

HOME INSEMINATION AND HIV PREVENTION AMONG SAME-SEX ATTRACTED COMMUNITIES IN VICTORIA

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Background: Changes in Australian legislation and social attitudes have resulted in more lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people having children. Increasing numbers of lesbians and gay men are bypassing clinical fertility services and entering into private arrangements to conceive children by inseminating fresh donor sperm at home. This project aimed to better understand the nature of, and evidence for, HIV and STI risk in the context of home insemination, and to identify ways of supporting LGBT prospective parents, donors and service providers to accurately assess and minimise the risks associated with home insemination.

Method: Data was collected from interviews and focus groups with 28 clinical and community based key informants who work with LGBT prospective parents and donors. Inductive, thematic analysis was undertaken to explore the knowledge, perceptions and experiences of participants.

Results: Six themes related to home insemination were identified: reasons for choosing home insemination, limited donor options, the lack of support for HIV positive prospective donors, the barriers to talking openly about sexual practice and risk, access to services and stigma, and time constraints related to fertility. Many LGBT people choose home insemination as it is more intimate and cheaper than using fertility services. However, there are several barriers to open and comprehensive discussions between donors and prospective mothers about HIV/STI risks. These barriers include lack of awareness of STI risks, desire to minimise or ignore risk due to fear of loss of fertility or limited options for becoming parents in other ways or assumptions made by women about the donor's abstinence or HIV/STI testing.

Conclusion: Resources and guidance about home insemination and HIV/STI prevention need to be developed and disseminated to LGBT prospective parents and donors and service providers.