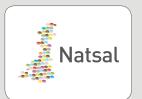
Sexual attitudes and lifestyles in Britain: Highlights from Natsal-3

We interviewed 15,162 men and women aged 16-74 between September 2010 and August 2012. They provided us with valuable information about their experiences, behaviours, and views which will shape our understanding of sexual health in Britain. Here we present highlights from our initial findings. The full articles can be found in The Lancet (www.thelancet.com/themed/natsal) and details of the study methodology are on the Natsal website (www.natsal.ac.uk). More results will be published in the coming months, so please check the Natsal website for updates.

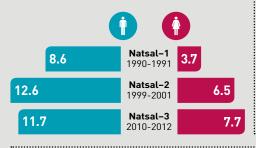


Changes in sexual behaviour

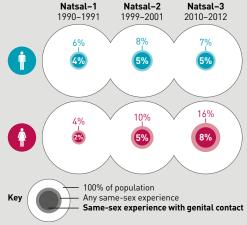
This is the third Natsal survey that has been carried out in Britain: the first survey was undertaken in 1990-1991 and the second survey in 1999-2001.

Over the 1990s, we saw an increase in the number of opposite-sex partners people reported, and more people reporting same-sex experience. Over the last decade, we have only seen further increases for women, so the gender gap is narrowing.

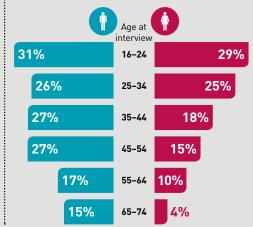
Average (mean) number of opposite-sex partners, lifetime (people aged 16-44)



Percentage of the population who have ever had same-sex experience (people aged 16-44)



Percentage who had sexual intercourse with someone of the opposite sex before age 16



Median (middle) number of occasions of sex in the past 4 weeks (people aged 16-44)

Natsal-1 Natsal-2 Natsal-3

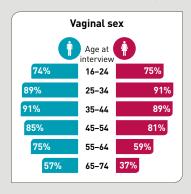
The bars represent the interquartile range: 50% of the population were in this

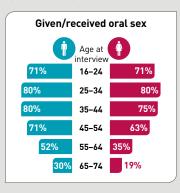
range, 25% were below the lower value, and 25% were above the higher value.

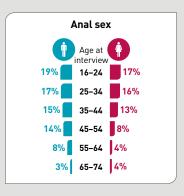
the past two decades there has been a decrease in how often people say they have sex.

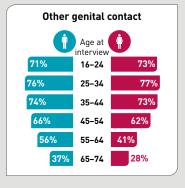
On average over

Different types of sex with people of the opposite-sex, past year









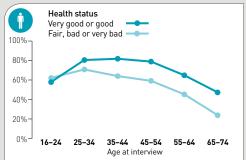
People continue to have sex at all ages, but the frequency and range of sexual practices decrease with age. While most people have had vaginal sex in the past year, other practices are less common, especially anal sex.

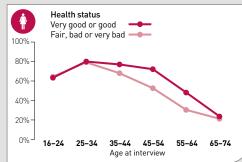
Sex and health

Overall, more than 60% of people reported having sex recently and over 60% of people said they were satisfied with their sex life. People in poorer health were less likely to have had sex recently, and less likely to say that they were satisfied. This was true even after taking age and whether people were in a relationship into account.

However, ill health does not necessarily mean the end of an active or satisfying sex life: more than one in three people in bad or very bad health had had sex recently, and around half were satisfied with their sex lives.

Percentage reporting recent sexual activity (in past four weeks)





Percentage reporting a health condition that affected their sex life in the past year

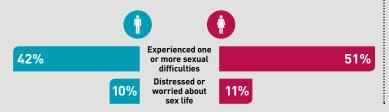


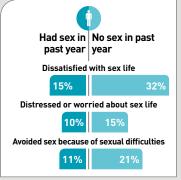
Almost one in six people said they had a health condition that affected their sex life in the past year, vet less than one in four of these men and one in five of these women said that they had tried to get help or advice from a healthcare professional. Those who had were most likely to have talked to their GP.

Sexual function

We asked men and women who had had sex in the past year whether they had experienced any sexual difficulties lasting three or more months in the past year, including lack of interest in having sex, feeling anxious during sex, pain during sex, vaginal dryness, and problems getting or keeping an erection.

Sexual difficulties were common, even in young people. However, it was much less common for people to say that they were distressed or worried about their sex lives







People who hadn't had sex in the past year were more likely to say that they were dissatisfied with their sex life, and that they had avoided sex because of sexual difficulties (either theirs, or a partner's), compared with people who did have sex in the past year. However, only a minority of people who had not had sex in the past year said they were dissatisfied, distressed, or avoiding sex.

1 in 4 men and women who are in a relationship do not share the same level of interest in sex as their partner.





1 in 5 men and women who are in a relationship said that their partner had experienced sexual difficulties in the past year.

We created a sexual function score that took account of people's experience of sexual difficulties, their sexual relationship and how they rate their sex life.

People with a lower sexual function score were more likely to report:

relationship break-up

being unhappy in their relationship

finding it difficult to talk about sex with a partner

having been diagnosed with an STI having experienced sex against their will

paying for sex (men only) having more partners (women only)

Sexually transmitted infections (STIs)

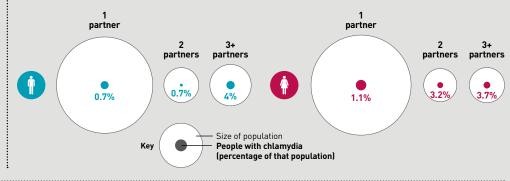
We collected urine from a sample of men and women aged 16-44 which we tested anonymously for sexually transmitted infections (STIs), including chlamydia, gonorrhoea, human papillomavirus (HPV), and HIV. These findings are for men and women who have ever had sex.

HPV was the most common STI, followed by chlamydia. HIV and gonorrhoea were found in around one in a thousand people.

For more information about these STIs and where you can test for them you can visit the NHS website: www.nhs.uk/Livewell/STIs/Pages/STIs-hub.aspx

Overall, around one in a hundred people aged 16-44 had chlamydia, although this varied by age, peaking at almost one in twenty women aged 18-19 and one in thirty men aged 20-24. Although people who reported more partners in the past year were more likely to have chlamydia, a lot of the chlamydia was found in people who reported only one partner in the past year, because most people only had one partner.

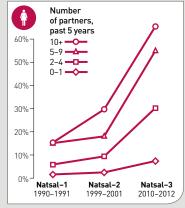
Percentage of people in the population with chlamydia



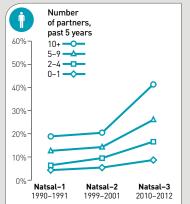
Over the past decade, national sexual health strategies in Britain have aimed to increase access to sexual health services and STI / HIV testing. Compared with the previous survey (1999-2001), more people reported having an HIV test or going to a sexual health clinic in the past 5 years. It is encouraging to see that these increases were even larger in those at highest risk, such as people who reported more partners.

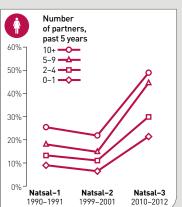
Sexual health clinic attendance, past 5 years (people aged 16-44)

Number of partners, past 5 years 60% 10+ 50% 40% 30% 20% 10% Natsal-1 Natsal-2 Natsal-3 2010-2012 1990-1991 1999-2001



HIV testing, past 5 years (people aged 16-44)





Non-volitional sex

We asked men and women "since the age of 13, has anyone made you have sex with them, against your will?" which we refer to as 'non-volitional sex'. One in 10 women and one in 71 men said that they had experienced nonvolitional sex since age 13.

Proportion of men and women who have experienced non-volitional sex

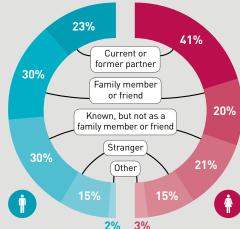


Experiencing sex against your will could happen at any age, but it was more common at younger ages.

Median age at most recent occurrence of non-volitional sex



Person responsible at most recent occurrence 23% 41%



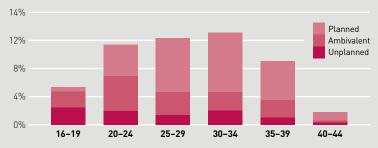
In most cases the person responsible was someone known to the individual.

We found that people who said they had experienced sex against their will were more likely to report potentially harmful health behaviours and poorer physical, mental and sexual health, including treatment for depression or another mental health condition in the past year, a long-term illness or disability, and a lower sexual function score. We do not know whether these things happened before or after experiencing sex against their will.

Unplanned pregnancy

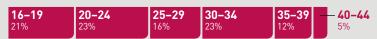
10% of women aged 16-44 had been pregnant in the past year (given birth, miscarried, or had an abortion in the past year). An estimated one in six of these pregnancies were unplanned, two in six were ambivalent and three in six were planned.

Percentage of women who have been pregnant in the past year



Although pregnancies among 16-19 year old women were more likely to be unplanned than those among older women, most unplanned pregnancies were in women aged 20-34, simply because that is when most women become pregnant.

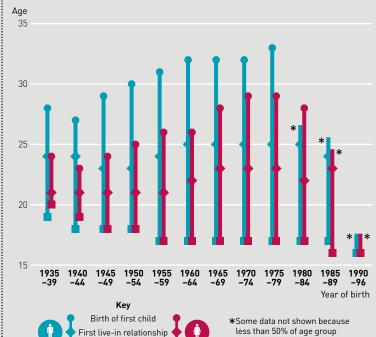
Age profile of unplanned pregnancies



We found that unplanned pregnancy was less common than has been found in studies done in some other high income countries such as the USA. This may in part reflect the fact that contraception is provided free of charge in Britain under the NHS.

Over the past 60 years, the gap between the age people start having sex, the age they first live with a partner, and the age they have their first child has widened - so there is now a longer period in women's lives where efforts are needed to prevent unplanned pregnancy.

Median age at first intercourse, first live-in relationship and birth of first child



Natsal-3 is a collaboration between:





Social Research that works for society



First intercourse



had experienced event

The study was funded through grants from:



wellcometrust

With additional funding from:





Further information

If you would like information or advice about the topics covered in the Natsal study, you can contact one of the organisations below.

NHS website

This website provides information about sexual health and allows you to search for your nearest sexual health service.

mww.nhs.uk/livewell/sexualhealth

Your registered GP

They can provide consultations and refer you to specialist agencies. You can find a GP on the NHS website:

www.nhs.uk/Service-Search/GP/ LocationSearch/4

Family Planning Association

Provides guidance on where you can seek help for a wide range of issues relating to health, sexual and personal relationships

www.fpa.org.uk

Helpline 0845 122 8690

British Association for Counselling

Can suggest a local counsellor

(m) www.bacp.co.uk

© 01455 883300

Samaritans

The Samaritans provide counselling and support on any issue of concern

(m) www.samaritans.org

@ jo@samaritans.org

Helpline: 08457 909090

Marie Stopes International

Advice and information on a range of topics including family planning, abortion, contraception, sexually transmitted diseases and menopause

mww.mariestopes.org.uk

@services@mariestopes.org.uk

● Helpline: 0845 300 8090

Men's advice line

Provides advice and support for men in abusive relationships

mww.mensadviceline.org.uk

@info@mensadviceline.org.uk

Nelpline: 0808 801 0327

London Gay/Lesbian Switchboard

Provides support and information to lesbian, gay, bisexual & transgendered communities throughout the UK

(iii) www.llgs.org.uk

For info on local lines: www.switchboard.org.uk

@admin@llgs.org.uk

Helpline: 020 7837 7324

Relate

Provides counselling and advice on relationship and sexual problems

@www.relate.org.uk

@ enquiries@relate.org.uk

● Helpline: 0300 100 1234

Safeline

Support for adults who have been sexually abused as children

www.safeline.org.uk

@ office@safeline.org.uk

Nelpline: 01926 402498

Rape Crisis

Provides counselling and help for people who have been raped or sexually assaulted

(iii) www.rapecrisis.org.uk

@info@rapecrisis.org.uk

Helpline: 0808 802 9999

The Havens

Provides counselling and help for people in London who have been raped or sexually assaulted

(iii) www.thehavens.co.uk

Camberwell branch: 020 3299 1599
Paddington branch: 020 3312 1101

Whitechapel branch: 020 7247 4787

Sexual Advice Association (formerly the Sexual Dysfunction Association)

Advice and information on male and female sexual problems

@www.sda.uk.net

Nelpline: 020 7486 7262