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## Better access to testing the key to slowing down HIV infection rates among gay men

The 2009 Adelaide Gay Community Periodic Survey has just been released by the National Centre for HIV Social Research. The survey was completed by 970 men and most were recruited from gay venues, sexual health clinics, sex on premises venues, during the 2009 Feast Festival.

Shane Dinnison, CEO of ACSA said that while most of the results were similar to previous surveys there were sobering results surrounding the numbers of men who regularly test for HIV in Adelaide.

“While testing rates haven’t changed all that much over the years, there have been increases in the numbers of men who don’t know their HIV status” said Dinnison. “This has been confirmed by data from a national survey recently completed, *Pleasure and Sexual Health*, which highlighted the fact that many men reported that current testing procedures and waiting times for results stopped them from testing. More convenient testing with faster results would motivate them to test more often.”

“Of additional concern was the increase in the numbers of men reporting ‘any’ fucking without condoms in casual relationships. This tells us that while condoms are still being used by most men most of the time, some men are turning away from condom messages and are having sex with a higher degree of risk attached to it. Conservative estimates suggest approximately 1 in 10 men who have sex with men who are HIV positive do not know they have HIV, and that this undiagnosed group of men are responsible for the onwards transmission of approximately one out of every three new HIV infections. Decreasing rates of HIV testing and increasing rates of unprotected fucking in casual relationships where HIV disclosure is rare, even if known, are likely to result in increasing rates of new HIV infections amongst men who have sex with men in SA in the years to come”

“Rises in the number of men who report fucking without condoms with casual partners and the increasing numbers of men who are of untested or unknown HIV status shows us that more work needs to be done around HIV testing (including the introduction of rapid testing in South Australia), and HIV harm reduction campaigns in more innovative formats to reach these increasingly diverse sections of the population” said Dinnison.

The survey will run again during the Feast Festival this year. The full report summary is available on the ACSA website [www.acsa.org.au](http://www.acsa.org.au)

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