2.62)	1.30 (2.25)	1.48 (3.72)
Victoria	0.57 (1.06)	0.43 (0.62)	0.42 (0.70)	0.37 (0.68)
Other jurisdictions	1.06 (4.15)	0.94 (1.53)	0.75 (1.25)	0.82 (1.24)
Total sample	1.00 (3.66)	0.95 (1.98)	0.90 (1.72)	1.00 (2.67)
Median	0	0	0	0

Men in Victoria had stable partner numbers which were much less than those in NSW or other jurisdictions. Men in other jurisdictions had a slight decline in partner numbers in the four-week period. It should be noted that most men had one or no partners

Figure 4. Mean number of sexual partners by week of response



Non-relationship partners and condomless anal intercourse (CLAI)

Men reporting any type of sex remained stable over the four-week period. Just under half of men reported any type of sex, peaking at Week 16. Around a quarter of men engaged in sex with a non-relationship partner (fuckbuddy/casual partner). Sex with casual or multiple non-relationship partners increased from about one in six to nearly a quarter. The proportion of men using PrEP or TasP during receptive CLAI with casual or multiple non-relationship partners fluctuated slightly over the four-week period. The proportion of men using PrEP or TasP during insertive CLAI with casual or multiple non-relationship partners increased slightly over the four-week period.

Table 5. Sex by partner type and CLAI (for all study weeks see Table 5 in Appendix C)

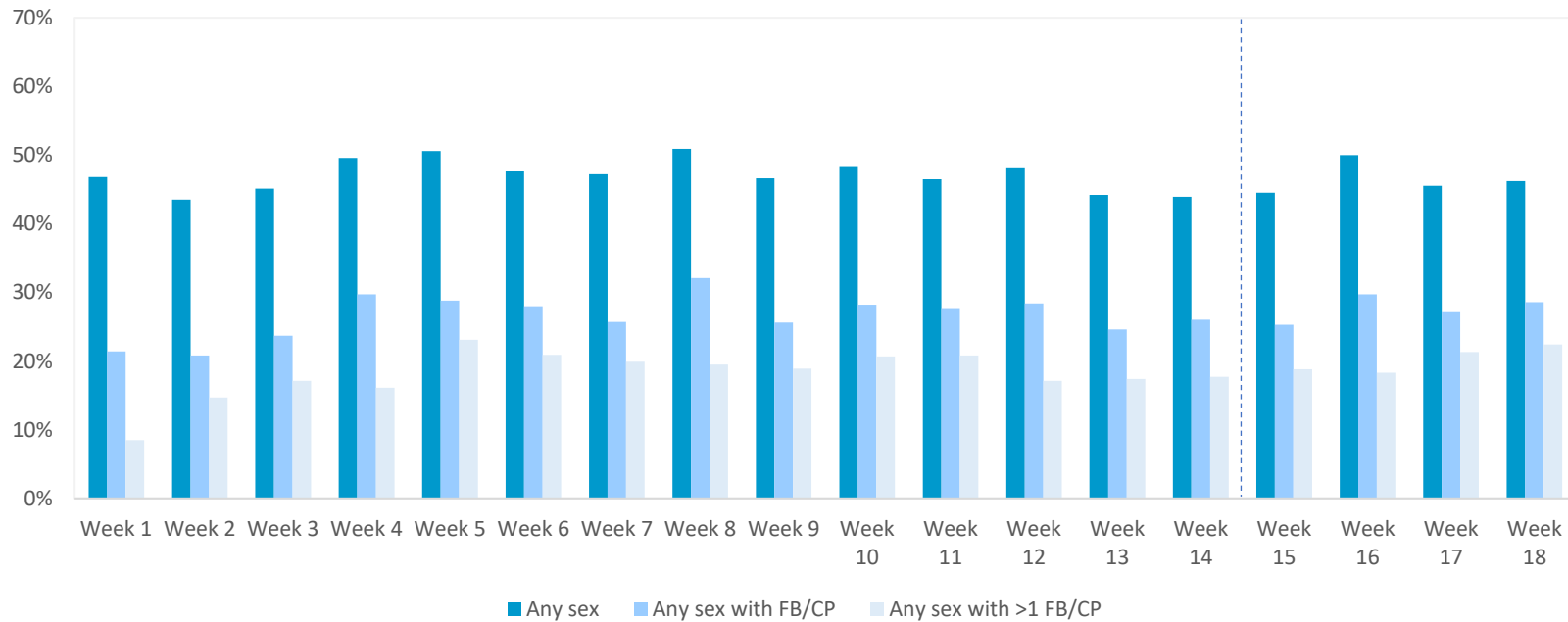
	Week 15	Week 16	Week 17	Week 18
Any sex	227 (44.5)	246 (50.0)	230 (45.5)	233 (46.2)
Sex with 1 partner only	151 (30.0)	153 (31.1)	144 (28.5)	141 (28.0)
Any sex with FB/FWB	129 (25.3)	146 (29.7)	137 (27.1)	144 (28.6)
Any sex with >1 FB/any CP	96 (18.8)	90 (18.3)	108 (21.3)	113 (22.4)
Any receptive CLAI*	36 (37.5)	40 (44.4)	46 (42.6)	51 (45.1)
Used PrEP or TasP**	28 (77.8)	27 (67.5)	33 (71.7)	37 (72.5)
Any insertive CLAI*	49 (51.0)	51 (56.7)	54 (50.0)	59 (52.2)
Used PrEP or TasP**	32 (65.3)	32 (62.7)	38 (70.4)	43 (72.9)

*Note: CLAI is reported specifically among men who had sex with >1 FB/ any CP.

**Note: PrEP/TasP coverage is reported specifically among men who reported CLAI and had sex with >1 FB/ any CP.

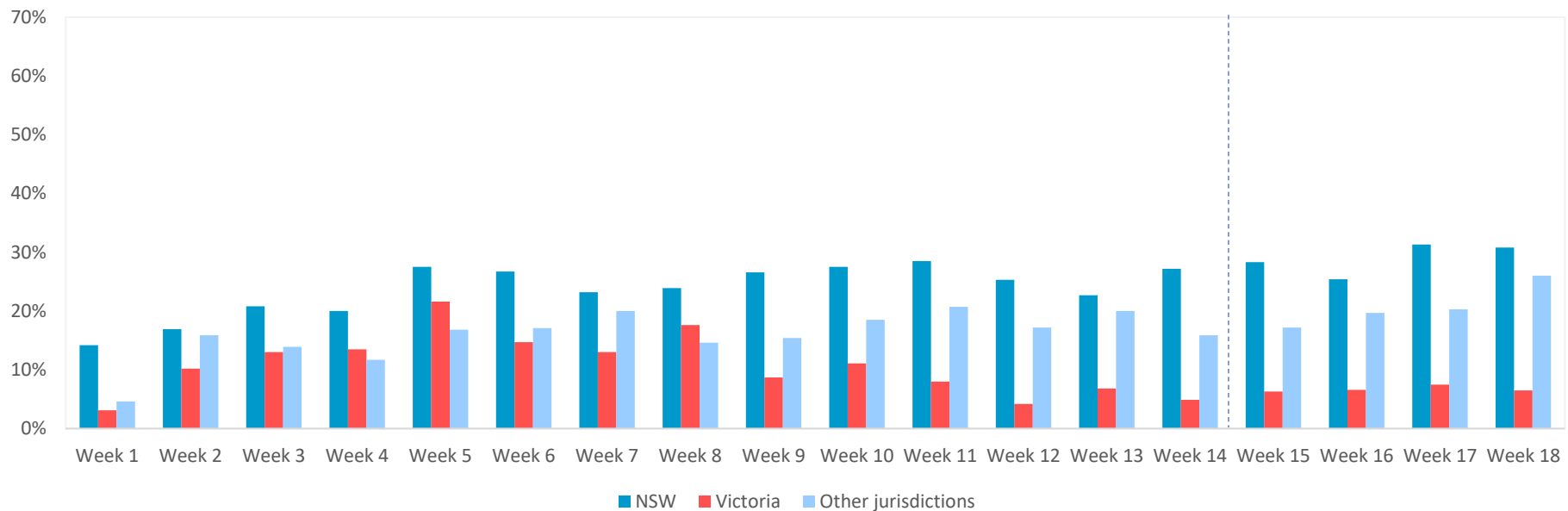
Reports of any sex with non-relationship partners remained fairly stable over the entire study period. Any sex with any casual or more than one non-relationship partner has fluctuated over the study period.

Figure 5a. Proportion of men engaging in any sex and sex with FBs/CPs



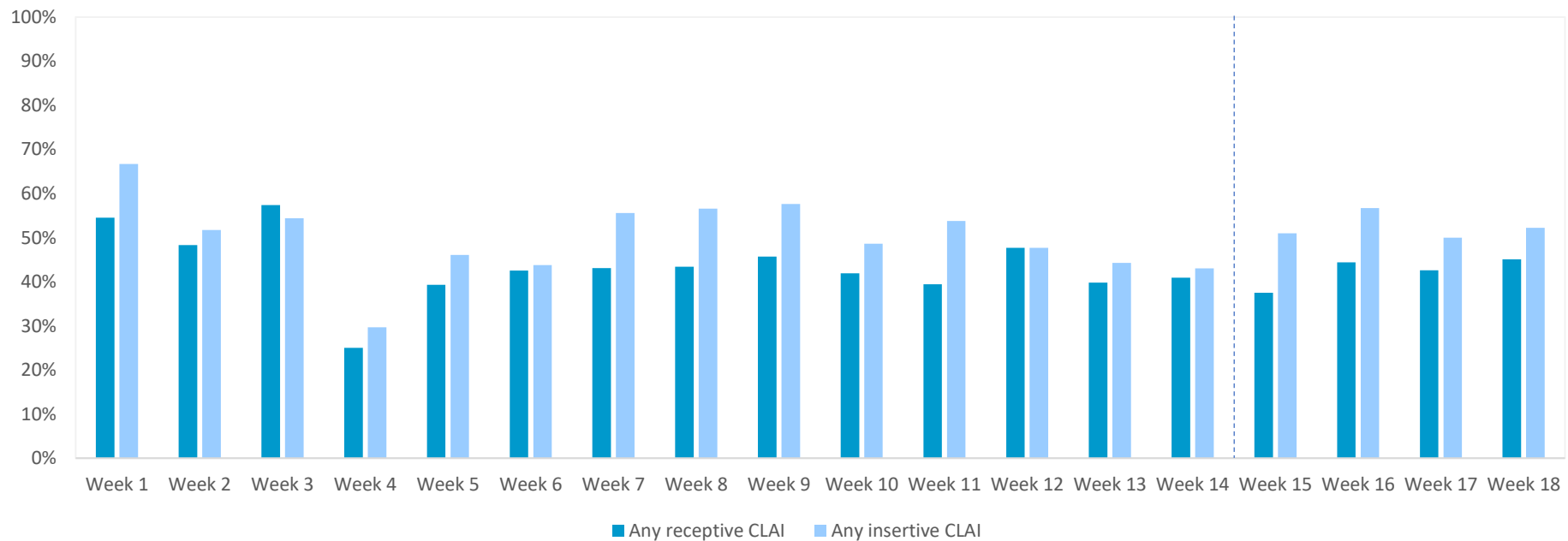
NSW respondents were generally more likely to report sex with more than one non-relationship partner throughout the study period and have been more likely to do so over time. After a period of decline, there was a slight increase in other jurisdictions during recent weeks. This slight increase was not seen in Victoria which has remained stable of the four-week period. This is likely due to the restrictions in place during this period.

Figure 5b. Proportion of men in NSW, Victoria and other jurisdictions engaging in sex with multiple (>1) non-relationship partners



Among men reporting sex with any casual or more than one non-relationship partner, both receptive and insertive CLAI have fluctuated throughout the study period. Following initial declines in receptive CLAI and several weeks of relative stability, there were slight increases in recent weeks. Following similar initial decreases in insertive CLAI, it has fluctuated over time. Receptive CLAI peaked at Week 18 and insertive CLAI peaked at Week 16 in the most recent reporting period.

Figure 5c. Proportion of men engaging in CLAI among men reporting sex with multiple (>1) non-relationship partners



Group sex

Participation in group sex was uncommon with approximately one in 14 men at Week 16 reporting that they had engaged in group sex at some time during the previous month.

Sex within the household and with fuckbuddies/casual partners

Of the men that had sex with any non-relationship partners over the four-week period, a small proportion indicated they lived with all the men with whom they had sex with. Almost all sex was conducted with men outside of the participant's household. The proportion of men who described all of their non-relationship partners as either fuckbuddies or friends with benefits declined over the four-week period.

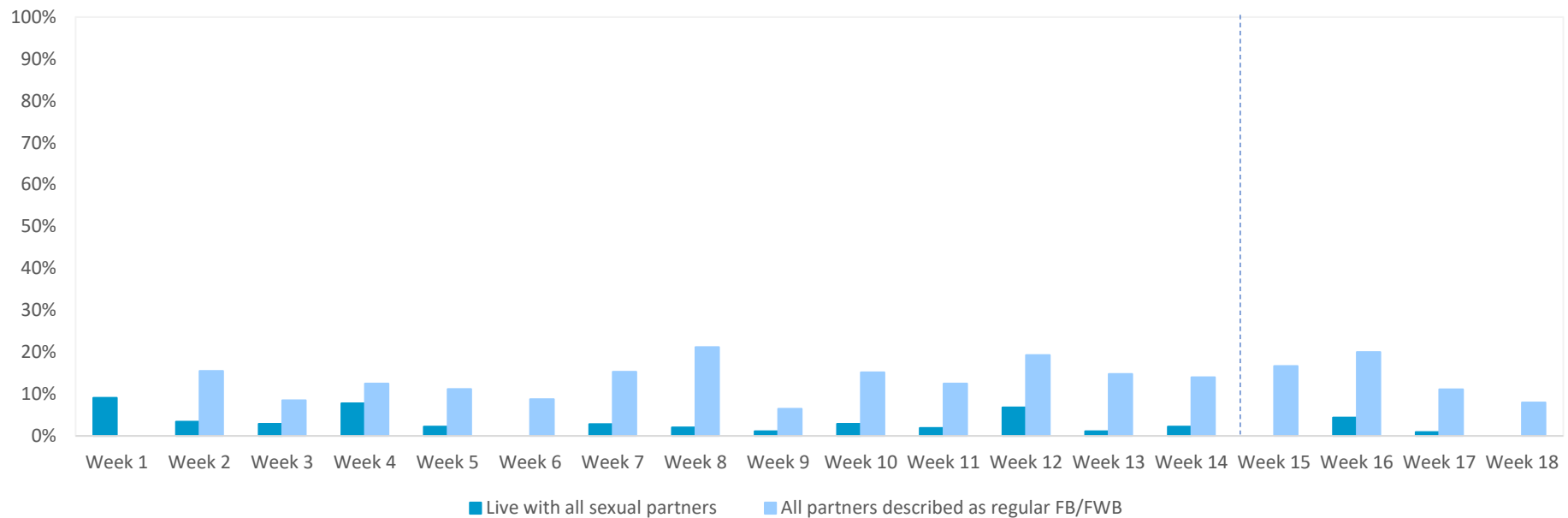
Table 6. Sex within the household and characterisation as FBs/CPs (for all study weeks see Table 6 in Appendix C)

	Week 15 N=96*	Week 16 N=90*	Week 17 N=108*	Week 18 N=113*
Live with all sexual partners	0 (0.0)	4 (4.4)	1 (0.9)	0 (0.0)
All partners described as regular FB/FWB	16 (16.7)	18 (20.0)	12 (11.1)	9 (8.0)

*N = men each week who reported having >1 fuckbuddy or casual partner

Around one in seven of the small number of men who had sex with any non-relationship partners reported that they would describe all these partners as regular fuckbuddies or friends with benefits. This proportion has fluctuated throughout the study period but appears to have declined in recent weeks having peaked in Week 16. Data were not collected to determine whether these were previously established or new regular partners. The proportion of men who reported living with all of their sex partners has remained small throughout the study period.

Figure 6. Proportion of men having sex with FBs/CPs within their immediate household and describe as FBs/FWBs



PrEP and PEP use

Just under a third of non HIV-positive men were using PrEP over the four-week period and this remained stable over the four-weeks. On average, men who had PrEP pills in their possession had between 34-41 pills remaining. Men who used PrEP at least four days in the previous week fluctuated over the period. PrEP use among men reporting CLAI with any casual or more than one non-relationship partner appears to have increased slightly during the four-week period.

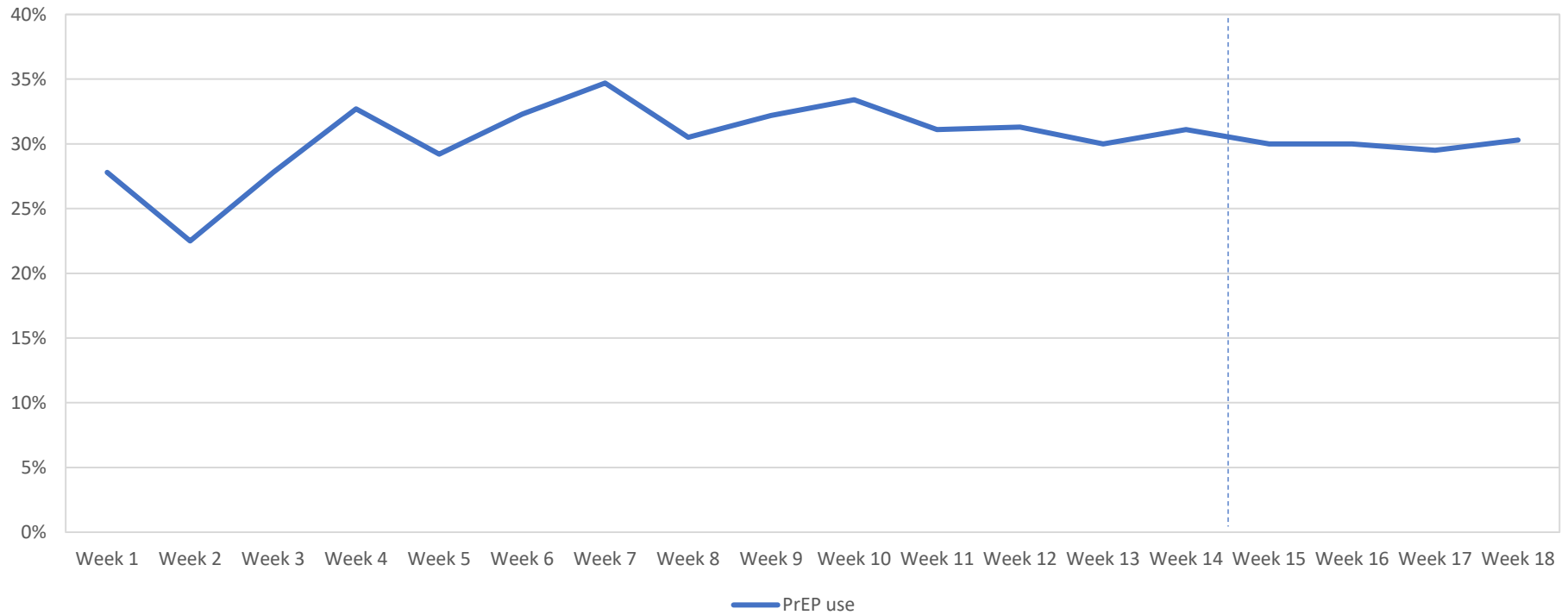
Table 7. PrEP and PEP use among non HIV-positive men (for all study weeks see Table 7 in Appendix C)

	Week 15	Week 16	Week 17	Week 18
No use	334 (70.0)	311(70.0)	334 (70.5)	332 (69.6)
PrEP use	143 (30.0)	133 (30.0)	140 (29.5)	145 (30.3)
PEP use	6			
Mean (SD) PrEP pills remaining	36.9 (28.0)	40.5 (30.0)	36.9 (27.6)	34.0 (26.3)
Any sex with >1 FB/CP	96	90	108	113
PrEP use among men reporting any sex with >1 FB/CP	58 (60.4)	52 (57.8)	65 (60.2)	74 (65.5)
Any CLAI with >1 FB/CP	63	63	72	78
PrEP use among men reporting any CLAI with >1 FB/CP	43 (68.3)	41 (65.1)	52 (72.2)	57 (73.1)
4+ days/week PrEP use among men reporting sex CLAI with >1 FB/CP	42 (66.7)	37 (58.7)	50 (69.4)	55 (70.5)

HIV-positive men excluded.

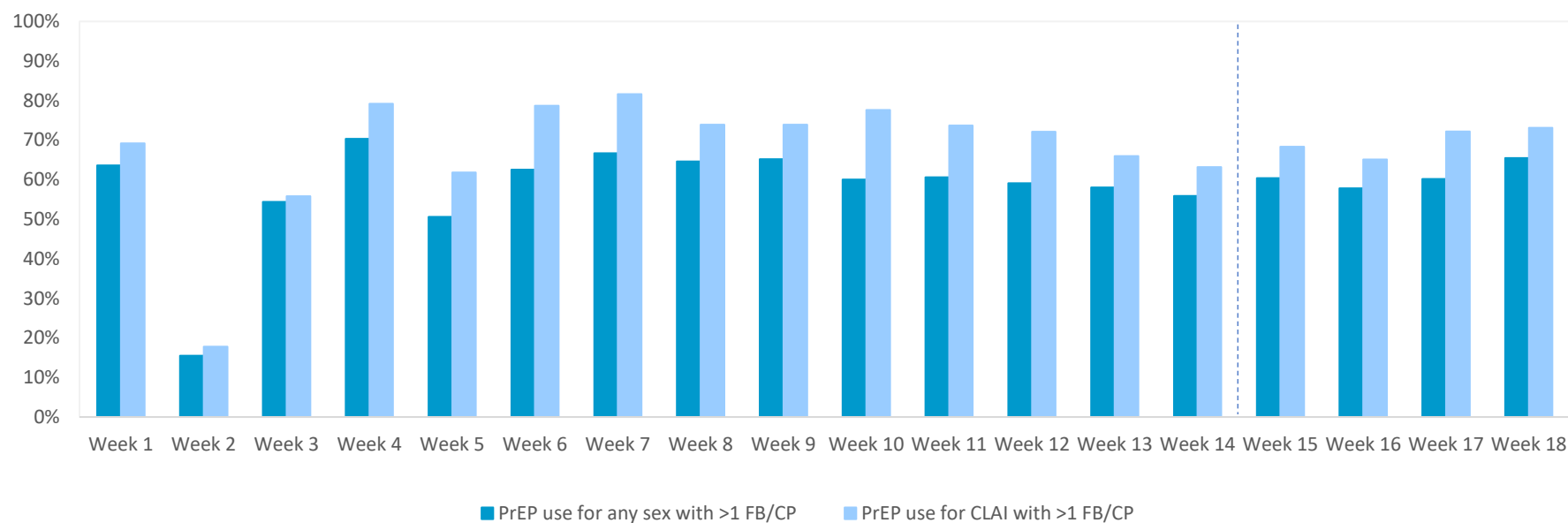
Over the entire study period, PrEP use has fluctuated but has remained stable in more recent weeks.

Figure 7. Proportion of non HIV-positive men using PrEP



The majority of non HIV-positive men who reported CLAI with any casual or more than one non-relationship partner remained protected by PrEP. Specifically, after several weeks of seeming decline in PrEP use, the proportion of men reporting PrEP use for CLAI with any casual or multiple non-relationship partners has increased slightly during the most recent period.

Figure 8. Proportion of men having CLAI with multiple non-relationship partners using PrEP



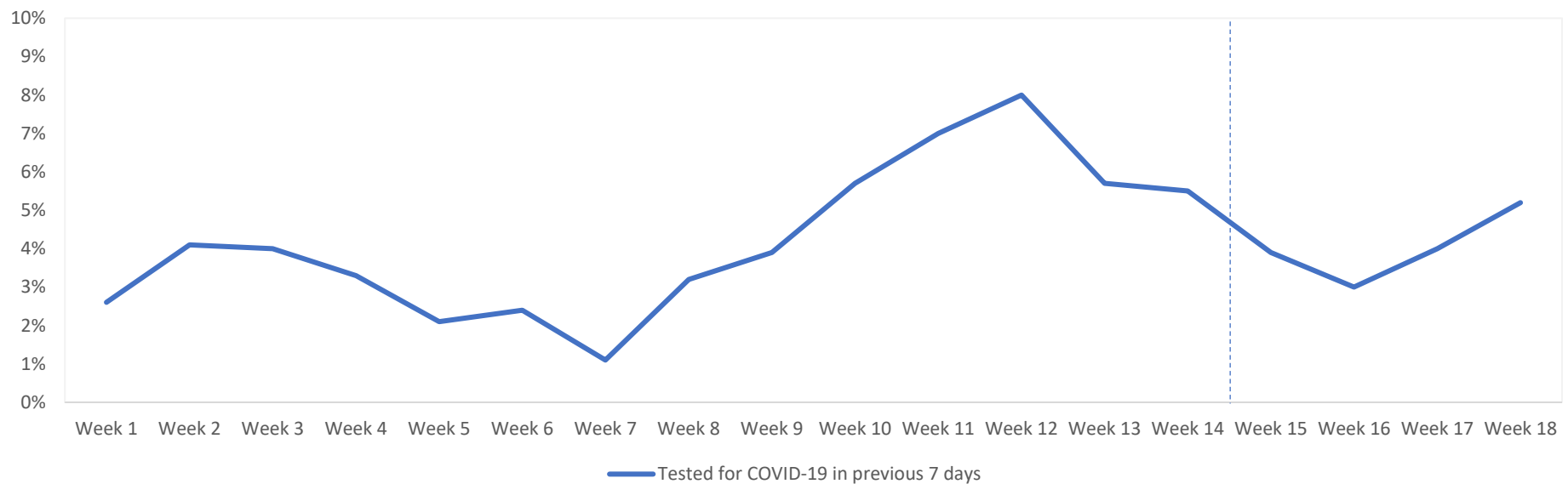
COVID-19 Testing

Recent (in the past 7 days) testing for COVID-19 has been between 3-5.2% of participants. During the four-week period, testing peaked at Week 18, possibly reflecting the continued community transmission in Victoria and stable transmission in NSW.

Table 8. COVID-19 testing (for all study weeks see Table 8 in Appendix C)

	Week 15	Week 16	Week 17	Week 18
Tested in previous week	20 (3.9)	15 (3.0)	20 (4.0)	26 (5.2)

Figure 9. Proportion of men tested for COVID-19 in previous seven days



Test type

Table 9. COVID-19 test type (for all study weeks see Table 9 in Appendix C)

	Week 15	Week 16	Week 17	Week 18
Blood test	1 (5.0)	0 (0.0)	1 (5.0)	0 (0.0)
Nose and throat swab	19 (95.0)	15 (100.0)	19 (95.0)	26 (100.0)
Other	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)
Positive COVID-19 result	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)

Social connectedness

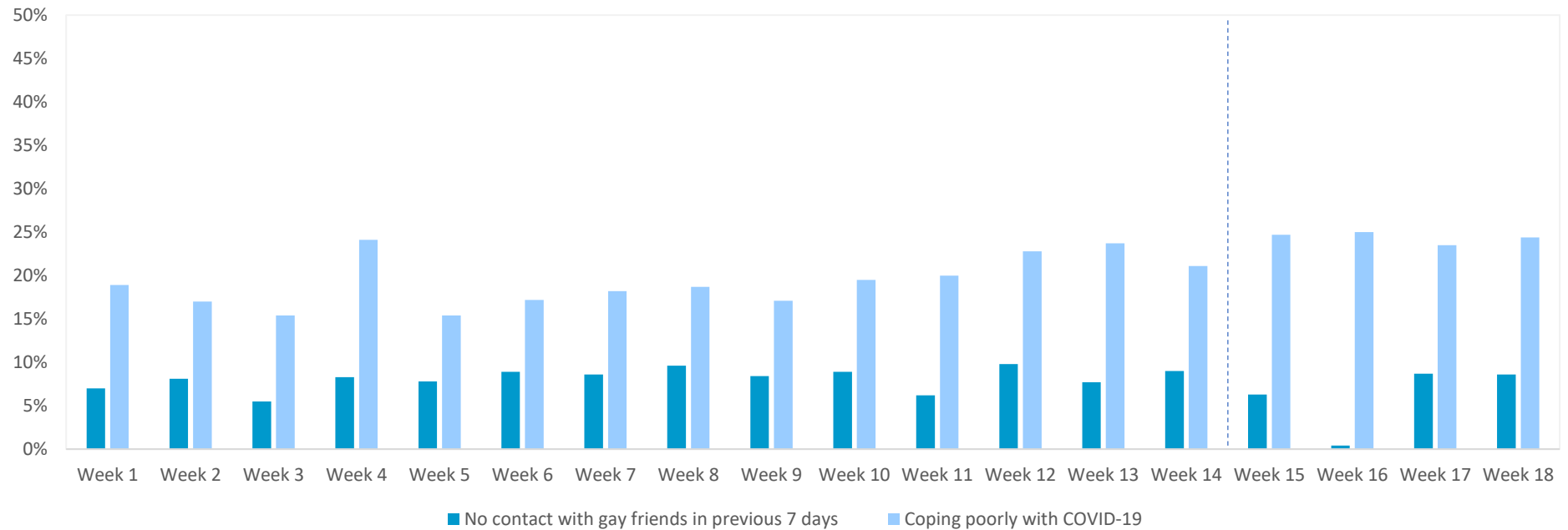
Despite some fluctuations, contact with gay male friends remained fairly steady, with fewer than one in ten reporting no contact, including the small proportion who have no gay friends. The majority of men had some contact with family or other friends at Week 16, with about five percent reporting no contact. Coping was measured on a six-point scale from 'Very well' to 'Very poorly'. About a quarter of men indicated that they felt they were coping poorly with the pandemic and its attendant restrictions, and this reached a peak in Week 16.

Table 10. Proportion of men having no contact with friends and family and coping poorly (for all study weeks see Table 10 in Appendix C)

	Week 15	Week 16	Week 17	Week 18
No contact with gay friends in the past 7 days	32 (6.3)	2 (0.4)	44 (8.7)	43 (8.6)
No contact with other friends and family in the past 7 days	24 (4.8)			
Coping poorly	126 (24.7)	126 (25.0)	119 (23.5)	123 (24.4)

Contact with gay friends has remained fairly stable throughout the study period. Although most men reported coping with COVID-19 concerns and restrictions fairly well, the proportion who report coping poorly has been gradually increasing since early in the study period.

Figure . Proportion of men with no contact with gay male friends and coping poorly with COVID-19



Time spent communicating with gay male friends

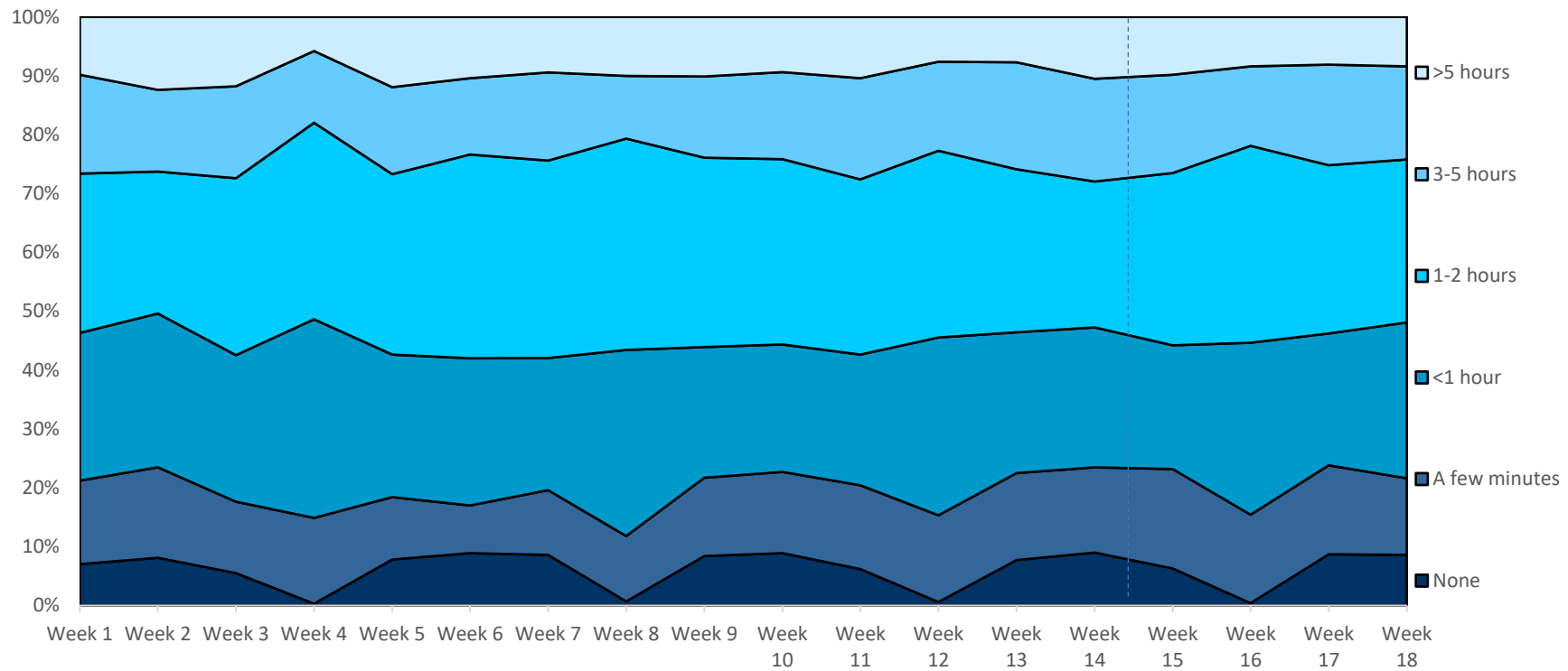
Communication, in person, by phone or online, with gay male friends was fairly consistent during Weeks 15-18. During this period, over half the sample consistently spent an hour or more each day communicating with gay male friends. The proportion of men not engaging in daily communication with gay male friends remained low over the four-week period, at less than one in ten men.

Table 11. Time spent communicating with gay male friends among all respondents (for all study weeks see Table 10 in Appendix C)

	Week 15	Week 16	Week 17	Week 18
None	32 (6.3)	2 (0.4)	44 (8.7)	43 (8.6)
A few minutes	86 (16.9)	68 (15.0)	76 (15.1)	65 (13.0)
<1 hour	107 (21.0)	132 (29.2)	113 (22.4)	133 (26.5)
1-2 hours	149 (29.3)	151 (33.4)	144 (28.6)	139 (27.7)
3-5 hours	85 (16.7)	61 (13.5)	86 (17.1)	79 (15.8)
>5 hours	50 (9.8)	38 (8.4)	41 (8.1)	42 (8.4)

Despite some slight fluctuations, time spent communicating with gay friends each day has remained fairly stable throughout the study period.

Figure 11. Time spent communicating with gay friends



Health-seeking behaviour

Influenza vaccine uptake

At Week 16 there was little change in the proportion of men that had received the 2020 seasonal influenza vaccine compared to Report 01-03. Three quarters of men indicated they had received the 2020 seasonal influenza vaccine.

STI/HIV testing

About one in five men indicated they had been tested for STIs or HIV at Week 16. During this period, positive STI results were low: In the previous four weeks, 1.8% of men indicated they tested positive for chlamydia, 1.6% had tested positive for gonorrhoea, and 1.4% for syphilis.

Most men reported being HIV negative (81.4%), almost one in 10 as HIV positive and just under 5% reported an unknown HIV status. None of the men who reported being HIV positive indicated they had a detectable viral load at Week 16.

Appendix A – Methods

Data collection

The Flux Study COVID-19 Diary leverages the existing Flux cohort study infrastructure to investigate the experiences of the coronavirus (COVID-19) and its impact on pre-existing epidemics among GBM. Individual follow occurs systematically among consenting GBM every week for an initial three-month period, to be revisited at the end of each three-month period for up to a maximum of one year to collect specific information about sexual and other risk behaviours and direct impacts of COVID-19.

Baseline questionnaires are completed by newly enrolling participants to establish the characteristics, behaviours, and beliefs required to assess changes over time, during the COVID-19 pandemic. Additional information collected includes associated harms, health-seeking, social connectedness, COVID-19 physical distancing behaviours, mental health, and relevant personal characteristics.

Weekly diary questionnaires collect specific limited information on sexual behaviour, PrEP use, and COVID-19 health-seeking practices, to enable measurement of changes in behaviours against the rapid changes in physical distancing regulations as they are enforced, or relaxed. Every four weeks, a slightly expanded questionnaire will also collect specific information on physical distancing and social connections, drug use, and access to services.

Six-monthly follow-up questionnaires monitor changes in characteristics, behaviours, and beliefs over time, throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, required to assess changes over time as specified in the study aims.

Data analysis

SPSS™, Version 26 (IBM Corporation) was used to analyse data. Percentage values exclude the proportion of respondents who did not answer the question and may not add to 100 because of rounding. Data may change slightly over time due to minor error checking.

Ethical approval for data collection was obtained from UNSW Human Research Ethic

Appendix B – Glossary

CLAI – condomless anal intercourse

COVID-19 – the disease caused by the novel coronavirus SARS-CoV-2

Fuckbuddy/Friend with benefits – a regular sexual partner with whom ongoing sexual contact occurs, generally in the absence of romantic attachment

GBM – gay and bisexual men

HIV – human immunodeficiency virus

HIV status – a person's antibody status established by HIV testing (e.g. HIV-negative, HIV-positive, or unknown [untested])

Non-relationship partner – a sexual partner that is not a boyfriend or husband with whom participants are in an ongoing romantic relationship, but characterised as a fuckbuddy, friend with benefits or casual partner

PEP – post-exposure prophylaxis; for the purpose of this report, it refers to the use of antiretroviral drugs by HIV-negative people to reduce the risk of HIV infection after a potential exposure has occurred

PrEP – pre-exposure prophylaxis; for the purpose of this report, it refers to the use of antiretroviral drugs by HIV-negative

Appendix C – Complete data tables

Table 1. Responses

	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5	Week 6	Week 7	Week 8	Week 9	Week 10	Week 11	Week 12	Week 13
NSW only	176	183	182	185	182	176	164	234	229	240	235	229	225
Total sample	387	395	397	397	385	382	362	508	488	510	499	514	505
Initial enrolment	387	47	5	2	0	0	0	134	45	24	10	27	10
Previous enrolment		348	392	395	385	382	362	374	443	486	489	487	495
Non-response		39	42	44	56	59	79	67	132	134	155	167	186
Cumulative total	387	434	439	441	441	441	441	575	620	644	654	681	691

Table 1. Responses (cont.)

	Week 14	Week 15	Week 16	Week 17	Week 18
NSW only	239	270	259	269	262
Total sample	524	510	492	506	504
Initial enrolment	3	2	2	0	2
Previous enrolment	521	508	490	506	502
Non-response	170	185	205	191	195
Cumulative total	694	696	698	698	700

Table 3b. Employment status

	Week 4	Week 8	Week 12	Week 16
Laid off temporarily	8 (11.9)	7 (8.8)	3 (3.4)	16 (3.2)
Laid off completely	3 (4.5)	2 (2.5)	1 (1.1)	8 (1.6)
Reduced hours	10 (14.9)	9 (11.3)	6 (6.8)	25 (5.0)
Working from home	18 (26.9)	15 (18.8)	17 (19.3)	74 (14.7)
Redeployed due to COVID-19	1 (1.5)	1 (1.3)	1 (1.1)	5 (1.0)
Commenced new job	4 (6.0)	1 (1.3)	2 (2.3)	11 (2.2)
Returned to workplace	4 (6.0)	10 (12.5)	9 (10.2)	15 (3.0)
Increased hours	5 (7.5)	8 (10.0)	4 (4.5)	31 (6.2)
Began taking payment for sex	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)
No changes	31 (46.3)	43 (53.8)	55 (62.5)	352 (70.0)

Table 4. Number of sexual partners

Mean (SD)	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5	Week 6	Week 7	Week 8	Week 9	Week 10	Week 11	Week 12	Week 13
NSW	1.11 (2.31)	0.83 (1.44)	0.97 (1.61)	1.06 (1.93)	0.98 (1.51)	1.36 (3.36)	1.00 (1.61)	1.21 (2.18)	1.10 (1.74)	1.15 (2.40)	1.19 (2.02)	1.13 (1.90)	1.09 (2.31)
Victoria	0.54 (0.90)	0.62 (1.24)	0.59 (0.95)	0.78 (1.11)	1.04 (2.18)	0.74 (1.21)	0.65 (1.09)	0.75 (0.94)	0.53 (1.04)	0.62 (1.03)	0.47 (0.76)	0.43 (0.67)	0.43 (0.98)
Other jurisdictions	0.61 (0.90)	0.73 (1.14)	0.76 (1.40)	0.81 (1.62)	0.77 (1.33)	0.81 (1.65)	0.77 (1.46)	0.79 (1.36)	0.76 (1.52)	1.04 (3.11)	0.77 (1.14)	0.98 (3.21)	0.76 (1.27)
Total sample	0.82 (1.71)	0.75 (1.30)	0.82 (1.42)	0.92 (1.67)	0.94 (1.66)	1.04 (2.53)	0.84 (1.45)	0.97 (1.73)	0.85 (1.53)	0.97 (2.34)	0.88 (1.58)	0.89 (2.09)	0.81 (1.77)
Median	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0

Table 4. Number of sexual partners (cont.)

Mean (SD)	Week 14	Week 15	Week 16	Week 17	Week 18
NSW	1.23 (2.31)	1.37 (4.42)	1.31 (2.62)	1.30 (2.25)	1.48 (3.72)
Victoria	0.35 (0.52)	0.37 (0.57)	0.43 (0.62)	0.42 (0.70)	0.37 (0.68)
Other jurisdictions	0.75 (1.64)	1.06 (4.15)	0.94 (1.53)	0.75 (1.25)	0.82 (1.24)
Total sample	0.86 (1.82)	1.00 (3.66)	0.95 (1.98)	0.90 (1.72)	1.00 (2.67)
Median	0	0	0	0	0

Table 5. Sex by partner type and CLAI

	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5	Week 6	Week 7	Week 8	Week 9	Week 10	Week 11	Week 12	Week 13
Any sex	181 (46.8)	172 (43.5)	179 (45.1)	197 (49.6)	195 (50.6)	182 (47.6)	171 (47.2)	255 (50.9)	227 (46.6)	246 (48.4)	232 (46.5)	247 (48.1)	223 (44.2)
Sex with 1 partner only	129 (33.3)	122 (30.9)	122 (30.7)	135 (34.0)	127 (33.0)	117 (30.6)	115 (31.8)	169 (33.3)	150 (30.0)	169 (33.3)	144 (28.9)	153 (29.8)	154 (30.5)
Any sex with FB/CP	83 (21.4)	82 (20.8)	94 (23.7)	118 (29.7)	111 (28.8)	107 (28.0)	93 (25.7)	163 (32.1)	125 (25.6)	144 (28.2)	138 (27.7)	146 (28.4)	124 (24.6)
Any sex with >1 FB/CP	33 (8.5)	58 (14.7)	68 (17.1)	64 (16.1)	89 (23.1)	80 (20.9)	72 (19.9)	99 (19.5)	92 (18.9)	105 (20.7)	104 (20.8)	88 (17.1)	88 (17.4)
Any receptive CLAI*	18 (54.5)	28 (48.3)	39 (57.4)	16 (25.0)	35 (39.3)	34 (42.5)	31 (43.1)	43 (43.4)	42 (45.7)	44 (41.9)	41 (39.4)	42 (47.7)	35 (39.8)
Used PrEP or TasP**	12 (66.7)	17 (60.7)	22 (56.4)	15 (93.8)	22 (62.9)	28 (82.4)	26 (83.9)	35 (72.9)	33 (78.6)	36 (81.8)	28 (68.3)	30 (71.4)	23 (65.7)
Any insertive CLAI*	22 (66.7)	30 (51.7)	37 (54.4)	19 (29.7)	41 (46.1)	35 (43.8)	40 (55.6)	56 (56.6)	53 (57.6)	51 (48.6)	56 (53.8)	42 (47.7)	39 (44.3)
Used PrEP or TasP**	15 (68.2)	16 (53.3)	20 (54.1)	15 (78.9)	23 (56.1)	28 (80.0)	31 (77.5)	38 (67.9)	38 (71.7)	37 (72.5)	40 (71.4)	29 (69.0)	25 (64.1)

*Note: CLAI is reported specifically among men who had sex with >1 FB/CP.

**Note: PrEP/TasP coverage is reported specifically among men who reported CLAI and had sex with >1 FB/CP. This may be an underestimate of PrEP coverage in Week 2 due to variation in the questions asked in that week.

Table 5. Sex by partner type and CLAI (cont.)

	Week 14	Week 15	Week 16	Week 17	Week 18
Any sex	230 (43.9)	227 (44.5)	246 (50.0)	230 (45.5)	233 (46.2)
Sex with 1 partner only	159 (30.3)	151 (30.0)	153 (31.1)	144 (28.5)	141 (28.0)
Any sex with FB/CP	136 (26.0)	129 (25.3)	146 (29.7)	137 (27.1)	144 (28.6)
Any sex with >1 FB/CP	93 (17.7)	96 (18.8)	90 (18.3)	108 (21.3)	113 (22.4)
Any receptive CLAI*	38 (40.9)	36 (37.5)	40 (44.4)	46 (42.6)	51 (45.1)
Used PrEP or TasP**	24 (63.2)	28 (77.8)	27 (67.5)	33 (71.7)	37 (72.5)
Any insertive CLAI*	40 (43.0)	49 (51.0)	51 (56.7)	54 (50.0)	59 (52.2)
Used PrEP or TasP**	23 (57.5)	32 (65.3)	32 (62.7)	38 (70.4)	43 (72.9)

*Note: CLAI is reported specifically among men who had sex with >1 FB/CP.

**Note: PrEP/TasP coverage is reported specifically among men who reported CLAI and had sex with >1 FB/CP. This may be an underestimate of PrEP coverage in Week 2 due to variation in the questions asked in that week.

Table 6. Sex within the household and characterisation as FBs/FWBs

	Week 1 N=33*	Week 2 N=58*	Week 3 N=68*	Week 4 N=64*	Week 5 N=89*	Week 6 N=80*	Week 7 N=72*	Week 8 N=97*	Week 9 N=92*	Week 10 N=105*	Week 11 N=104*	Week 12 N=88*	Week 13 N=88*
Live with all sexual partners	3 (9.1)	2 (3.4)	2 (2.9)	5 (7.8)	2 (2.2)	0 (0.0)	2 (2.8)	2 (2.0)	1 (1.1)	3 (2.9)	2 (1.9)	6 (6.8)	1 (1.1)
All partners described as regular FB/FWB	0 (0.0)	9 (15.5)	8 (8.5)	8 (12.5)	10 (11.2)	7 (8.8)	11 (15.3)	21 (21.2)	6 (6.5)	16 (15.2)	13 (12.5)	17 (19.3)	13 (14.8)

*N = men each week who reported having >1 fuckbuddy or casual partner

Table 6. Sex within the household and characterisation as FBs/FWBs (cont.)

	Week 14 N=93*	Week 15 N=96*	Week 16 N=90*	Week 17 N=108*	Week 18 N=113*
Live with all sexual partners	2 (2.2)	0 (0.0)	4 (4.4)	1 (0.9)	0 (0.0)
All partners described as regular FB/FWB	13 (14.0)	16 (16.7)	18 (20.0)	12 (11.1)	9 (8.0)

*N = men each week who reported having >1 fuckbuddy or casual partner

Table 7. PrEP and PEP use among non HIV-positive men

	Week 1	Week 2*	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5	Week 6	Week 7	Week 8	Week 9	Week 10	Week 11	Week 12	Week 13
No use	254 (72.2)	306 (77.5)	255 (72.2)	248 (67.0)	226 (70.8)	239 (67.7)	218 (65.3)	319 (66.6)	306 (67.8)	315 (66.6)	321 (68.9)	314 (68.7)	331 (70.0)
PrEP use	98 (27.8)	89 (22.5)	98 (27.8)	121 (32.7)	93 (29.2)	114 (32.3)	116 (34.7)	146 (30.5)	145 (32.2)	158 (33.4)	145 (31.1)	143 (31.3)	142 (30.0)
PEP use				0 (0.0)				14 (3.0)				11 (2.4)	
Mean PrEP pills remaining			38.4 (31.0)	41.3 (32.2)	38.6 (31.9)	38.2 (28.5)	38.7 (30.8)	38.0 (27.7)	39.2 (29.3)	36.5 (30.2)	38.5 (31.4)	41.9 (33.7)	37.7 (28.7)
Any sex with >1 FB/CP	33	58	68	64	89	80	72	99	92	105	104	88	88
PrEP use among men reporting any sex with >1 FB/CP	21 (63.6)	9 (15.5)	37 (54.4)	45 (70.3)	45 (50.6)	50 (62.5)	48 (66.7)	64 (64.6)	60 (65.2)	63 (60.0)	63 (60.6)	52 (59.1)	51 (58.0)
Any CLAI with >1 FB/CP	28	45	52	24	55	47	49	69	69	67	76	61	53
PrEP use among men reporting any CLAI with >1 FB/CP	18 (69.2)	8 (17.8)	29 (55.8)	19 (79.2)	34 (61.8)	37 (78.7)	40 (81.6)	51 (73.9)	51 (73.9)	52 (77.6)	56 (73.7)	44 (72.1)	35 (66.0)
4+ days/week PrEP use among men reporting sex with >1 FB/CP	17 (60.7)	8 (17.8)	29 (55.8)	1 (4.2)	29 (52.7)	30 (63.8)	36 (73.5)	47 (68.1)	47 (68.1)	48 (71.6)	55 (72.4)	40 (65.6)	33 (62.3)

Note: HIV-positive men excluded.

*Note: May be an underestimate of PrEP coverage in Week 2 due to variation in the questions asked in that week.

Table 7. PrEP and PEP use among non HIV-positive men (cont.)

	Week 14	Week 15	Week 16	Week 17	Week 18
No use	336 (68.9)	334 (70.0)	311(70.0)	334 (70.5)	332 (69.6)
PrEP use	152 (31.1)	143 (30.0)	133 (30.0)	140 (29.5)	145 (30.3)
PEP use	6				
Mean PrEP pills remaining	37.8 (28.8)	36.9 (28.0)	40.5 (30.0)	36.9 (27.6)	34.0 (26.3)
Any sex with >1 FB/CP	93	96	90	108	113
PrEP use among men reporting any sex with >1 FB/CP	52 (55.9)	58 (60.4)	52 (57.8)	65 (60.2)	74 (65.5)
Any CLAI with >1 FB/CP	57	63	63	72	78
PrEP use among men reporting any CLAI with >1 FB/CP	36 (63.2)	43 (68.3)	41 (65.1)	52 (72.2)	57 (73.1)
4+ days/week PrEP use among men reporting sex with >1 FB/CP	34 (59.6)	42 (66.7)	37 (58.7)	50 (69.4)	55 (70.5)

Note: HIV-positive men excluded.

Table 8. COVID-19 testing

	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5	Week 6	Week 7	Week 8	Week 9	Week 10	Week 11	Week 12	Week 13
Tested in previous week	10 (2.6)	16 (4.1)	16 (4.0)	13 (3.3)	8 (2.1)	9 (2.4)	4 (1.1)	16 (3.2)	19 (3.9)	29 (5.7)	35 (7.0)	41 (8.0)	29 (5.7)

Table 8. COVID-19 testing (cont.)

	Week 14	Week 15	Week 16	Week 17	Week 18
Tested in previous week	29 (5.5)	20 (3.9)	15 (3.0)	20 (4.0)	26 (5.2)

Table 9. COVID-19 test type

	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5	Week 6	Week 7	Week 8	Week 9	Week 10	Week 11	Week 12	Week 13
Blood test	1 (10.0)	0 (0.0)	1 (6.3)	0 (0.0)	1 (12.5)	1 (11.1)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	1 (05.3)	1 (3.4)	1 (2.9)	1 (2.4)	0 (0.0)
Nose and throat swab	7 (70.0)	16 (100.0)	15 (93.8)	13 (100.0)	7 (87.5)	8 (88.9)	4 (100.0)	16 (100.0)	18 (94.7)	28 (96.6)	33 (94.3)	40 (97.6)	29 (100.0)
Other	2 (20.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	1 (2.9)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)
Positive COVID-19 result	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)

Table 9. COVID-19 test type (cont.)

	Week 14	Week 15	Week 16	Week 17	Week 18
Blood test	0 (0.0)	1 (5.0)	0 (0.0)	1 (5.0)	0 (0.0)
Nose and throat swab	29 (100.0)	19 (95.0)	15 (100.0)	19 (95.0)	26 (100.0)
Other	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)
Positive COVID-19 result	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)

Table 10. Proportion of men having no contact with friends and family and coping poorly

	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5	Week 6	Week 7	Week 8	Week 9	Week 10	Week 11	Week 12	Week 13
No contact with gay friends in the past 7 days	27 (7.0)	32 (8.1)	22 (5.5)	33 (8.3)	30 (7.8)	34 (8.9)	31 (8.6)	49 (9.6)	41 (8.4)	45 (8.9)	31 (6.2)	51 (9.8)	39 (7.7)
No contact with other friends and family in the past 7 days	18 (4.6)					17 (3.4)					26 (5.1)		
Coping poorly	73 (18.9)	67 (17.0)	61 (15.4)	95 (24.1)	59 (15.4)	66 (17.2)	66 (18.2)	95 (18.7)	84 (17.1)	99 (19.5)	100 (20.0)	118 (22.8)	120 (23.7)

Table 10. Proportion of men having no contact with friends and family and coping poorly (cont.)

	Week 14	Week 15	Week 16	Week 17	Week 18
No contact with gay friends in the past 7 days	47 (9.0)	32 (6.3)	2 (0.4)	44 (8.7)	43 (8.6)
No contact with other friends and family in the past 7 days	24 (4.8)				
Coping poorly	111 (21.1)	126 (24.7)	126 (25.0)	119 (23.5)	123 (24.4)

Table 11. Time spent communicating with gay male friends among all respondents

	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5	Week 6	Week 7	Week 8	Week 9	Week 10	Week 11	Week 12	Week 13	Week 14
None	27 (7.0)	32 (8.1)	22 (5.5)	1 (0.3)	30 (7.8)	34 (8.9)	31 (8.6)	3 (0.7)	41 (8.4)	45 (8.9)	31 (6.2)	3 (0.6)	39 (7.7)	47 (9.0)
A few minutes	55 (14.2)	61 (15.4)	48 (12.1)	53 (14.6)	41 (10.6)	31 (8.1)	40 (11.0)	51 (11.1)	65 (13.3)	70 (13.8)	71 (14.2)	68 (14.7)	75 (14.8)	76 (14.5)
<1 hour	97 (25.1)	103 (26.1)	99 (24.9)	122 (33.7)	93 (24.2)	96 (25.0)	81 (22.4)	145 (31.6)	108 (22.2)	110 (21.7)	111 (22.2)	140 (30.2)	121 (23.9)	125 (23.8)
1-2 hours	105 (27.1)	95 (24.1)	119 (30.0)	121 (33.4)	118 (30.6)	133 (34.6)	121 (33.5)	165 (35.9)	157 (32.2)	160 (31.5)	148 (29.7)	147 (31.7)	140 (27.7)	130 (24.8)
3-5 hours	65 (16.8)	55 (13.9)	62 (15.6)	44 (12.2)	57 (14.8)	50 (13.0)	54 (15.0)	49 (10.7)	67 (13.8)	75 (14.8)	86 (17.2)	70 (15.1)	92 (18.2)	92 (17.5)
>5 hours	38 (9.8)	49 (12.4)	47 (11.8)	21 (5.8)	46 (11.9)	40 (10.4)	34 (9.4)	46 (10.0)	49 (10.1)	48 (9.4)	52 (10.4)	35 (7.6)	39 (7.7)	55 (10.5)

Table 11. Time spent communicating with gay male friends among all respondents (cont.)

	Week 14	Week 15	Week 16	Week 17	Week 18
None	47 (9.0)	32 (6.3)	2 (0.4)	44 (8.7)	43 (8.6)
A few minutes	76 (14.5)	86 (16.9)	68 (15.0)	76 (15.1)	65 (13.0)
<1 hour	125 (23.8)	107 (21.0)	132 (29.2)	113 (22.4)	133 (26.5)
1-2 hours	130 (24.8)	149 (29.3)	151 (33.4)	144 (28.6)	139 (27.7)
3-5 hours	92 (17.5)	85 (16.7)	61 (13.5)	86 (17.1)	79 (15.8)
>5 hours	55 (10.5)	50 (9.8)	38 (8.4)	41 (8.1)	42 (8.4)

Appendix D – Relevant research outputs from the Flux Study

Publications

M A Hammoud, A Grulich, M Holt, L Maher, D Murphy, F Jin, B Bavinton, B Haire, J Ellard, S Vaccher, P Saxton, A Bourne, L Degenhardt, D Storer, G Prestage. Substantial decline in use of HIV pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) following introduction of COVID-19 physical distancing restrictions in Australia: Results from a prospective observational study of gay and bisexual men. 2020. Journal of Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndromes.

M A Hammoud, A Grulich, L Maher, M Holt, L Degenhardt, F Jin, D Murphy, B Bavinton, T Lea, B Haire, A Bourne, P Saxton, S Vaccher, J Ellard, B Mackie, C Batrouney, N Bath, G Prestage. Physical distancing due to COVID-19 disrupts sexual behaviours among gay and bisexual men in Australia: Implications for trends in HIV and other sexually transmissible infections. 2020. Journal of Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndromes.

Presentations

G Prestage, M A Hammoud, S Philpot, D Storer. [Impacts of COVID-19 on gay and bisexual men in Australia: Changes in sexual behaviour, PrEP and mental health](#). July 2020. ACON Research Snapshot Forum.

M A Hammoud, A Grulich, L Maher, M Holt, L Degenhardt, F Jin, D Murphy, B Bavinton, T Lea, B Haire, A Bourne, P Saxton, S Vaccher, J Ellard, B Mackie, C Batrouney, N Bath, G Prestage. [Impact of social distancing due to COVID-19 on sexual behaviour among gay and bisexual men in Australia: Implications for trends in HIV and other sexually transmissible infections](#). July 2020. International AIDS Conference 2020, Virtual.

G Prestage, M A Hammoud, S Philpot. [Impacts of COVID-19 on gay and bisexual men in Australia: Changes in sexual behaviour, PrEP and mental health](#). May 2020. Kirby Institute Seminar Series.

Reports

D Storer on behalf of the Flux Study BRISE Reference Group. [Flux Study COVID-19 Diary: Monthly Report. Report 01: Reporting week ending 14 June.](#) 2020. Kirby Institute, UNSW Sydney.

D Storer on behalf of the Flux Study BRISE Reference Group. [Flux Study COVID-19 Diary: Monthly Report. Report 02: Reporting week ending 12 July.](#) 2020. Kirby Institute, UNSW Sydney.

D Storer on behalf of the Flux Study BRISE Reference Group. [Flux Study COVID-19 Diary: Monthly Report. Report 03: Reporting week ending 09 August.](#) 2020. Kirby Institute, UNSW Sydney.