

Monopoly
Monogamy? Polygamy?



Making relationships work: How much is age a factor?

Garrett Prestage^{1,2}, Benjamin Bavinton¹,
Steven Philpot¹, Duane Duncan^{2,3}

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Background

- Over half of gay men have a regular partner
 - About half are monogamous
 - Over half have an agreement about sex with each other & with other men
- Negotiated safety was recognised as a risk-reduction strategy in the early 1990s.
- Has been an explicit aspect of HIV prevention in Australia since the mid 1990s.
- Recently seen decline in explicit agreements between regular partners.
- Young gay men tend to have 'regular' partners
 - But tend to be short-term
 - And tend to be assumed monogamous
 - And less likely to have an explicit agreement




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About the Monopoly study

- Gay men's relationships study
 - Study of understandings of monogamy and its place in HIV-prevention
- Collaboration between Australian Research Centre in Sex Health and Society, & Kirby Institute.
- Initiated by Professor Anthony Smith.
- Online national survey conducted late 2013
 - Mainly recruited through Manhunt and Facebook
- 4215 usable records.
 - 65% identified a 'primary' regular partner
 - 2212 men described their relationship agreements.




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Sample

Not unlike other samples of gay & bisexual men:

- Mean age 38.6 years
- 52% had university education
- 87% gay & 11% identified as bisexual
- 85% tested for HIV
 - 6.4% were HIV-positive




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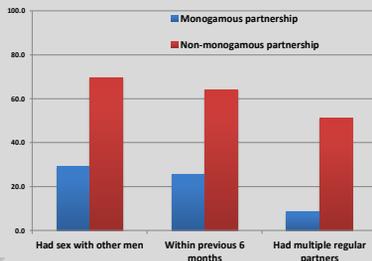
Relationship agreements

- 19% had been with their regular partner <6 months
- 61% said they were 'in a relationship'
 - 36% had multiple regular partners
- 35% described their partnership as monogamous
 - 45% had not explicitly discussed outside sex with their partner
 - 19% regularly discussed their agreement




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Monogamous & open relationships



Category	Monogamous partnership (%)	Non-monogamous partnership (%)
Had sex with other men	~30	~70
Within previous 6 months	~25	~65
Had multiple regular partners	~10	~55




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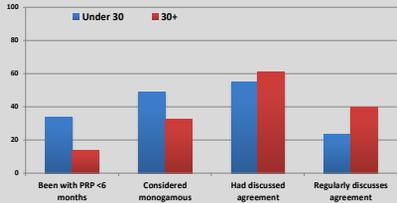
Agreements and risk reduction

- HIV was not always an issue in negotiating agreements:
 - 15% made agreements in order to stop using condoms
 - 55% discussed HIV prevention when negotiating agreements
 - 30% agreed to use condoms with other men
- 52% reported condomless sex with their PRP
 - 33% of those reporting condomless sex had no explicit agreements with their PRP




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Age & relationship agreements

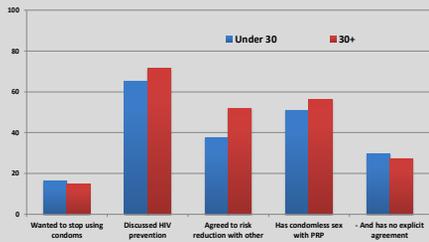


Category	Under 30	30+
Been with PRP <6 months	~35	~15
Considered monogamous	~48	~32
Had discussed agreement	~55	~60
Regularly discusses agreement	~25	~40




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Age & risk reduction in relationships



Category	Under 30	30+
Wanted to stop using condoms	~15	~15
Discussed HIV prevention	~65	~75
Agreed to risk reduction with other men	~35	~50
Has condomless sex with PRP	~50	~55
- And has no explicit agreement	~30	~25




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Conclusions & discussion

- Majority of men with regular partner have negotiated agreements about sex and risk reduction
- Younger men are less likely to have explicit agreements
 - And less likely to discuss risk reduction
- Younger men have shorter relationships
 - And more likely to assume monogamy
- Age made little difference to likelihood to engage in condomless sex




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