

# PORTUGAL IN THE EMIS STUDY: A GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF STUDY PARTICIPANTS



Cláudia Carvalho<sup>1,2</sup>, Ricardo Fuertes<sup>3</sup>, Raquel Lucas<sup>1,2</sup>, Luís Mendão<sup>3</sup>, Maria José Campos<sup>3</sup>, Henrique Barros<sup>1,2,4</sup>, Axel J. Schmidt<sup>5</sup>

1. Institute of Public Health, University of Porto, Portugal, 2. Department of Clinical Epidemiology, Predictive Medicine and Public Health-University of Porto Medical School, Portugal 3. Grupo Português de Activistas sobre Tratamentos VIH/SIDA (GAT), Portugal, 4. National HIV/AIDS Coordination, Portugal, 5. Robert Koch Institute, Germany

## Background

Many legal and social recent changes<sup>1,2</sup> are expected to impact on Portuguese MSM situation. However, information about the extent, the lifestyles, the attitudes and the health-related behaviors of the Portuguese gay community remains unacceptably scarce.

## Material and methods

The European MSM Internet Survey-EMIS, the largest international study ever conducted on homosexually active men, took place in 2010, from June 4 to August 31. An anonymous questionnaire was provided online in 38 European countries and 25 languages. Data from the Portuguese sample (n = 4584) was extracted and analyzed (SPSS 19).

## Results

**Born in Portugal:** 82% (3678)

**Living in medium size or larger cities:** 65% (2910)

**Age (mean± SD):** 32 ± 10.6 y

**Employed:** 69% (3110)

**Students:** 20% (917)

**High educational degree:** 58% (2606)

**Self described as gay/homosexual:** 70% (3186)

**Attracted only or mostly to men:** 89% (4086)

**Sexually happy:** 65% (2879)

**Comfortable with being gay:** 66% (2946)

**“Out of the closet”:** 53% (2416)

**Living alone:** 28% (1272)

**Living with a male partner:** 16% (734)

**Living with a female partner:** 6% (272)

**Living with parents:** 34% (1546)

**Current relationship with a steady male partner:** 37% (1697)

**Duration of steady relationship**

- <1 year: 25% (427)
- 1-2 ys: 23% (396)
- 3-5 ys: 25% (420)
- >5ys: 27% (449)

**Steady partner HIV status:**

- Seroconcordant: 80% (1351)
- Serodiscordant: 10% (161)
- Don't Know: 10% (176)

**Number of non steady partners among those with stable relationship:**

- None: 45% (759)
- 1-9: 37% (618)
- 10 or more: 18% (296)

**Number of non steady partners among those without stable relationship:**

- None: 28% (790)
- 1-9: 49% (1377)
- 10 or more: 23% (640)

**Number of partners last 12 months (mean± SD):** 5.4 ± 4.5

**Meeting place for last non steady partner**

(regardless current relationship status):

- Website: 57% (1677)
- Cruising location (street, baths...): 15% (442)
- Gay disco/nightclub: 6% (185)
- Gay sauna: 4% (128)
- Gay community centre or social group: 1% (41)

**Unprotected anal intercourse (UAI) in the last 12 months**

**Overall: 67%** (2623) of the participants reported UAI last 12 months

**With a male partner of unknown or discordant status: 30%** (1255)

**Proportion of participants who always used condoms with non steady partners: 59%** (1539)

**UAI because no condom was available: 15%** (683)

**HIV testing (ever):**

- **Tested: 72%** (3281)
- Untested: 28% (1265)

**Site of last test:**

- GP/private physician: 52% (1712)
- Hospital/Clinic (outpatient): 15% (488)
- Hospital/clinic (inpatient): 3% (92)
- Community based service: 21% (690)

**HIV prevalence (among those tested): 11%** (350)

**Currently on treatment (ART): 72%** (249)

## Conclusions:

Despite the possibility of self-selection bias and the non-representative nature of the sample, the amount of information and the large adherence of the MSM community resulted in a remarkable picture of the social, behavioral and epidemiological situation of MSM in Portugal, providing a valuable basis for future monitoring and comparisons.

References:

<sup>1</sup>Law n.º 9/2010 31 May. Law allows civil marriage among same sex persons.

<sup>2</sup>Law n.º 7/2011, 15 March 2011 – Regulates the procedures to change sex and name on the Civil Registry

Contact: claudiac@med.up.pt

