

## Is acculturation a major factor for HIV related risk taking behaviours amongst South Asian immigrant men who have sex with men (MSM) in Australia ?

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## Overview of the Research

### Aims:

This research study has two broad aims.

1. To examine the effects of acculturation on sexual and mental health of South Asian MSM living in Australia.
2. To explore the impact of substance abuse, body image dissatisfaction and suicidal ideation on sexual health and mental wellbeing of South Asian MSM.

### Participants:

Data will be collected from a minimum of 300 subjects from South Asian MSM, aged 18 years and over living in Australia (Data collection underway).

### Research Methodology:

The study will employ a mixed methodology involving a quantitative (survey) and qualitative (focus group discussion and in depth interview) methods.

Stage 1: Quantitative Survey (Online survey)

Stage 2: Qualitative Survey (One to one interview and focus group discussion)

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## Variable Assessment tools

Variable	Assessment Tool
Demographics	Developed own research questionnaire
Acculturation	Chris Rissell's acculturation scale- an eight-item scale assessing acculturation with a structural equation modelling program (LISREL) with high internal consistency and high criterion-related validity (Pearson's correlation coefficient for each item was > 0.86) (Cronbach's alpha value was 0.88 respectively).
Sexual behaviour, attitudes and help seeking behaviours	Sydney Gay Community Periodic Survey questionnaire
Mental Health	Depression Anxiety Stress Scales (DASS) (Cronbach's alpha values of 0.75, 0.74 and 0.79, respectively for depression, anxiety and stress subscales)
Body image	The Body Areas Satisfaction Scale (BASS) (Cronbach's alpha value 0.80 and test-retest reliability, $r = .80$ )
Suicidal ideation	Beck Scale for Suicidal ideation (BSS) (Cronbach's alpha value between 0.84 to 0.89)
Focus Group Discussion	Less rigid structured facilitated by Anglo-Saxon facilitator

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## Data on the migrant population

According to the 2011 Census, 439,806 Australian residents were born in Indian Subcontinent, comprising 2.0 percent of the Australia's total population. Of the 439,806 Indian Subcontinental migrants living in Australia, 295,363 were born in India (100.8% increased from 2006 Census), 86,413 were born in Sri Lanka (36.8% increased from 2006 Census), 30,221 were born in Pakistan (77.8% increased from 2006 Census) and 27,809 in Bangladesh (72.8% increased from 2006 Census). Indian immigrants are the fourth largest immigrant group in Australia and there numbers increased by 150, 000 from 2006 to 2011 (ABS, 2006, 2011).

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## Acculturation and its different strategies

According to cross-cultural researcher Berry acculturation is a multidimensional process based on the presumption that individuals can choose the manner and the extent to which they adapt, depending on how strongly or weakly they identify with both their ethnic culture and the dominant culture. Moreover, based on extensive research into cross-cultural psychology, there is now substantial evidence to suggest that cultural factors influence the development and display of individual human behaviour (Berry, 1997).

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## Acculturation and its different strategies

Berry, Phinney, Sam an Vedder ( 2006) have found empirical support for all four acculturative strategies.

- When ethnic minority groups maintain their customs, values and heritage, while at the same time strongly identifying with the mainstream cultural norm- is a indicative of integration.
- When ethnic minority rejects both cultures it suggests marginalisation.
- When ethnic minority group identify exclusively with their own culture, it is indicative of separation.
- When ethnic minority groups ignore their own culture to be involved with the mainstream culture, it is indicative of assimilation.

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**THE UNIVERSITY OF SYDNEY** Current Presentation

This presentation will focus on the preliminary findings of this project

- Overview of the acculturation process of SAMSM immigrants.
- Overview of their HIV related high risk and help seeking behaviours.
- Overview of the drug usage among this group.

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**THE UNIVERSITY OF SYDNEY** Measures of Acculturation among SAMSM

	Only South Asian language	Mostly South Asian Language	English and South Asian language	Mostly English	Only English
<b>What language do you usually speak at home?</b>	9.09% (17)	49.20% (92)	29.95% (56)	6.95% (13)	4.81% (9)
<b>What language do you normally speak with your friends?</b>	5.35% (10)	51.34 (96)	29.41% (55)	8.02% (15)	5.88% (10)
<b>What language do you prefer to speak</b>	6.42% (12)	42.25% (79)	34.76% (65)	12.30% (23)	4.28% (8)

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**THE UNIVERSITY OF SYDNEY** Measures of acculturation among SAMSM

	Only South Asian language	English and South Asian language	English
<b>What language do you read better</b>	6.95% (13)	79.14% (148)	13.90% (26)
<b>What language do you write better</b>	10.16% (190)	74.33% (139)	15.51% (29)

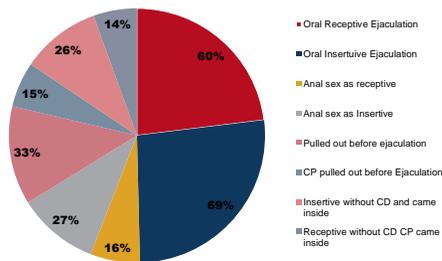
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**THE UNIVERSITY OF SYDNEY** Measures of Acculturation among SAMSM

	Only South Asian	Mostly South Asian	Australian and South Asian	Mostly Australian	Only Australia
<b>What Ethnic group do you identify with?</b>	10.70% (20)	57.22% (107)	28.34% (53)	2.67% (5)	1.07% (2)
<b>What language do you usually think?</b>	46.52% (87)	28.34% (53)	14.44% (27)	8.02% (15)	2.67% (5)
<b>How important to you that you (South Asian) traditions be honoured / followed?</b>	Very important 58.29% (109)		Somewhat important 38.50% (56)	Not very important 3.21% (6)	

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**THE UNIVERSITY OF SYDNEY** Unprotected anal and oral sex with Casual Partners



82.51% (151) reported have sex with casual partner where 34.43% (63) have regular partner.

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**THE UNIVERSITY OF SYDNEY** STI knowledge, screening and substance use

	Yes	No
<b>Are you aware anyone can have any STI without any symptoms?</b>	64.44% (116)	35.56% (64)
<b>In last 6 months have you had any sexually transmissible infections (STI) screening?</b>	46.11% (83)	53.89% (97)

Where do you get information regarding sexual health	Responses
Friends	19.44 % (35)
Sex partners	15.56% (28)
Medical professional speaks the same language	15.55% (28)
Medical professional speaks another south Asian language	13.33 % (24)
Medical professional speaks English	<b>81.67%</b> (147)
Media (e.g. newspaper, magazine)	11.11 % (20)

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## STI knowledge, screening and substance use

	Yes	No
In previous 6 months any substance use associated with sexual pleasure	77.47% (141)	22.53% (41)
In previous 6 months substance use NOT associated with sexual pleasure	60.44% (110)	39.56% (72)

Types of substance	Responses
Alcohol	86.89% (120)
Marijuana	41.48% (56)
Crystal meth	41.48% (56)
Ecstasy	8.89% (12)
Amyl	7.4% (10)

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## HIV test

	Yes	No
Have you ever had any HIV test?	77.22% (139)	22.78% (41)
Have heard about Rapid HIV test?	62.22% (112)	37.78% (68)

Where do you think you can have an HIV test?	Response
GP	44.44% (80)
Clinic/Hospital	90.56% (163)
Gay bar	20.00% (38)
At home	6.67% (12)
Don't know	3.33% (6)

How many HIV test have you had in last 12 months?	Response
None or no test	53.89% (87)
One test	33.89% (61)
Two tests	7.22% (13)
3-4 tests	3.33% (6)
5 or more tests	1.67% (3)

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## Conclusion and Recommendation

There is lack of research data on the possibility of interactional effects between ethnicity and sexual orientation/identity on the sexuality of Asian/South Asian immigrants. Current research project is a pioneer sexual health research in Australia targeting south Asian MSM. The preliminary findings of this research suggest

- SAMSMM maintain their customs, values and heritage mostly with more integration and separation acculturation measures compare to assimilation.
- High numbers of casual sexual partners with substantial high risk behaviours and substance use among SAMSMM.
- Low rates of HIV testings including regular STI checks.

Further research is required to determine any targeted HIV / Sexual Health intervention that would benefit SAMSMM living in Australia.

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