

**SEXUAL COERCION AMONG
GAY MEN, BISEXUAL MEN AND TAKATĀPUI TĀNE
IN AOTEAROA/NEW ZEALAND**



A research report by

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**THE UNIVERSITY
OF AUCKLAND**

NEW ZEALAND

Te Whare Wānanga o Tamaki Makaurau

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Background

- The existence of sexual assault, sexual coercion and unwanted sex among gay, bisexual and other men who have sex with men is seldom acknowledged – within gay communities, society at large, or in policy.
- Although prevalence is difficult to determine, international research has established that sexual assault, sexual coercion and unwanted sex are experienced by a significant number of gay, bisexual, and other men who have sex with men.

Our project

- This project consisted of two separate, but related, studies: a broader project, and a Kaupapa Māori project.
- The broader project was designed to explore the phenomenon of sexual coercion *among* gay and bisexual men in Aotearoa/New Zealand.
- It did not set out to investigate the broader issue of sexual assault against gay and bisexual men by men who do *not* identify as gay or bisexual (i.e., sexual violence which could more easily be categorised as hate crime).
- Twenty-three key informants were interviewed about their observations and views on sexual coercion among gay, bisexual, and other men who have sex with men.
- Eighteen gay and bisexual men were interviewed about their experiences of sexual coercion.
- Six focus groups were held with gay and bisexual men in order to generate accounts about how sexuality is understood and negotiated in gay communities.
- Five takatāpui tāne were interviewed for the Kaupapa Māori project on Māori men's experiences of sexual coercion.

Key findings

- Sexual coercion covers a broad spectrum, and includes:
 - Criminal acts of sexual assault, where physical force or threats of force are used, or where a man is physically unable to resist due to, for example, intoxication.
 - Unwanted sex that occurs as a result of manipulation or pressure by another man.
 - Unwanted sex that occurs due to more indirect social pressures relating to perceived obligation, and lack of viable alternative choices.

Dynamics of sexual assault, sexual coercion, and unwanted sex

- The vast majority of incidents men reported occurred in the context of interactions that were initially, or at least potentially, consensual sexual encounters and/or relationships, or were carried out by men with whom the participants had non-sexual relationships.
- Differences in age and experience were frequently identified as a dynamic that enabled sexual coercion. Younger, less experienced men can be vulnerable in sexual encounters with older, more experienced men. This is due to difficulties in negotiating implicit norms around gay sexual practices.
- When using the Internet to contact another man for sexual encounters, men can feel obliged to have sex with the other man, even in the absence of desire upon meeting.
- In relationships, men may engage in unwanted sex out of a sense of obligation, or because they fear the relationship may be jeopardised if they do not. Partners can use 'emotional blackmail' to coerce men into unwanted sex.

- In sexually coercive encounters, or in other contexts of unwanted sex, men may decide to engage in some sexual acts, such as oral sex, as a way of avoiding other unwanted practices, such as anal intercourse.

Sexual coercion and STI/HIV prevention

- HIV prevention models assume that men have rational control over their sexual behaviour and that, given appropriate knowledge and skills, they will prioritise STI/HIV prevention and their health above all other concerns. However, this is not always the case:
 - Men are sometimes forced into engaging in unsafe sexual practices against their will.
 - Even without force, men cannot always clearly and verbally refuse sex in general, particular sexual activities, or unsafe sex.
 - On some occasions, other interests – such as emotional bonds, or the desire to please a sexual partner, or to appear sexually mature – take immediate precedence over health concerns, and work to constrain men's choices regarding safer sex.

Alcohol and drugs

- In some cases, men deliberately intoxicated participants in order to have sex with them. In others, men took advantage of participants' already intoxicated states to have sex, which was not wanted, with them.
- Young gay men may use drugs and/or alcohol to boost their confidence, rendering them vulnerable to sexual coercion.

Disclosure, reporting, silence and heterosexism

- Gay and bisexual men do not generally talk openly about sexual coercion and unwanted sex.
- Sexual assault is often not disclosed, or reported to 'authorities', even to access support services.
- For some men, disclosing sexual coercion would necessitate coming out.
- Failure to recognise or acknowledge some forms of sexual coercion as sexual assault will limit opportunities for disclosure and reporting.
- Expectations of institutional heterosexism may constrain men from reporting sexual assault.
- Low rates of disclosure (and reporting) reinforce perceptions that sexual assault is not an issue for gay and bisexual men, effectively maintains silence on the issue.
- Gay and bisexual men's experiences of sexual coercion can remain silenced because dominant models of masculinity portray men as in control and as always ready for sex.
- The relative invisibility of gay sexuality in heterosexist mainstream culture arguably intensifies young gay and bisexual men's vulnerability to sexual coercion, as men are unlikely to initially have the breadth and depth of 'cultural resources' necessary for negotiating their way through implicit norms of gay male sexuality.

Specific issues for Māori men

- Sexual coercion occurs within the Māori community and can have a debilitating impact on the lives and well-being of Māori men and the communities to which they belong.
- Māori men who have experienced sexual coercion draw strength and support from their own cultural networks in their efforts to deal with the impacts of unwanted sex.
- The occurrence of sexual coercion of Māori men needs to be acknowledged so that appropriate interventions and services can be developed and implemented.

Ethical and political sensitivities around the identification of this issue

- We acknowledge that many of the researchers involved with this project are not gay or bisexual men, and are not from the communities we are researching.
- It must be recognised that in drawing attention to the issue of sexual coercion among gay and bisexual men there is a risk of other people utilising this information in ways that pathologise, and result in increased discrimination against, an already marginalised community.
- While we identified some specific features of gay male culture which appear to contribute to men's vulnerability to sexual coercion, overall the dynamics of sexual coercion among gay, bisexual, and other men who have sex with men had *much* in common with the dynamics of heterosexual coercion experienced by women.
- Therefore, it appears that masculinity and male sexuality *per se*, rather than gay masculinity and gay male sexuality, in particular, are key in understanding sexual coercion among gay and bisexual men.

Policy implications and recommendations

- See pages 43-44 of this report.

INTRODUCTION

Society has a responsibility to create a supportive social environment: to achieve this environment, we need to discuss and debate our values. One ideal is for society to promote the right of every New Zealander to make their own decisions about their sexual behaviour, free from discrimination, coercion and violence, while at the same time considering the rights and welfare of others, particularly partners and children. (*Sexual and Reproductive Health Strategy*, Ministry of Health, 2001, p. 8)

The existence of sexual assault, sexual coercion and unwanted sex among gay, bisexual, and other men who have sex with men has received little recognition within New Zealand research and policy, as is the case internationally (Scarce, 1997).¹ In this report we present a summary of the findings of a New Zealand Health Research Council and Lottery Health-funded research project on sexual coercion among gay, bisexual, and other men who have sex with men, in Aotearoa/New Zealand.

This in-depth qualitative project aimed to provide a rich, detailed, contextual exploration of the meanings, experiences and contexts of sexual coercion among gay, bisexual, and other men who have sex with men. It did not aim to determine prevalence; nor do we claim that this study provides a representative survey of all forms and experiences of sexual coercion among gay and bisexual men – although a wide variety are reported.

We use ‘sexual coercion’ as an umbrella term to refer to a range of ways in which men may be forced or pressured to have unwanted sex. This includes: unwanted sex that is directly forced by another man, without the consent of the person on whom it is being forced; sex which a person states they do not want, but which they are nevertheless ultimately coerced or pressured into; and sex that is unwanted, but in which a person engages, in the absence of direct force, and without *necessarily* expressing non-consent. Unwanted sex, therefore, does not necessarily involve direct pressure from the sexual partner. The term sexual coercion thus covers a broad range of phenomena including criminal acts of sexual assault and more everyday interactions where choices are limited by social pressures and obligations rather than by direct force or violence.

Our predominant focus is on sexual coercion in relation to gay and bisexual men and takatāpui tāne. While some of the issues raised are specific to these groups, many are also relevant to other men who have sex with men (who do not identify as gay or bisexual or takatāpui tāne). We highlight both the specificities, and the generalities, of sexual coercion, throughout.

Summary of existing literature

Existing literature on sexual coercion and men who have sex with men is limited, with a range of different foci, most notably around prevalence and effects. Qualitative research on the topic is almost non-existent, although a limited number of authors have begun to discuss gay and bisexual men’s experiences of forced, coerced, or unwanted sex, in the context of research on related issues (e.g., Flowers, Smith, Sheeran & Beail, 1998; Mutchler, 2000, 2002; Ridge, 2004).

Estimates of the prevalence of sexual assault and coercion experienced by men who have sex with men vary considerably, depending on definitions of ‘force’ and/or ‘coercion’, the type of sexual activity measured, the age range investigated, and sampling and recruitment strategies.²

¹ We have, however, identified three promotions run by the New Zealand AIDS Foundation (New Zealand AIDS Foundation, n.d., 2005, 2006) that have addressed issues of coercive and pressured sex. These will be discussed in relation to the relevant findings.

² Of the limited research that exists in this area, it is notable that very few studies collect data on ethnicity, or comment on how men’s ethnic identities relate to their experiences of sexual coercion.

International research shows that between 14% and 51% of men who have sex with men report having experienced some form of sexual coercion (see Table 1 for a summary of relevant studies).

Sexual assault is one form of sexual coercion. The impacts of sexual assault for men who have sex with men include various states of psychological distress: shock, fear, anger, shame, guilt, embarrassment, confusion, depression, suicidal ideation, and post-traumatic stress disorder (Groth & Burgess, 1980; Kalichman et al., 2001; King & Woollett, 1997; Mezey & King, 1989; Myers, 1989; Ratner et al., 2003; Scarce, 1997; de Visser, Smith, Rissel, Richters, & Grulich, 2003; Walker, Archer & Davies, 2005). They also include physical impacts such as anal mucosal damage, resulting in perforated rectums, proctitis and rectal bleeding (Hillman, O'Mara, Taylor-Robinson & Harris, 1990; Hillman, Tomlinson, McMillan, French & Harris, 1990).

All forms of sexual coercion (including, but not limited to, sexual assault) have serious implications for sexual health. Some studies show high rates of coerced (*and* unprotected) anal intercourse (Freedner, Freed, Yang, & Austin, 2002; Hickson, Davies, Hunt, Weatherburn, McManus, & Coxon, 1994; Kalichman et al., 2001; Kalichman & Rompa, 1995; Krahé, Schütze, Fritsche, & Waizenhöfer, 2000), making the transmission of sexually transmitted infections, and HIV in particular, a critical consideration.

There is no New Zealand research on sexual coercion among men who have sex with men. Major surveys relating to sex between men, such as Male Call (Reid et al., 1997; Worth, Reid, Saxton, Hughes & Segedin, 1997), and the Gay Auckland Periodic Sex Survey (GAPSS) (e.g., Saxton, Dickson & Hughes, 2004; Saxton, Dickson, Hughes & Paul, 2002), have not directly asked about unwanted, coerced, or forced sex.

The risk that sexual coercion can pose for young gay and bisexual youth in Aotearoa/New Zealand was made apparent in John Fenaughty's previous research on suicide risk and resiliency for young gay and bisexual men (Fenaughty, 2000), where 14.5% of survey participants (n=27) reported at least one experience of sexual coercion (defined as being forced, blackmailed, tricked or pressured into sexual contact in the community – i.e., outside school or home). Participants who reported community-located sexual coercion were more likely to have reported at least one suicide attempt than those who did not report such sexual coercion.

The limited research on sexual coercion among gay, bisexual and other men who have sex with men indicates that sex between men often falls short of the Ministry of Health's (2001) aims that sexual behaviour be "free from discrimination, coercion, and violence" (p. 8). Further, experiences of sexual coercion have the potential to result in a wide range of psychosocial, and physical and sexual health problems. This suggests an urgent need to address the topic.

This project is the first to explore issues related to understanding and preventing sexual coercion among gay and bisexual men in Aotearoa/New Zealand, and the first study internationally to provide an in-depth, qualitative examination of the area. Through its methodology, and engagement with gay and bisexual men, and with key informants in general, it offers knowledge and critical insights that should be useful in informing social and public health policy and health promotion initiatives in the area.

Table 1: Research addressing prevalence of sexual coercion among men who have sex with men

Author/s (date)	Country	Recruitment/Participants	Findings
Hickson et al. (1994)	United Kingdom	930 men recruited from gay bars, clubs, social and political organisations, a postal questionnaire in gay press, and snowballing.	247 (26.6%) reported having been “sexually molested or raped, that is, subjected to sex without [their] consent” (p. 285) by other men. 65.4% of those assaulted when over 21 were assaulted by regular or casual partners. 99 (45.2%) of the ‘victims’ experienced forced anal penetration and 5% experienced attempted anal penetration.
Kalichman & Rompa (1995)	United States	196 ‘homosexually active’ men recruited from bars, businesses, STI clinics and newspapers serving gay men.	57 (29%) reported at least one of seven types of sexual coercion; 92% of these ‘victims’ reported unprotected anal intercourse.
Strathdee et al. (1998) ³	Canada	439 HIV-negative gay and bisexual identified men (or men who have sex with men [MSM]) aged 19-30 recruited through GPs, health clinics and community outreach.	64 (14%) reported non-consensual sex that occurred over the age of 18.
Coxell et al. (1999)	United Kingdom	78 men who identified as gay, bisexual, or heterosexual but sometimes having sex with men, from a total sample of 2,474 men recruited through GP clinics.	40 MSM (51%) reported non-consensual sex with men; 7/78 (9%) reported rape.
Coxell et al. (2000)	United Kingdom	50 men who reported having sex with men, and identified as either gay, sexual, or ‘straight’, from a total sample of 224 men recruited through a sexual health clinic.	19 (38%) of the MSM reported adult sexual molestation (over the age of 16). ⁴
Krahé et al. (2000)	Germany	310 men recruited from social clubs frequented by gay men, gay events, and gay youth groups.	141 (45.5%) reported sexual assault (not including childhood sexual abuse or relationships with clear power differentials [e.g. teacher-pupil]) where a man had made them have sex with him against their will by using physical force or threatening to do so, exploiting the fact they could not resist (e.g., after too much alcohol or drugs) or used verbal pressure. 29.7% of the participants experienced unwanted anal sex.

³ Strathdee et al. (1998) and Ratner et al. (2003) report data from an ongoing project – The Vanguard Project – started in May 1995, which examined HIV rates and risk factors among gay, bisexual and other men who have sex with men aged 19-30, in greater Vancouver (Ratner et al., 2003). Strathdee et al. analyse data from May 1995-October 1997, and Ratner et al. analyse data from January 1998-January 2000 (see also Heath et al., 1999).

⁴ The authors noted that “men attending GUM [sexual health] clinics are more likely than other men to give a history of sexual molestation” (p. 574).

Author/s (date)	Country	Recruitment/Participants	Findings
Valleroy et al. (2000)	United States	3,449 urban 15-22 year old MSM recruited from street locations, dance clubs, businesses, social organisations, bath houses, health clubs, parks, and beaches.	1,203 (34.9%) reported forced sexual contact, as defined by the participant.
Kalichman et al. (2001)	United States	595 men recruited from a gay pride festival in Atlanta.	121 (20.3%) reported having been over 16 and having "had anal intercourse even though [they] didn't want to because a man [...] threatened to leave [them] [...] threatened to use physical force [...] used force or pressure" (pp. 2-3).
Freedner et al. (2002)	United States	122 gay and bisexual men recruited from a gay, lesbian and bisexual youth rally.	28 (23.0%) answered yes when asked "has a date or partner ever hurt you sexually or made you do something sexual that you did not want to?" (p. 470). 52.9% of 'victims' experienced forced anal penetration. 7.8% were forced to anally penetrate the perpetrator.
Beck et al. (2003)	United Kingdom	122 men recruited through a weekly gay men's sexual health clinic for a study on psychosocial predictors of HIV/STI risk behaviours.	32 (26%) reported experiences of non-consensual sex. "For 23 (71.9%), the episode involved penetration, and for 22 (68.8%), episodes involved a threat of violence" (p. 144).
Ratner et al. (2003) ³	Canada	385 HIV-negative gay and bisexual identified men (or MSM) aged 19-30 recruited through GPs, medial centres, and community outreach.	51 (14.2%) reported experiencing non-consensual sex after the age of 14, where non-consensual sex was "any type of sexual activity that [they] were forced or coerced into against [their] will, including childhood sexual abuse, molestation, rape, and sexual assault" (p. 68).
Balsam et al. (2005)	United States	226 gay men from a total sample of 1,245 men and women recruited through lesbian, gay and bisexual periodicals, websites, and listservs, and from the siblings of those who responded to recruitment advertising, for a study on lifetime victimisation.	In relation to adult experiences (over 18 years of age), 28% reported having been coerced into non-intercourse sex, 20.6% reporting having been coerced into intercourse, 15.1% reported attempted rape, and 11.6% reported completed rape.

OUR PROJECT

Data and analyses from two projects⁵ on sexual coercion among gay and bisexual men are discussed in this report:

1. The broader project, which was conceptualised and conducted by John Fenaughty, Dr Virginia Braun and Dr Nicola Gavey.
2. The Kaupapa Māori project, which was conceptualised and conducted by Dr Clive Aspin and Dr Paul Reynolds.

Consistent with commitments to the Treaty of Waitangi, and principles of self-determination in research, this project was a result of a sub-contract with Ngā Pae o te Māramatanga (The National Institute of Research Excellence for Māori Development and Advancement) at The University of Auckland. The purpose of this sub-contract was to fund a Kaupapa Māori project designed specifically to explore and address sexual coercion for takatāpui tāne.⁶

The predominant focus of this report is on the broader project; findings from the Kaupapa Māori project are reported in specific sections, and will be reported more extensively elsewhere.

A word of caution: The ethics and politics of the broader project and research team

We wish to point out the complex issues, and risks, of doing research on such a sensitive topic with an already marginalised community (we discuss these issues further later in the report). Here, we wish to acknowledge our recognition of the risk that reports of negative practices can be taken up and used against an already marginalised community. We have therefore taken every measure to be specific and clear in the claims we make, and avoid pathologisation of gay or bisexual men or their communities.

Issues of research representation and its use are potentially exacerbated by the sexual identities/memberships of the research team, and relate to the politics of who has a right to 'speak on behalf' of marginalised groups (e.g., see Wilkinson & Kitzinger, 1996). The research team for the broader project consisted, originally, of John Fenaughty, a gay man with strong community connections, and Virginia Braun and Nicola Gavey, his doctoral supervisors, both heterosexual women, with backgrounds in research around diverse issues related to sex and sexuality, but no particular connections to gay communities.

Following a significant reduction in John Fenaughty's involvement in the project in mid-2005, a research team of (mostly female) graduate students and researchers was assembled to complete the project, closely supervised by Virginia Braun and Nicola Gavey. One of this team, Johanna Schmidt,⁷ took a key role in co-ordinating and drafting this report. None of this team identified as gay (or lesbian). In addition to John Fenaughty's ongoing involvement, other gay men were also engaged to provide feedback related to issues of representation of gay and bisexual men and their communities. Responsibility for any inadequacies, errors or omissions remains with the original research team.

⁵ We aimed also to sub-contract a Pacific scoping project to explore issues related to sexual coercion for Pacific gay, bisexual and other men who have sex with men. Regrettably, our attempts proved unsuccessful.

⁶ We use the term 'takatāpui tāne' to refer to the men who took part in the Kaupapa Māori study. According to the *Dictionary of the Maori Language* (Williams, 1975), 'takatāpui' has long referred to an "intimate companion of the same sex" (p. 369), and tāne renders the phrase specific to men. Today, the term takatāpui is preferred by increasing numbers of Māori because it acknowledges both the cultural and sexual dimensions of one's identity (Aspin & Hutchings, 2006).

⁷ Johanna brought experience from her PhD research on westernisation, migration, and Samoan fa'afafine (Schmidt, 2002, 2003, 2005).

The broader project

The broader project aimed to explore the phenomena of sexual coercion among men who have sex with men, from experiential, sociocultural, and professional perspectives.

Methodologically, it included three separate phases of data collection:

- Phase One: interviews with key informants working in the areas of sexual health, sexual violence, mental health, sex education, and the gay community.
- Phase Two: interviews with gay and bisexual men who had some experience of coerced or unwanted sex.
- Phase Three: focus groups with gay and bisexual men, who may or may not have had experiences of coerced or unwanted sex.

Ethics approval was obtained from The University of Auckland Human Subjects Ethics Committee. Participants were provided with information sheets which detailed measures designed to protect confidentiality, outlined their rights, and provided practical details relating to their participation. In the case of the Phase Two interviews, particular care was taken to ensure that research contact remained discrete and confidential.

Phase One: Key informant interviews

Twenty-three key informants were interviewed by John Fenaughty or Virginia Braun regarding their understandings about the existence and experience of sexual coercion among gay and bisexual men. Topics covered included the nature and effects of sexual coercion, any implications for health promotion and service provision for men who have sex with men, and the factors thought to play a part in enabling men to force, pressure, and/or have unwanted sex with gay and bisexual men.

Key informants all worked, or had worked, in agencies or institutions based in Auckland or Wellington in Aotearoa/New Zealand (18), Australia (4), or the United Kingdom (1), and represented a diverse range of professional expertise:

- Health Promoter A, New Zealand AIDS Foundation (NZAF)
- Health Promoter B, NZAF
- Researcher, NZAF
- Social Worker, Sexual Abuse Help Foundation
- Therapist, Sexual Abuse Help Foundation
- Education Manager, Rape Crisis
- Youth Education Facilitator, Rape Crisis
- Co-ordinator, Service Assisting Male Survivors of Sexual Assault (Australia)
- Support Worker, Service Assisting Male Survivors of Sexual Assault (Australia)
- Youth Worker A, Rainbow Youth
- Youth Worker B, Rainbow Youth
- Youth Development Manager, Hutt Valley Health Service
- Doctor, Doctors for Sexual Abuse Care
- Sexual Health Doctor/Sexual Assault Clinic Co-ordinator (Australia)
- Sexual Health Nurse, Auckland District Health Board
- Manager, Community organisation dedicated to rape prevention.
- Manager, non-profit gay and lesbian mental health support service
- Psychotherapist (ACC certified)
- Manager, Māori Health Organisation
- Former Police Officer
- Former Prison Nurse (Australia)
- Government and Workplace Sexual Diversity Consultant
- Gay Men's Health Researcher/Academic (UK)

Phase Two: Experiential interviews

Eighteen men were interviewed by John Fenaughty about their personal experiences of sexual coercion.⁸ Men were recruited through word of mouth, snowballing, outreach in community settings, and through advertisements in gay media, at gay community organisations, and at community events. Based on experience researching heterosexual women's experiences of sexual coercion (see Gavey, 2005), we described a broad range of potentially relevant sexual experiences in the advertisements in order to maximise the chances of recruiting men who may have experienced coerced sex, but had not necessarily thought of it as such.

Sixteen of the men identified as gay/homosexual, the other two as bisexual. Eleven were Pākehā (encompassing Pākehā, New Zealander, and European self-identifications), one as Māori, two as Māori/Pākehā, four as of Asian ethnicities, and one as Anglo-European.⁹ All lived in Auckland, Wellington or Christchurch. They were aged 20-54 years, with only two over 40 years old.

The interviews were conducted using a semi-structured approach, with the schedule designed to elicit narratives of men's unwanted sexual experiences, and their impacts, as well as their ideas about the wider contexts of gay male sexuality. The approach in conducting the interviews was to address each of the major areas of interest while allowing scope for the participants to raise and/or elaborate on issues of importance to them. This meant that the emphasis across different interviews varied considerably.

Phase Three: Focus groups

Twenty-two men took part in six focus groups (of 3 to 5 men), moderated by John Fenaughty. Recruitment was similar to that for the individual interviews, although was not targeted specifically at men who identified as having experienced sexual coercion. Advertisements for participation included a brief description of the topics that would be discussed in the focus groups.

Eleven of the men identified as New Zealander/European/Pākehā, one as (part) Māori, three as Asian (including New Zealand born); information on ethnic identity was not provided by the others. The age range for 15 of the men was 23 to 54; information on age was not provided by the others. All lived in Auckland.

Focus groups were designed to generate discussion about how various meanings of sexuality are articulated, negotiated and understood in gay communities, in order to understand the socio-sexual contexts of sexual coercion among gay, bisexual and other men who have sex with men. Topics of discussion included sexual identity and behaviour, stereotypes of gay and bisexual sexuality, intimacy and responsibilities in relationships, cruising and public sex venues, expectations around casual/anonymous sex, the meaning of sex, pressure to have sex, non-consensual sex, and sex work/prostitution.

The moderator ensured that each of the main topics was introduced, but allowed the flow and content of the conversations to be directed by the group.

⁸ In addition to these 18 men, one key informant recounted personal experiences of sexual coercion, and our analysis of men's experiences includes his account. This key informant identified as European and gay.

⁹ This information is provided to give a general indication of the ethnic diversity among the men we interviewed. We have glossed over specific detail of some participants' ethnicities in order not to compromise anonymity. Ethnicity did sometimes appear to inflect the power dynamics experienced by some participants. We have not typically elaborated on this, however – partly because of the risk of compromising anonymity, and partly because we do not possess the appropriate cultural expertise necessary to more fully appreciate the specific and diverse cultural dynamics. The Kaupapa Māori study does discuss relevant specific cultural issues in more detail.

Data management and analysis

All interviews and focus groups were recorded on separate audio cassettes, which were securely stored at The University of Auckland. The tapes were fully transcribed by a third party, under strict confidentiality, and transcripts were kept as password-protected files. Carefully chosen pseudonyms were given to all individual interview and focus group participants. Where they agreed, key informants were identified by their professional roles.

Data were analysed using thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006), an approach that allows the identification of key patterns in responses across participants' accounts. We were interested in the explicit content – the meanings, experiences - of what men said; we were also interested in the implicit or underlying assumptions that informed the experiences and ideas participants reported.

Kaupapa Māori project

Five Māori men were interviewed about their experiences of sexual coercion as part of the Kaupapa Māori project. These men were recruited through the networks of the researchers and interviewers, themselves takatāpui tāne. Interviews were conducted either in person or, in one case, over the telephone. All interviews were tape-recorded and transcribed, with the exception of the telephone interview, for which extensive notes were taken.

The men interviewed ranged in age from 24 to over 50. Interviews were structured to elicit information about the men's experiences of coerced or unwanted sex, their reactions to these experiences, and whether they reported or disclosed the incidents, as well as their understandings about why these particular incidents occurred, and the wider context in which gay and bisexual men experience sexual coercion. There was a particular focus on how sexual coercion is experienced by Māori men, and on how it relates to aspects of Māori culture, and on the impacts of sexual coercion.¹⁰ The approach in the interviews was to ensure that the areas of interest were raised, while allowing participants to have the opportunity to discuss aspects that were of particular concern or importance to them.

In addition to these five interviews, the Kaupapa Māori project also drew upon three interviews conducted with Māori men as part of the broader project.¹¹ These three interviews were not conducted by a Māori interviewer, and had a somewhat different focus. Furthermore, much of the shared cultural knowledge that marked the interviews conducted by Māori men is absent from these three interviews.

¹⁰ The focus of the interviews, and the analyses, for the broader study and the Kaupapa Māori study had some differences. While both studies have been concerned with gay and bisexual men's experiences and understandings of sexual coercion, in both the interviews and analysis conducted as part of the Kaupapa Māori study, there was a greater emphasis on the impacts of sexual coercion. While this was asked about in the broader project's interviews, it was not a significant part of the interviewer's focus, and has not been detailed in subsequent analysis.

¹¹ Interviews with these three men have, therefore, been subject to the analytic gaze of two sets of researchers.

KEY FINDINGS – BROADER PROJECT

Our data demonstrated a wide range of experiences of sexual coercion. Many of these were isolated events that occurred in the context of one-off sexual (or non-sexual) situations (see Table 2 for a summary of these). Others occurred within the context of an ongoing (sexual) relationship (see Table 3 for a summary of these). The tables are designed to provide an easy reference to the range of experiences and contexts these particular men discussed. We must emphasise that these tables (and Table 4) should not be read as indicative of the entire range of these men's experiences or, indeed, of the comparative frequency of particular types of experiences of sexual coercion among gay and bisexual men. This was an in-depth, exploratory, qualitative study of *some* men's experiences, in which men told their own stories. As men could choose what they did and did not discuss, these reported experiences may not cover the full range of experiences these men themselves have had.

Across the diversity of reported experiences, the data revealed a number of repeated patterns and raised a range of general issues (many of which overlapped with each other), which we address across the remainder of this Key Findings section.

Experience, age and power differences

Youth and inexperience (typically combined) were frequently identified as 'risky'. For instance, some Phase Three focus group participants commented:

Zane: now we're getting into the um non-consensual sex

Charles: um I think that quite often boils down to maturity, when I was, when I was young, first came out I found it very difficult to say *no* to people, and got myself,

Zane: you *do* don't you?

Charles: and got myself into situations where I didn't *know* how to say no, um, or did things that I really didn't *want* to do (Focus Group 1)

Although these men locate the responsibility for unwanted or non-consensual sex with themselves, other men talked of the potential for exploitation by others. In research on the associations between the 'sexual debut' of young gay men and their ability to negotiate safer sex, Flowers et al. (1998) suggested that newly out men lack experience with gay cultures and gay sexuality, which renders them vulnerable to exploitation by older and more experienced gay men (see also Mutchler, 2000). One Phase Two participant commented on how this power imbalance can play out in interactions between newly out and more experienced gay men:

[There are] issues of people who are newly out and needing to feel comfortable in the community being exploited by someone, who may or may not be older, um, who has been out for a lot longer and is used to the community and takes them [on] a whirlwind tour and then fucks the arse off them and throws them away, that's an abuse of power ... Because you are using a person's sense of discomfort and uncertainty about themselves to exploit it for sexual gain, that's why it's an abuse of power. If you're sure of your own sexual situation and someone else is not, and you use your comfort with the situation to operate like a Svengali, then that's abuse. (Manu)

Being coerced, pressured, or forced into sex while young and inexperienced was a recurring theme. Seven Phase Two participants spoke of being manoeuvred into having unwanted sex by men who were both older and more experienced than they were. Another two described relationships they entered into within which their lack of knowledge about gay sexuality and relationships left them vulnerable to sexual coercion. In both casual and relationship contexts, participants described going along with the other man's suggestions or desires because they assumed that 'this was what gay men did', or they felt in a position of considerable disadvantage because of their relative youth and/or inexperience.

For men who are already marginalised because of their sexuality, and especially for those who are young and still in the process of coming out, the desire to gain the approval of men who are

already established members of gay communities may well be strong (Flowers et al., 1998). In this context, the ability of young men to refuse unwanted sex could be particularly compromised. Phil described a period in his life when he was young and new to the gay scene, when his enthusiastic friendliness was often taken for sexual interest, especially by older men. He attributed his difficulties in refusing sex in these situations in part to feeling unable to tell his “elders” what to do:

And being young, I didn't know how to say no to people, and I think it was along the lines of not wanting to offend them, so it was easier to just let the situation evolve the way they wanted it, reach a finish, and get the hell out of there, and then hopefully never ever see that person again. (Phil)

Greg described how he was coerced into having unprotected anal intercourse in a casual encounter by a man ten years older than he was. The older man clearly used the age difference to his advantage:

He said ‘I'm not gonna treat you like a kid or anything, just because you want to use [condoms].’ You know, and it was very, very clever, subtle psychological thing but I didn't kind of realise 'til later, was by applying, ‘Oh, I wouldn't treat you like a kid, if you want to use it’, that by using condoms, I would feel like, you know, a kid ... it hadn't even occurred to me that I would be treated, you know, or *considered* that I, I was being a child by wanting to use them. (Greg)

For some men, being young and seeking both experience and knowledge of same-sex sexuality rendered them vulnerable to sexual coercion or pressure by older men. Kyle talked of how, when he was young and in the process of coming out, he visited an older gay man who repeatedly made unwanted sexual advances. Despite this, Kyle continued visiting the older man because he had an extensive collection of gay pornography, which allowed Kyle access to some representations of gay male sexuality. On one occasion, the older man performed oral sex on him. Although Kyle communicated his reluctance, both verbally and physically, during the act, the older man did not stop, but simply asked him what was wrong. Forced into a position where he would have to be even more explicit about not wanting the sex, the inexperienced Kyle lacked the confidence to be more insistent, and actually felt obligated to then show *more* enthusiasm.

The power differential that appeared to facilitate sexual coercion in the encounters between younger, less experienced men and older, more experienced men was even more marked in the contexts of ongoing relationships. Once in such relationships some younger men were, over a period of time, coerced into types of sex they were not comfortable with, assuming that the sex they were expected to engage in was ‘normal’ in gay communities. For example, Rob described how his partner, B, coerced him into unwanted and unprotected anal intercourse in the context of a relationship that was marked by B controlling virtually every aspect of Rob's life. “I sort of thought that's how a relationship works. When you're in that situation, you don't even realise that there are other ways of living.”

We want to be clear that, in highlighting the potential vulnerability of young and inexperienced men to coercion and exploitation by older men, we in no way wish to imply that older, experienced gay men are predisposed toward predatory intergenerational sex. For example, some younger gay men have expressed a preference for older men as sexual partners, seeing these older men as potential ‘mentors’ (Adam, 2000). However, there can be a power imbalance in sexual encounters between young, inexperienced and older, more experienced men, which leaves younger men potentially vulnerable to participating in unwanted sex, even in the absence of conscious exploitation by the older men.¹²

One way to counterbalance this could be through the promotion of an ethic of ‘care’ and/or ‘mutual responsibility’, where the experience of the sexual partner is always being considered, even in casual sexual encounters:

¹² This may also work in the reverse, that an older man may feel pressure to perform sexually to please a younger partner. However, that dynamic was not discussed by our participants.

Table 2: Experiences of coerced sex outside relationships (broader study)¹³

	Man	Age	Age of other man	Relationship to other man	Brief description	Physical force	Sexual act	Condom	Alcohol /Drugs
1.	Manu 54, Māori/ Pākehā	17	NR	Strangers – fellow inmates	Gang rape in jail.	Extreme	AI, receptive	No	NR
2.	Manu	31	NR	Strangers	Home invasion.	Extreme	AI, receptive	No	NR
3.	Oliver 27, Māori/ Pākehā	31	NR	Internet contact – 4-5 sexual encounters	Other man attempted unsafe sex – Oliver introduced condom. At next encounter, other man again attempted unsafe sex – condom could not be located, encounter terminated.	No	Attempted AI, receptive, unprotected	Yes/not relevant	NR
4.	Guy 29, Pākehā	29	22	Close friend	Consensual but unwanted sex with friend while drunk (he normally had no desire for sex with him), after long period of friend attempting to form ‘romantic’ relationship, which Guy had clearly indicated he was not interested in.	No	Not specified	NR	Alcohol
5.	Kyle 24, Pākehā	19/20	Much older	Acquaintance	Newly out, visited much older man to watch pornography, coerced into sex after a few visits.	No	Oral sex, received	Not relevant ¹⁴	No
6.	Tama 37, Māori	21	NR	Stranger (met in gay bar)	Went home with stranger, explained he was not interested in AI but then physically immobilised during consensual sexual activity and AI attempted. Not successful.	Physically immobilised by position	Attempted AI, receptive	No	NR
7.	Tama	18	NR (probably older)	Employer (casual position)	One evening employer commenced sex without any prior discussion, catching Tama by surprise from behind.	No	AI, receptive	NR	Alcohol

¹³ NR means not reported. AI refers to anal intercourse.

¹⁴ In designating ‘not relevant’ in this column, we are treating condoms as ‘standard’ safer sex practice for anal intercourse, but not oral sex.

	Man	Age	Age of other man	Relationship to other man	Brief description	Physical force	Sexual act	Condom	Alcohol /Drugs
8.	Seb 31, Anglo-Euro	21	Older, more experienced	Stranger (met in gay bar)	Went home with stranger, explained he was not interested in anal intercourse but then physically immobilised during consensual sexual activity and anal intercourse attempted. Not successful.	Physically immobilised during consensual sex	Attempted AI, receptive	No	Alcohol
9.	Seb	NR	65-70	Hosts, met via the Internet	Stayed with couple in US while travelling, engaged in unwanted sex in return for hospitality.	No	NR	NR	"A couple of drinks."
10.	Ben 27, Pākehā	19	27	Flatmate (not known for long)	Continually flirted but Ben not interested, flatmate plied Ben with alcohol and had sex with him.	Not relevant	"Everything but" AI	Not relevant	Alcohol
11.	Don 39, Pākehā	NR	NR	Internet contact	Not attracted to other man on meeting, but still had consensual but unwanted sex.	No	Oral sex, received	Not relevant	Some alcohol
12.	Don	NR	NR	Internet contact	Not attracted to other man on meeting, but still had consensual but unwanted sex.	No	Oral sex, received and performed	Not relevant	NR
13.	Sanjay 23, Asian	19	36	Internet contact	Not attracted to other man on meeting, but coerced into unwanted sex.	No	Oral sex, performed	Not relevant	NR
14.	Sanjay	NR	NR	Internet contact	Payment for expensive dinner by other man made contingent on Sanjay having sex with him.	No	Not specified, but not AI	Not relevant	NR
15.	Sanjay	20-21	2 years older	Stranger (met in gay bar)	Coerced into unwanted AI by 'extremely attractive man' but lost consciousness early in act. AI abandoned, coerced into digital anal self-penetration while other man masturbated.	No	Attempted AI, receptive; digital anal self-penetration	Yes for AI, no for other	NR
16.	Sanjay	NR	40-50	Internet contact	Taken some distance to other man's house. Other man drank too much to drive Sanjay home, had to share a bed, 'gave in' to unwanted sex.	No	NR but not AI	NR	Alcohol
17.	Sanjay	Early 20s	40s	Internet contact	Sanjay in financial difficulty, other man agreed to have sex for money, but did not pay once sex completed.	No	Refused AI; oral sex, performed	Not relevant	No

	Man	Age	Age of other man	Relationship to other man	Brief description	Physical force	Sexual act	Condom	Alcohol /Drugs
18.	Sanjay	23	68	Acquaintance (flatmate of ex-boyfriend)	Sanjay staying with ex-boyfriend, had to share bed with his older flatmate, woke to find him 'touching' him, and on final night performing oral sex.	No	Unwanted genital touching; oral sex, received	Not relevant	No
19.	Phil 36, Pākehā	21	10-15 years older.	Strangers (met in bars etc)	Numerous incidents of unwanted sex with men met in bars etc because unable to refuse.	No	NR	NR	NR , probably alcohol
20.	Justin 34, Pākehā	21	NR	Stranger (met in gay bar)	During consensual sexual activity other man put bottle of amyl nitrate under Justin's nose and then penetrated him anally.	Not relevant	AI, receptive	No	Alcohol, amyl nitrate
21.	Josh 44, Pākehā	21	Early 40s	Acquaintance (not well known to Josh, met in gay bar)	Older man offered Josh lift home, went via his place. Josh was given a drugged drink and lost consciousness. Awoke to find other man penetrating him anally. Pushed other man off and ran out of house.	Not relevant	AI, receptive	NR	'Date rape drugs'
22.	Darren 29, NZ-born Asian	NR	NR	Stranger (sex-on-site venue patron)	First encounter at sex-on-site venue – not attracted to other man, but did not want to disappoint him, and concerned would have no other opportunity for sex that night.	No	Refused AI; oral sex, received	Not relevant	NR
23.	Greg 23, Pākehā	NR	NR	Internet contacts	Numerous incidents not being attracted to men on face-to-face meeting, but had sex out of a sense of obligation.	No	Unknown, but never AI	Not relevant	NR
24.	Greg	23	33	Internet contact	Other man declared interested in barebacking on-line. Greg sure he could convince him to use condoms, but coerced into unprotected AI.	No	AI, receptive and penetrative	No	NR
25.	Gerald 45, Pākehā	Early 20s	NR	Stranger (fellow sauna patron)	Inebriated, lost consciousness in sauna, woke to find another man anally penetrating him.	Not relevant	AI, receptive	No (prior to public awareness of HIV risks)	Alcohol

Table 3: Experiences of coerced sex within relationships (broader study)¹⁵

	Man	Age	Age of partner	Length of relationship	Brief description	Physical force	Sexual act	Condom	Drugs/ Alcohol
1.	Marco 20, NZ Asian	20	29	18 months	Unwanted frequent and 'rough' sex.	No	'Rough' sex; AI, receptive	NR	NR
2.	Sean 23, Pākehā	22	NR	2 months	At initial encounter, partner insisted on more sex than Sean wanted. During relationship, coerced Sean into repeated unprotected AI.	Physically immobilised Sean in first encounter	AI, receptive	No	No
3.	Jai 31, Asian	28	48	6 months	Unwanted sex for fear of losing boyfriend – sex unwanted because it was 'functional' rather than 'romantic'.	No	Oral sex, performed; masturbated partner	NR	NR
4.	Tama 37, Māori	NR	NR	NR	Sex in relationship a 'duty' that had to be scheduled into a busy life.	No	Not specified	NR	NR
5.	Phil 36, Pākehā	NR	NR	"Years"	Partner interested in bondage and discipline (B&D), Phil not interested, although engaged in B&D briefly. Partner then engaged in virtual sex; had sex with Phil in ways that lead Phil to feel belittled.	No	Not specified	NR	NR
6.	Rob 39, Pākehā	26	Mid-30s	4½ years	After relationship commenced, partner coerced Rob into AI. Refused to use condoms, or allow Rob to penetrate him.	No	AI, receptive	No	NR
7.	Josh 44, Pākehā	40s	29	NR	Engaged in more frequent sex than desired so as to avoid offending partner.	No	Not specified	NR	NR

¹⁵ NR means not reported. AI refers to anal intercourse.

If I sense, if I receive the perception that one of my partners, is not comfortable with where things are heading, then it will stop again, because I think as a mature-ish gay man, having sex with one or more partners at the same time, it is our duty to foster that, especially if they're younger, or especially if they're less experienced. (Aaron, Focus Group 1)

One key informant expressed this through the notion that sex is a “dyadic” act, where we should take responsibility not just for our own wellbeing, but that of the other:

This is a dyadic act, you've got to think of the interests of the other person as well, and if you're actually going ahead with something which you know is not going to be in the other person's interests, objectively, and, and don't give me this bullshit about well it's all subjective, it's completely wrong for you to go ahead with something knowing that the other person is probably not wanting it to happen, and I think really it's complicated though by the issues of drugs and alcohol. If a receptive partner is drunk, and not wanting something to go ahead, what's their ability to say no? I mean maybe people should say well they shouldn't get themselves in that situation in the first place, but that's sort of unacceptable, I think there should still be a responsibility of the person, the other actor in a sexual situation to take responsibility and come to some sort of objective assessment of whether something isn't in the best interests of the other person. (Researcher, NZAF)

Relationships to perpetrators

The ‘classic rape’ scenario, in which the victim is assaulted by an unknown stranger, who often uses extreme force or threats of force, was not the predominant form of sexual coercion discussed by the men in our project.¹⁶

Unknown men

In the two cases of violent rape (both reported by Manu), the perpetrators were strangers to Manu, and their sexual identities were not known. Many other cases of sexual coercion that occurred with unknown men happened with men met at gay venues – bars, saunas, sex-on-site venues. Apart from Gerald's experience of losing consciousness in a sauna when inebriated and waking to find another man engaging in penetrative anal intercourse with him, all other incidents with men met in these locations occurred in the context of sexual activity that started out consensually. The unwanted nature of the experience was not *sex per se*, but the *particular* sexual act or the way it was enacted. While in some cases there was little discussion of sexual preferences, in others participants were quite clear in expressing that they did not want to engage in certain acts (e.g., anal intercourse), but the other man still went ahead, or attempted to go ahead, with it.

Many of the key informants spoke of a ‘gay culture’ in Aotearoa/New Zealand that follows different rules from, and tends to be more sexualised than, wider (heteronormative) society. For instance, one key informant suggested that almost all the spaces in which gay men socialise with other gay men tend to be sexualised:

Most of our social situations, or our social opportunities to meet other gay men are sexualised events, so they're in bars, or saunas and things like that, they're really sexualised, so there's that sort of tacit expectation that if you're in that venue, then you agree to the sort of behaviours that are acceptable in that venue. (Researcher, NZAF)

Others noted that in locations like sex-on-site venues, some men may believe that any other men present have ‘automatically’ consented to any sexual contact. As one key informant put it, the attitude of some men was that refusing sex in a sex-on-site venue was “like going swimming

¹⁶ We note that only around 10% of all rapes reported by women are perpetrated by strangers (Gavey, 2005).

and saying you don't want to get wet" (Health Promoter A, NZAF). In these contexts, it seems likely that the ability of men to negotiate sex would at times be compromised, especially if they were young and/or not experienced with the conventions of the particular venue.¹⁷

Consequently, key informants suggested there are relatively few socio-cultural spaces in which gay men can gain experience (not *just* sexual), and general 'cultural currency', which may be necessary for negotiating sexual safety – particularly with men they do not know.

Internet contacts

Men in this research described the Internet as a common vehicle for gay men in Aotearoa/New Zealand to arrange casual sexual encounters, as it is elsewhere (Davis et al., 2006; Hospers et al., 2005; Henrickson, Neville, Jordan & Donaghey, in press). However, arranging sex on-line appeared to present a particular set of dilemmas. Some key informants noted that, as a relatively new means of contacting other gay men, norms around Internet use had yet to be established.¹⁸

The ways in which the Internet facilitates rapid communication and contact was identified by some as potentially problematic:

Although I understand that there's a lot of information about how to keep yourself safe, and young people seem to be onto it and that, but again, take it to the extreme where you get a vulnerable young person who is just really desperate to meet someone. Then the Internet does become unsafe because what is represented on the screen may not be right in the actual present, and it could be easy for a young person to really get lulled into a false sense of security and therefore put themselves into dangerous situations. (Youth Worker)

Two men in Phase Two (Sanjay and Greg) spoke of incidents in which their physical safety may have been compromised in situations with men they had contacted through the Internet. More men who used the Internet for contacting casual sexual partners spoke of not being attracted to a man when they met him 'in the flesh'. Some were able to avoid sex with these prospective partners; others talked about how a sense of obligation to provide some sort of sex for the other person had resulted in them having sex with men they were not attracted to. This sense of obligation was sometimes directly encouraged by the other man:

And so he came along and he came from like the end of south Auckland or something and he said he wanted to have sex and stuff and I just didn't know how to say, in a nice way, that I wasn't attracted to him so I kind of said, 'Well I haven't had any experience and I just feel uneasy doing this'. Like I thought it would be a nice way of saying no, but he kind of made me feel guilty, like he said, 'Well I came all the way from like so far away and you can't really turn me down, you can't make me go away, like it's kind of unfair on me' and things. [...] so I kind of said, thought 'Okay, I'll just do it this one time and then forget about it'. (Sanjay)

Other men's accounts echoed Sanjay's suggestion that meeting a man contacted through the Internet seemed to be considered by some as a form of 'contract'.¹⁹ Therefore, not only is declining sex at the point of meeting likely to be difficult because of the risk of offending the other man, but it seems that for some, it would imply withdrawing consent that has already

¹⁷ The NZAF's (n.d.) promotion *Loved up: A guide for venue virgins* specifically addresses this issue in the promotion's booklet section 'A kiss is not a contract'.

¹⁸ We raise questions about the role of norms later in this report.

¹⁹ The possibility of interpreting the meeting of Internet contacts as a 'contract' with the condition of sexual activity is raised in the NZAF's 'Men seeking men' website (www.menseekingmen.co.nz), in which it is stated that men are not obliged to do anything they don't want to when they meet Internet contacts, reinforced by the statement "you don't owe anyone sex" (New Zealand AIDS Foundation, 2006). While issues around safety and obligation are also addressed on the NZ Dating (2006) website, similar information does not appear to be present on dating websites that are specifically designed for men who have sex with men.

implicitly been given, in effect breaching a contract. Again, this was an issue identified in particular by younger men, who often lacked the confidence to assert their own wishes over those of men who were maybe older, or more experienced in negotiating Internet contacts.

Casual partners, friends and acquaintances

Some men described being coerced or pressured into sex by men they had known for some time, either as friends or acquaintances. Many of these incidents were marked by the use of drugs and/or alcohol. In some cases, this was a deliberate strategy to render the man inebriated and less able/unable to resist (see Alcohol and Drugs section for more discussion).

Relationships

Three of the Phase Two participants who discussed unwanted sex in the context of relationships (see Table 3) spoke of how their partners appeared to have an expectation that within a relationship, sex was a virtual entitlement or obligation. They described being subjected to various forms of 'emotional blackmail' to ensure their acquiescence to sex (see Gavey, 2005, for accounts of similar dynamics by heterosexual women). While these men reported that they desired 'romantic sex' (sex that was an expression of intimacy), their boyfriends reportedly saw relationships as contexts in which they should have an unfettered right to sex that was often mechanical, or even rough. Marco described an eighteen-month long relationship, in which his older boyfriend desired sex much more frequently than he did. He reported that his boyfriend would say things like "you're my boyfriend, you should understand me", and "if you love me, you'll do anything for me", to pressure Marco into having sex. Marco gave in to these demands, stating that "because of your relationship to him ... you feel obliged, you know, you must do this because, you know, you have a relationship ...".

In comparison to experiences of sexual coercion and unwanted sex within casual sexual encounters, participants indicated that in relationships existing power dynamics and strong emotional links worked to enhance their sense of obligation. In some of these situations, participants implied that requesting a condom be used, or expressing a preference for or against particular sexual activities, might jeopardise the relationship in some way. Jai described a relationship in which he wanted romantic sex, while his boyfriend wanted *regular* sex. He felt that by insisting his desires be prioritised he would risk losing the relationship. Jai explained that while he was mostly able to make excuses so that he could avoid unwanted sex, he would either masturbate or perform oral sex on his partner when this was not possible – activities which Jai felt allowed him to sexually satisfy his partner without having to get fully 'involved'.

Sexual acts

In cases in which participants engaged in unwanted sex out of a sense of obligation, they most commonly engaged in oral sex (performing or receiving). Where participants were forced or more directly coerced into sex (or specific sexual acts), it more commonly involved anal intercourse. The aspects of anal intercourse that were unwanted varied: in some cases, participants simply wanted *no* anal intercourse; in others, they were happy or willing to have protected anal intercourse, but their partner did not want to use a condom; and in others still, it was the way the anal intercourse was performed that made it unwanted. In some of these cases, it was the participant's first experience of anal intercourse. Some participants reported that the attempts made to penetrate them anally were unsuccessful.

In all but one instance of unwanted anal intercourse, the participants were in a receptive position. Greg, however, described an encounter with an older, more experienced man he met through the Internet, in which he was coerced into not using a condom during both receptive *and* penetrative anal intercourse.

Physical force

Most of the experiences of sexual coercion that men discussed were not marked by physical force. The most extensive use of physical force was reported by Manu in relation to two attacks by strangers – one in jail, the other during a home invasion. The other three instances where some degree of physical force was used were reported by Tama, Sean, and Seb. In all cases, they were initially engaged in consensual sexual activity and were in positions in which they could be easily physically overpowered. Tama was already engaged in consensual anal intercourse.

When we first started off we were in unison, we were together and I like that, kind of having an intimacy, which is good and then it, it changed and that was more, I think, to carry out his own personal fantasies, you know, and then I thought that that was probably a form of rape to me. [...] I said, 'Stop' and he kept going, so I thought that in order for him to get me he [...] to a certain stage where it was, like, pretty tough to get out of and then, yeah, I had to see it through until, and it was to meet his needs, it wasn't to meet mine or ours. [...] I felt violated by that ... and pissed off actually [about] the fact that he [...] he changed it, the atmosphere and, and the whole scene to where I was feeling unsafe and felt, you know, not comfortable, and he knew that but he still continued because he just wanted to drop his load and just get off. (Tama)

Seb was immobilised by a man who was older and bigger than him while engaged in consensual sexual activity, at which point the other man attempted to penetrate Seb anally, in spite of Seb's earlier statement that he was not interested in anal intercourse. Sean's experience occurred when he was just 'recovering' from physically strenuous sex, and had refused his partner's request for more sex. The other man then pushed Sean's legs into the air, physically immobilising him, and penetrated him without a condom.

Questions of consent and (non) consensual sex

As these men's accounts indicate, the occurrence of unwanted sexual activities in the contexts of consensual sexual encounters highlight issues of consent:

Consensual sex can suddenly become non-consensual at some point, and that's the difficulty that people sometimes don't comprehend. That they start to go along with it and it's just not working, or someone starts doing something that they're not interested in, and they continue and so suddenly the consent changes. (Former Police Officer)

Another key informant suggested that this was not unique to encounters between men, but also occurred in heterosexual contexts. However, other key informants suggested that the nature of sex between men is relatively 'flexible', compared to heterosexual sex (which tends to be a more rigidly scripted progression towards vaginal intercourse), meaning the 'norms' of gay sex could vary widely between men, and between groups of men (e.g., some men commonly engage in anal intercourse; others never do). This was particularly notable in the stories of Phase Two men interviewed about their own experiences – as noted above, being forced, coerced, or pressured into unwanted anal intercourse was a common form of unwanted sex.

Issues of choice and consent may be a particular problem for young gay men. The relative invisibility of gay sexuality within dominant culture, and the marginalisation of gay men (see section on Silence, Invisibility and Marginalisation), mean that young men may approach their first sexual encounters with other men with little or no sense of how to assert their own wishes while negotiating implicit norms around sex. One key informant suggested that many young men enter the gay community thinking that "part of being gay is having sex" (Former Police Officer). Young men who subscribe to this belief may find it difficult to refuse unwanted sex or negotiate sexual encounters.

Many key informants raised issues related to sexual norms within gay male communities, and particularly identified a lack of knowledge of norms as the problem. It was suggested that young, inexperienced men often lack familiarity with norms, which can lead to them engaging in sexual practices they do not desire, because they assume they are 'normal' for gay men. In that

formulation, knowledge leads to the power to resist coercion to have sex, or have sex in certain ways, and a solution appears to be information, education, and experience. However, we would like to problematise the idea that knowledge of norms necessarily enables men to resist sexual coercion. Critical analyses of heterosex have demonstrated the coercive potential of sexual norms in and of themselves (Gavey, 2005). It has been shown that women's implicit knowledge of norms can function coercively to induce them to engage in undesired sexual activities, because it is 'expected' and 'normal'. The nature of norms is arguably different between heterosexual and gay cultures, in a myriad of ways including the visibility, and flexibility, of norms. However we would caution against a simple interpretation that knowledge of norms is the panacea against sexual coercion. For this to be in any way effective, the dominant or overarching 'norm' would have to be one of diversity that legitimized fluid and flexible possibilities for sexual engagement.

HIV, safer sex and sexual coercion

Most current HIV prevention models aimed at men who have sex with men are based on a number of assumptions (Davies 2002):

- The individual always has control of sexual encounters,
- Sex between men is free of power differentials,
- Sex is always and clearly either wanted or unwanted,
- 'Saying no' will always work if sex is not wanted, and
- Health is the most rational desire or objective, and will always be prioritised above other potential outcomes of sexual encounters.

However, our data suggest that these assumptions do not always hold true. HIV prevention models do accept that men may attempt to coerce or pressure other men into engaging in unsafe sex – for example, the recent *Bullfighter* promotion run by the NZAF (2005) addressed the ways in which men might respond to other men's attempts to convince them to practice unsafe sex. However, our data show that, for various reasons, it is not always possible to convince those who wish to engage in unsafe sex to do otherwise. Seb was physically immobilised and simply unable to resist his assailant's attempts at unprotected anal intercourse. Justin was so affected by the amyl nitrate held under his nose that he too was unable to resist being penetrated anally. Greg was subtly coerced into engaging in both penetrative and receptive anal intercourse with an older, more experienced man, in spite of being sure that he would be able to convince the other man to practice safer sex. Rob was in such a powerless position in his relationship that when his partner said they 'did not need' condoms for anal intercourse, Rob simply capitulated. These experiences indicate that, for a range of reasons, men are simply not always in a position to insist that their partners practice safer sex.

Competing rationalities and desires

HIV prevention models that suggest that men should always act 'rationally' during sexual encounters may also underestimate the importance of emotions such as love and intimacy, which may offer up 'competing rationalities' or desires. A strong theme throughout the data was the notion that men have 'intimacy needs' that compete with, or co-exist with, 'sexual needs' and desires for safer sex. Men interviewed for Phase Two of our project talked about how feelings of love, trust, and the desire for intimacy, could take precedence over their concerns about safer sex. For example, Rob described how when his relationship with B first started they only engaged in mutual masturbation. However, after some time, B suggested that they should become 'more intimate':

And then he said to me, 'I think that our relationship, to go further we should have anal sex, I want to have anal sex with you', and so I thought, 'Oh god, okay this is something that I have to do to please him'. [...] I mean for all I know he could have HIV. But because I loved him and because I'd put all my faith in him and I, I just thought, 'No he wouldn't do anything to me'. (Rob)

However, B refused to use condoms during anal intercourse. Moreover, despite Rob finding receptive anal intercourse extremely painful, B would not allow Rob to take the penetrative role, because *he* said it was too painful. Hence Rob ended up engaging in unprotected (and painful) receptive anal intercourse ‘for love’.

Men also discussed contexts in which the rationality of safer sex competed with sexual pleasure and desire. In situations in which sexual partners attempted to coerce, or did coerce, participants into unprotected anal intercourse, the participant’s own desire for sex sometimes competed with any imperative to practice safer sex. Some, such as Sanjay or Oliver, did negotiate condom use successfully or otherwise terminated encounters in which this was not possible. Yet even for the participants who used condoms, they could be seen as a ‘necessary evil’. In the following quote, Oliver explains how when his partner attempted to have anal intercourse without a condom, it would have been easy not to insist on safer sex, because of his own experience of pleasure at the time:

Oh yeah, there was the temptation, there is like this little devil on your shoulder saying it feels really good... and when he was on me ... he could have just done it, you know ... I was like on top, I mean it was like – I was like ‘Oh my god, it’s like *amazing*’, you know, and I was like ‘I wish I could keep going, I wish I could keep going.’ (Oliver)

Although Oliver insisted in that instance that his partner use a condom, the wish to protect one’s sexual health may have to compete with other desires and immediate pleasures within a sexual encounter.

Our data indicate that other concerns could also compete with an imperative for safer sex. In the incident in which Greg reported being coerced into unprotected anal intercourse by an older man, his account was marked by a conflict between the rationality of safer sex, and his desire to appear mature and to not “cause any friction”. However, he did report a certain rationalisation during his decision-making in this encounter:

He’d said several times on the Internet and also in person that he *really* wanted me to fuck him bareback, and that was what he was basically after, that’s what he’s into [...]. So I kinda felt a lot of pressure to do that, like I kinda thought, I know it’s more dangerous to be fucked unprotected than it is to be the top. So I thought, ‘Ok well, maybe I’ll do this then and I’ll ask him to use a condom and then I’ll feel safer because at least I’ll be more protected and less likely to get something’. (Greg)

This particular rationalisation (top is safer) is one addressed in, for instance, the NZAF (2005) *Bullfighter* campaign, which states “Men who only ever top (do the fucking) get HIV because there is actually more HIV in rectal secretions than in either blood or semen. People once thought that tops were at little risk, but now we know better”. Moreover, despite his concession to an apparently less risky sexual behaviour, he was later also coerced into unprotected receptive anal intercourse.

‘Just say no’?

A recurring theme in Phase Two interviews was the way in which participants described being unable to refuse sex outright, or ‘just say no’. Much of this talk echoed experiences of heterosexual women, and the difficulties they sometimes experience in refusing unwanted sex with heterosexual men (Gavey, 2005). As Kitzinger and Frith (1999; see also O’Byrne, Rapley & Hansen, 2006) have noted, the rhetoric of ‘just say no’, adopted in rape prevention discourses, is actually counter-intuitive and counter-normative. This is because refusals in everyday contexts rarely contain the word ‘no’. In fact, they are rarely very direct at all. Typically, we refuse offers and invitations through hesitant and indirect responses that are likely to contain embedded apologies and excuses.

Sanjay described how saying he did not have any experience of sex with other men and “felt uneasy” about having sex was “a nice way of saying no” to a man he had contacted through the Internet. A number of other participants spoke of trying to find ‘nice’ ways of refusing sex without offending the prospective partner, who was often someone they had just met and were

unlikely to ever see again. In many cases, simply ‘saying no’ as the means of refusing sex did not seem possible. For example, Phil talked of having numerous sexual encounters when he was younger because he “didn’t know how to say no to people”.

The idea that straightforward and outright ‘no’ refusals are the ideal, however, remains. For example, the NZAF (2005) *Bullfighter* campaign suggests that men who say ‘not really’ when they mean ‘no’ are not assertive enough. The literature cited above suggests more emphasis should be placed on encouraging sexually initiating men to interpret hedged ‘not really’ responses as meaning no, rather than on recommending respondents to sexual invitations or initiations learn how to say ‘no’ with that exact word.

Communication and condoms

Many participants appeared to have wholeheartedly adopted the safer-sex message that condom use is something that should always be discussed. However, their ability to do this in situations of coercion varied. In Sanjay’s case, he was successful in convincing his “drop dead gorgeous” partner to use a condom during the unwanted anal intercourse he was coerced into, even though this might have meant the end of the encounter. This belief in the right of the individual to expect their sexual partners to use condoms when asked was also evident in Greg’s account of being coerced into unprotected anal intercourse. Although the older man had been quite clear about his desire to have anal intercourse ‘bareback’ (without condoms), Greg was convinced that safer sex was the only ‘rational’ option, and that he would be able to convince the other man of this.

The guy was into basically unsafe sex, and I kinda knew that, that he was into that but I told myself, ‘Well, you know, I can handle this, and I’ll get him to, to be safe’. And so I thought, ‘Well, it’s his thing, he likes that, but you know, I can say no, I’m not going to do this unless we’re safe’, and I thought I could handle that. (Greg)

Greg was, however, coerced into unprotected anal intercourse. When it came to the point that the other man started to penetrate him anally, Greg found himself unable to voice his objection to the lack of protection: “Just feeling ... just feeling like I couldn’t say it basically, I just felt like I had, I didn’t have any option but to do it.” Despite Greg having communicated his desire to use condoms to the other man before they started having sex, Greg continued to position himself as responsible for the unsafe sex, as he had not been able to continue to articulate his desire to use condoms during the sexual activity itself. At one point in the interview, he suggested that he could have been more ‘forceful’; although he felt unable to issue a clear verbal refusal to this man, he took this inability to do so to mean that the coerced sex was not ‘rape’ (see Gavey, 2005, for parallels in women’s experiences of sexual coercion):

He didn’t rape me because I let him do it, I didn’t say no, you know, and if I really, really, really wanted someone not to do it I would say no, but he didn’t sort of, I didn’t feel like I could say no, basically. I wanted to the whole time and I almost did several times, I was so close to saying, ‘No, let’s do it safe’, and I didn’t, and so that’s why I can’t say he raped me because he didn’t. (Greg)

Drugs and alcohol

The only research to have directly investigated the role of drug and/or alcohol intoxication in sexual assault and coercion among men who have sex with men is Krahe et al.’s (2000) German study, which found 44% of men who reported having experienced sex against their will said that it happened when “a man exploited the fact that you could not resist (e.g., after too much alcohol and drugs)” (p. 150). Krahe et al.’s findings suggest that, if research focused on this issue, it may well indicate that intoxication, and possibly deliberate drugging, are associated with a high proportion of sexual assault and coercion experienced by men who have sex with men.

The use of drugs and, particularly, alcohol was not an explicit focus in our research, so in many instances where the participants and/or the perpetrators of the unwanted sex were likely to have been drinking – for example, where they met in a bar – the role of alcohol (and/or drugs) was not explicitly discussed. However, the use of drugs and alcohol still emerged as a concern in

the research: in instances in which participants specifically stated that they had been drinking, they frequently suggested that their inebriation had made them more susceptible to sexual coercion. For instance, in one of the Phase Three focus groups, Frank recounted his experience one night, when very drunk in a gay club:

I've had a few experiences like that, where I've had too much to drink, mm like um there was [a] guy coming on to me at [club x] when that was open, and I was really drunk and, and I got an AIDS test afterwards because I was so shocked at how it had happened, 'cause I can't even remember if I, oh, don't want to say this but, I can't remember if I even had unprotected anal sex 'cause I, I couldn't remember, I mean this guy had wanted me for ages, he'd been eyeing me up and dancing close to me and I don't know I just kind of gave in I shouldn't have, but I was really pissed, um, yeah, and he kept coming on to me at the back of the club and I didn't like it and I just kept moving away from him and, it was only a one-nighter, I wouldn't, would never go back there (Frank, Focus Group 6)

Three of the Phase Two participants recounted experiences in which they had had sex inflicted upon them subsequent to having been (apparently) deliberately drugged or intoxicated. Justin described an incident that was arguably a form of drug rape. At the time he was young and had not experienced anal intercourse. It was New Year's Eve and he had gone home with a man he met at a gay club:

I'd probably had a bit to drink so I was probably, you know, on top of the world type of thing, and we started having sex, and at that point I hadn't had penetrative sex. And essentially just, what he did was, he basically stuck a bottle of amyl nitrate²⁰ under my nose, which I'd never experienced before, I had no idea what it was, and he basically said, 'Inhale this' and, you know, I, being fairly naïve, I did. Gotta say it sort of sent me off to la la land the first time round, 'cos I took quite a [...] big whiff, and next thing I know, he had entered me and I wasn't into the idea of that, but yeah, that's what happened. (Justin)

Ben described moving into his first flat with an older gay male couple, one of whom, P, made it clear that he was attracted to Ben, and constantly flirted with him. The physical advances eventually reached the point where Ben felt the need to clearly state his lack of interest, but this did not stop P's flirtations. Ben eventually accepted an invitation to go to a bar, where P bought him numerous drinks. On the drive home, P took a detour to a house on the outskirts of the city, saying he had an errand to run. Once there, friends of P's deceived Ben into drinking even more alcohol, telling him a large glass of sambuca was flavoured water. Reeling from inebriation, he was given a bed to sleep in, only to be joined by P shortly thereafter:

And then he got into the bed and then one thing led to another and, you know, he just started groping me and touching me and ... I just had no resistance and I just sort of let it, and I mean, and I'd felt that something like, I mean I'd felt he was trying to make this sort of thing happen over the last several weeks and, I dunno, all my defences were down and I didn't, I just, I mean I didn't exactly respond but I didn't stop him by the same token. (Ben)

Two other men described experiences of sexual coercion in which another man took advantage of their being intoxicated to the extent they were unable effectively to resist the unwanted sex. For Gerald, who described frequently drinking large amounts of alcohol in his youth in order to muster the confidence to approach other men, alcohol use appeared to be linked to his inexperience. He described one occasion in a sauna, where "I was really drunk and I woke up, I'd passed out and I woke up and some guy was fucking me ...".

One of the key informants suggested that some gay men use drugs or alcohol to counter their lack of desire for particular sexual acts:

²⁰ "Amyl nitrate, poppers, or rush is a depressant and muscle relaxant which gives an almost immediate high. ... Most commonly used by gay men during sex to help relax the sphincter muscle ... and gives a short-lived feeling of well-being" (SuperDrewby, n.d.).

I think the fact that a lot of gay men feel that they should take drugs and alcohol in order to bear or put up with [anal sex] is a real pity and a real concern ... it's that at a certain level ... coercion is happening because they sort of feel forced, they feel they should have anal sex, they mightn't want to have anal sex but they feel forced into taking drugs because their partner wants to have anal sex this is I mean... the context of, of casual sex really, of a partner not really knowing... their partner very well and having to negotiate how the sexual interaction happens and using things like drugs and alcohol to mediate things that they don't feel fully in control of. (Researcher, NZAF)

This informant's account raises the issue of norms operating coercively, a point we have already discussed.

Acknowledging, disclosing and reporting sexual coercion

As our society is saturated with myths that minimise and justify sexual violence, and blame victims for their own victimisation (see Gavey, 2005), rape and sexual coercion can be difficult to disclose and report to authorities. The rate at which women report rape to the police remains very low (e.g., see Jordan, 2004). For gay and bisexual men, as well as other men who have sex with men, the difficulties around reporting to authorities are likely to be exacerbated by factors such as institutional heterosexism, which may prevent gay men from reporting all except the most extreme cases of sexual assault (Davies, 2002). Those who do report assaults may, if possible, conceal their sexuality (Hodge & Canter, 1998). None of the Phase Two participants had reported their experiences to the police or any other authorities, and only two, Manu and Josh, had sought medical attention. For Josh (whose experience was relatively recent), the doctor was sympathetic, and encouraged him to report to the police; but for Manu, who was brutally raped during a home invasion in 1981 (before New Zealand's homosexual law reform in 1986), this experience was extremely aversive:

The doctor spent half his time when he was questioning me asking me what I'd done to provoke the attack [laughs]. I was followed home, you know, and he kept saying, 'Oh, you must have done something', and 'Are you sure this isn't a game that got out of control?' And, no, I know the difference between fantasy and forced sex, and I refused to lay a charge. [...] I was at the hospital being examined by the doctor who found sperm inside me, who found a compound fracture of the nose and multiple bruising and a cracked rib [...] who basically decided that it was B&D that got too rough, and he made it really clear that's what he thought, so if I *had* laid a complaint, (a) I was going to be dealing with police prejudice, and (b) I was going to be dealing with them after they were told the doctor's version of what happened. (Manu)

Gay and bisexual men also face difficulties in disclosing their experiences of sexual coercion and assault to others, including friends and family. For some, disclosing may necessitate coming out, and the choice to remain silent about the coercion may be preferable to the identity and relational implications of coming out. Some of the Phase Two participants had not disclosed their experiences to *anyone* prior to the interview.

Tama, who was physically forced to have anal intercourse at a sex-on-site venue, talked about how an expectation that all sex was wanted for gay men made it impossible to consider reporting this incident to the venue's staff:

There was that thought, it was like, 'You bastard'. I was like, you know, who do I go and tell? Do I go and tell the guy who's younger than me at reception [laughter] and he's not gonna do a damn thing you know, like what do you do. Like I said, 'oh this guy just fucked me', he would've gone, 'oh good'. [laughter] But it wasn't a good experience, you know what I mean? (Tama)

The flipside of this account was reiterated in a focus group, by a man who worked in a sex-on-site venue, highlighting some of the other dimensions that work to constrain reporting:

This brings up another, a situation that, that I'd like, this did actually occur, and, and at what point does consent finish? Like um I was working in a sex-on-site

venue, at what point does it start and finish, this young guy came in and said, “I’ve just been...”, pulling his (towel) behind him stark naked, “I’ve just been raped in one of the cubicles, I want you to call the police” and I said to him “you went into a cubicle with some guy, took off your clothes and started getting sexual, and now you’re going to tell the policeman that you were raped, get real”. (Philip, Focus Group 2)

Philip later suggested his dismissal of this man’s claim related to the fact that it would be ‘implausible’ if reported to the police:

When I said you know that, well, “are you going to tell the police this story?” What I meant was, you’re going to ring the police and tell them that you got naked with this guy in the cubicle and you were raped, it doesn’t really sound like a plausible story, the police weren’t going to say “really?” (JF: what makes it sound implausible?) Well you went into a cubicle with the purpose of ah having, presumably with the purpose of having sex. (Philip, Focus Group 2)

Again, this illustrates the limited ways in which sexual consent is often understood.

Seb, who went home from a gay bar with an older man who then forced him to have anal intercourse after physically immobilising him, explained why he did not report the assault to the police, highlighting the more general ways in which the credibility of a report of sexual assault is always under suspicion:

No-one would believe me, you know. Plenty of witnesses saw the two of us together in a gay pub, plenty of witnesses saw us go home in a cab, whatever. [...] No-one’s gonna believe it once the door’s closed, what happened kind of behind closed doors. It would just be his word against my word. I was just a college student and he was a lot older than me so, I just kind of thought, the police are never gonna believe me, what’s the point? (Seb)

Kyle, who was coerced into unwanted anal sex when he was 19 or 20, talked about how he was unable to seek support from his family because he had only just come out. As his parents “didn’t cope too well with the whole coming out thing”, he decided it was not wise to tell them about his subsequent experience of sexual coercion.

A different issue arose in relation to recognising sexual coercion in the first place – to disclose, or report an experience of sexual coercion, it must first be acknowledged. In one key informant’s view, the incidence of non-consensual sex between men is high, but not necessarily recognised, even by the men themselves:

More than half the men, the gay men that I know have related at some time or other episodes of sexual experiences that were not consensual, whether they understood them to be, or without understanding them to be. (NZAF Educator)

When Ben told his story of having been deliberately inebriated by his flatmate and then coerced into sex that he had repeatedly stated he did not want, he said that he felt that he had not resisted in any significant manner:

I think it probably would’ve ended up being rape if I hadn’t, if I hadn’t just passively allowed it to happen. I think it probably would’ve. I would’ve had to have fought him off. (Ben)

This comment suggests that, although this sex occurred under circumstances of extreme duress and while Ben’s capacity to resist was severely impaired, the lack of the physical force prevented Ben from understanding it as ‘rape’. (For similar accounts of heterosexual women passively ‘consenting’ to ‘sex’ because of the threat of rape, see Gavey, 2005.) Other men also presented accounts of sexual coercion in ways that minimised the responsibility of the other man, and thus prevented the experience from being understood as assault. For example, in Justin’s discussion of having unwanted anal intercourse inflicted on him after being coerced into inhaling amyl nitrate, he suggested that it was almost the other man’s bad luck to have chosen him for sex:

I think he just got horny and wanted to penetrate somebody and I happened to be the person he took home and perhaps I had made noises about being not so

receptive to being penetrated and so he thought, 'Well, the only way this is going to happen is if I loosen this guy up a little bit.' So maybe that was his rationalisation of the situation. (Justin)

As these men's accounts indicate, sexual coercion cannot be disclosed or reported if it is first not recognised as such.

Silence, invisibility and marginalisation

We have presented a range of very specific issues that emerged from our research on sexual coercion experienced by gay and bisexual men. It is possible to address these issues, to varying degrees, in the policy arena, and we make recommendations to that effect in the Policy Implications section. However, other issues less amenable to straightforward 'policy solutions' also arose.

This research confirmed ongoing truths about the social position of gay and bisexual men. The theme of silence is central here: silence around men's experiences of sexual coercion, which facilitates the continuation of these experiences, and silence around gay men's sexuality, which leaves young gay men with limited cultural resources on which to draw when negotiating their first sexual experiences.

Silence around gay and bisexual men's coerced sex

Silence exists around gay men's experiences of coercive sex, and the reasons for this are varied and complex. As noted, for various reasons men may not recognise their unwanted experiences as coerced sex, which is likely to contribute to both a lack of openness about sexual coercion in general, and under-reporting of sexual assault between men in particular. This means that according to public perception, prevalence of sexual coercion and assault among gay men is low. This in turn arguably feeds in to a context in which it remains difficult to disclose or report experiences of sexual coercion, because it is perceived to be rare, or even 'unheard of'.

It is important also to consider how dominant constructions of (gay) masculinity and (gay) male sexuality might contribute to silence around sexual coercion among gay, bisexual, and other men who have sex with men. Dominant contemporary models of masculinity are likely to contribute to men's reluctance to disclose experiences of coerced sex. As one key informant noted, these models suggest "that real men are always in control and therefore not able to be abused" (NZAF Educator). Gay masculinity is often counter-posed against dominant 'real' (heterosexual) masculinity, and positioned as 'less masculine' (Connell, 2005; Kimmel, 1996). Therefore, for some gay men, especially those who are young and less confident in their identities, admitting to sexual coercion – even to oneself – might risk confirming wider heterosexist portrayals of gay men as 'masculine' than heterosexual men. It thus becomes an undesirable, and risky, identity position to occupy.

Furthermore, dominant models of masculine sexuality in general, and gay male sexuality in particular, render the possibility that sex could be unwanted for (gay) men virtually impossible, and hence invisible. Men are often understood to have strong, almost overwhelming sex drives (Hollway, 1989). In dominant highly gendered understandings of *heterosexuality* (see Gavey, 2005), women are understood to be the ones who set any limits on the amount of sex that occurs. As sex between men is not 'restrained' by women's (supposedly) lower sex drives, gay male sexuality is able to be understood as boundless and limitless. This is reinforced by the manner in which sexuality is often assumed to be the basis of gay men's identities. One key informant noted this point:

Because if you have a culture which describes you solely and primarily as being a gay man, as being a homosexual, not an employee or an employer, a brother, a cousin, uncle, father, son, whatever, but a homosexual, the only group of people on the entire planet who are primarily described to the exclusion of everything else, as a sexual being, then how long is it before you start to realise that your value as a human being is solely predicated on your ability to be sexual. (NZAF Educator)

The invisibility of gay sexuality

Not only are men's experiences of sexual coercion silenced because of the ways in which society frames masculinity and gay male sexuality; gay men are also vulnerable to sexual exploitation through the workings of heterosexism. Cultural heterosexism (Herek, 1992), in particular, results in the social privileging of heterosexuality as the 'visible' and 'normal' sexuality, rendering other sexualities 'substandard' and often 'invisible'. There have been notable cultural shifts towards more society-wide 'acceptance' of homosexuality, with a wider range of popular cultural representations, and legal changes like the passing of the Homosexual Law Reform Act in 1986, and the Civil Union Act in 2004, which potentially change the context of experiences of sexual coercion for gay and bisexual men (e.g., the ability to report). However, despite these not-insignificant changes, heterosexism remains pervasive, manifest at a mundane and everyday level (e.g., see Braun, 2000; Peel, 2001). Heterosexuality remains firmly entrenched as the dominant, normative sexuality.

Prior to, and during, (early) coming out, young (and other) men may have few, if any, models on which to base their identities and their sexual encounters (e.g., see Flowers & Buston, 2001), and have access to comparatively little, if any, information about the ways in which men have sex with other men. This was discussed at length by one key informant:

The gay community is a different minority group to any other community group [...] unlike ethnic minorities [...] we don't get brought up within gay families, by and large, so we're not brought up with strategies to protect ourselves from, you know discrimination, like other minorities are. So, as a young gay person, you're that much more incredibly isolated from your peers and from your society and from the sources of support which are available to most people, which are your family, your friends, things like that. So I think it's an incredibly vulnerable situation, and that I think is [...] a peculiar factor to our community, that places young gay men in the position of not having experience, and not knowing what's okay and what's not okay. So I think, whereas for heterosexual people, their issue of unwanted sex and coercion can be addressed at school probably ... maybe not a lot ... but I mean at least there's *Cleo* ... but for young gay men I don't think that's there at all. (Researcher, NZAF)

Kyle's experience of sexual coercion by the much older man he visited so that he could watch gay pornography – which he viewed as a means of learning about gay male sexuality – indicates that, in a heterosexist society in which information about same-sex sexuality is difficult to find, or suppressed, accessing such information can potentially be risky for young or inexperienced men.

Political issues

The marginalisation of gay men in a heterosexist society contributes to the silence around men's experiences of sexual coercion in more ways than one. Gay men are already frequently labelled as 'predatory', as was evidenced in reactions to the murder of David McNee in 2003.²¹ McNee was described in the media as having an "out of control sexual appetite", while his killer was cast almost as the victim, a 'homeless man' virtually forced by circumstance into prostituting

²¹ David McNee, a well-known 55-year-old interior designer, who frequently appeared on local television, was found murdered in his home in Auckland in July 2003. Some days later, Phillip Edwards, a man 30 years McNee's junior, was arrested for the murder. Edwards was homeless, had recently been released from jail for violent crime, and was known to engage in sex work. McNee had picked up Edwards while 'cruising' late one night, and taken him home. Edwards claimed he would be paid for masturbating while McNee watched. Edwards reported, however, that McNee attempted to penetrate Edwards anally with his finger. Edwards stated that he was so outraged that McNee apparently thought he was 'gay', that he beat McNee violently and repeatedly – up to 40 times. Edwards showered, and then stole clothes, alcohol, and other possessions from McNee's house, and took his car. McNee died of his injuries before he was discovered. Edwards was convicted of manslaughter and imprisoned for nine years (*Designer's Killer Loses Manslaughter Appeal*, 2005; *Jury Told to be Prepared for 'Sordid Details' about McNee's Life*, 2004).

himself to other men, and defending himself against McNee's untoward (homo)sexual advances (Wells, 2004).

We realise that bringing to light stories of gay men being coerced into sex by other gay men risks confirming this stereotype. For a community that is already marginalised, this is potentially problematic. We are very mindful of the delicate political balance that is faced in raising issues such as this – discussing such aspects of a community whose members remain oppressed and disadvantaged to varying degrees within western societies opens up the risk of further discrimination.

However, many of the forms of sexual coercion discussed in this report are acts that may be experienced as violating, distressing, and traumatic, in various ways, for the men involved. They can also be experiences that threaten a man's ability to avoid unsafe sexual practices. It is therefore important that space be opened within (and beyond) gay communities for acknowledgement, and candid discussion, of the issue of sexual coercion among gay, bisexual, and other men who have sex with men.

In doing so, it is important to acknowledge that while there are some aspects of sexual coercion that are likely to be specific to men who have sex with men, the social problem this issue represents is not unique to, nor does it originate in, *gay* male sexuality; it is also thoroughly embedded within heterosexual relationships. Indeed, many of the factors that enable sexual coercion among gay and bisexual men appear to reflect features of masculinity, *per se*, not *gay* masculinity, in particular. So it appears that it is gay and bisexual men's *masculinity*, rather than their *sexuality*, that is the key feature to consider. It is important that this be recognised, so that gay male communities are *not* (further) targeted as 'inherent' sites of sexual risk.

KEY FINDINGS: KAUPAPA MĀORI PROJECT

Experiences of sexual coercion reported by the five takatāpui tāne who were interviewed for the Kaupapa Māori study are summarised in Table 4. This section provides a brief summary of issues that specifically relate to takatāpui tāne, drawing on these five interviews, and the three from Māori men interviewed in the broader study. Although there were many overlaps with the issues found in the broader sample (such as age and power dynamics, and the role of alcohol), the experiences of this small sample of men also indicate some issues which may be of specific importance when considering sexual coercion among takatāpui tāne (as opposed to gay, bisexual or other men who have sex with men of different ethnicities).

Location, age and vulnerability

Any ‘vulnerability’ associated with youth, and inexperience, can be exacerbated for men who move to larger urban centres from rural areas, an experience which may be particularly likely for young takatāpui tāne who become detached from their cultural and social networks. Tama, who had moved from an isolated rural area to a large city, suggested that where he came from, sex between men was extremely common but seldom commented on. Mikaere stated that in the rural area he came from, he had not heard of any incidents of sexual coercion between men. While Tama was unable to comment on levels of sexual coercion in rural contexts, he did imply that the closeness of relationships and the smallness of communities might render this less likely than in urban areas: “I mean, you would break a trust if that was to happen”. These observations from Tama, Mikaere, and Oliver can be read together to suggest that young takatāpui tāne moving from rural to urban areas may find urban gay culture significantly different from what they are used to, and thus may be particularly vulnerable to sexual exploitation.

The power imbalance that results from differences in age and experience, and the ways in which this can be exacerbated by being new to urban contexts, was demonstrated in Mikaere’s account of sexual coercion. Although the perpetrator of this sexual assault was only approximately six years older than Mikaere, who was 18 at the time of the assault, he appears to have been much more experienced sexually, and confident in the environment of the nightclub where they met. As he was new to the city, and knew no one there, Mikaere was pleased to have someone else to talk with, and happy to accept the drinks the other man bought him. The other man then offered him a lift to the distant suburb where Mikaere was staying, but detoured to his own home on the way. Once there, the two men began to engage in consensual sexual activity, but Mikaere refused to engage in anal intercourse. In spite of this, the other man physically immobilised him and penetrated him anally, while Mikaere barely acquiesced and wept through the incident. Fearing a violent response if he did not co-operate with the other man’s demands, Mikaere was also rendered vulnerable by the fact that he was unfamiliar with the city, and had no other means of returning to the distant suburb in which he was staying.

Youth and ethnicity may intersect to create exacerbated vulnerabilities for young takatāpui tāne, such that Māori youth *may* exist as an exoticised and eroticised ‘other’ for some older Pākehā men.²² In eight of the ten incidents described by takatāpui tāne, the other man was identified as Pākehā. Piripi, who worked in a sex-on-site venue, reported that he often observed older Pākehā men ‘targeting’ young Māori, Pacific, and Asian men. However, he attributed this in part to the perception that these younger men may be less likely to refuse sex.

Culture, spirituality and the impacts of sexual coercion

A number of takatāpui tāne noted spiritual or cultural elements to their responses to sexual coercion. Mikaere spoke about the impact the assault had had on his spiritual well-being: “when

²² In much the same way that non-western and/or non-white women have historically been eroticised through the western gaze (hooks, 1992; see Jolly, 1997 and Taouma, 1998, specifically in relation to Pacific women).

that happened, my hinengaro, my taha wairua, just went out the door”. In saying this, Mikaere stresses the importance of his cultural attachment with the assault having a negative impact on his sense of being Māori and all that went with that. Mikaere’s experience suggests a particular level of impact that may be specific to takatāpui tāne; he also noted that his cultural base provided an important resource for healing. A Māori friend was able to help him find means of dealing with the spiritual impact of the assault:

And a thing that I was taught while I was growing up was that water heals a lot of things. Just to splash water along the body, either straight from the moana or straight from the river, will heal you. And I believe in that. And it’s called that ‘waimarie, kia ora ai te tangata’. So after my friend talked to me, she knew straight away and said, “Let’s go to the beach”. So we spent the day at the beach. And then my confidence in myself came back again and realised in me my taha Māori. (Mikaere)

Similarly, two years after the incident, Mikaere returned to his marae, where his aunt, who was a healer, immediately recognised that something had happened, and was able to heal his spirit: “I felt like I was a different person. I had been cleansed”.

Others spoke of the relationships between sexual coercion and cultural values in more general ways. Rangī suggested that if takatāpui tāne’s experiences of sexual coercion were to be addressed, the issue would need to be presented to Māori communities in particular ways, emphasising that this was a problem that needed a solution. However, the issue of unwanted sex could not be raised in all contexts – specific hui would have to be held to discuss the issue. Mikaere suggested that whānau networks would be the most effective way of addressing the issue of sexual coercion among Māori men. What was notable from these men’s comments was that sexual coercion and unwanted sex were not seen as (only) concerns to be addressed by gay communities; rather *Māori* communities were also appropriate and effective contexts in which to prevent sexual coercion, and from which to promote healing when it has occurred.

Table 4: Takatāpui tāne’s experiences of sexual coercion²³

		Age when SC	Age of other man	Relationship to other man	Brief description	Physical force	Sexual act	Condom	Alcohol /Drugs
1.	Piripi	16	18-19	Fellow cadet	In cadets. Sitting in bushes with other man, physically forced onto ground and penetrated anally.	Yes	AI, receptive	No (long before HIV epidemic)	Not reported (NR)
2.	Mikaere	18	Approx 24	Stranger met in bar	Offered lift home from bar, taken to other man’s house, engaging in consensual sexual activity, other man then held Mikaere down and penetrated him anally in spite of protests.	Yes	AI, receptive	No	Alcohol
3.	Hemi	21-22	NR	Strangers	Picked up when drunk and offered a ride home by two men, attempted to force him to perform oral sex on one, refused and left.	Threatened	Attempted forced oral sex, performed	Not relevant	Alcohol
4.	Hone	28-29	Much older	Acquaintance	Sharing bed after drinking with a group, engaged in consensual sexual activity. Other man asked to digitally penetrate Hone anally, Hone refused, other man held Hone down and attempted to anyway.	Yes	Attempted digital anal penetration, receptive	Not relevant	Alcohol
5.	Rangi	Early 20s	Approx 30	Stranger met at sauna	Rangi at sauna seeking sex, but no one there he found attractive. Other man had made numerous advances. Rangi eventually agreed to have sex.	No	Oral sex, received	Not relevant	Alcohol

²³ NR means not reported. AI refers to anal intercourse.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

The results from the broader and Kaupapa Māori projects raise a number of potential implications for policy and practice, and some specific policy recommendations. In highlighting these issues, and making these recommendations, we once again reiterate the point that it is features of normative *masculinity*, rather than of sexuality, which appear to enable sexual coercion (notwithstanding that these are nuanced in particular ways for gay and bisexual men and takatāpui tāne).

Furthermore, the societal context of heterosexism remains a pervasive, overarching umbrella which colours many aspects of gay men's lives, and inflects many of these policy-related suggestions. Any individually-focused education needs to occur in conjunction with measures designed to combat the corrosive and disempowering elements of this broader heteronormative context, which arguably creates the conditions of possibility for sexual coercion.

Breaking the silence on sexual coercion

- Silence around sexual coercion remains pervasive, with negative consequences for men's ability to acknowledge, and resist, sexual coercion.
- A key starting point for prevention is to raise awareness, and promote open discussion, of the issue.
- Any such awareness-raising, however, must take into account the ethical and political dimensions of publicising a negative issue for a marginalised community, and be carefully planned to avoid, or minimise, further marginalisation or pathologisation.
- The possibility of sexual coercion needs to be explicitly acknowledged and addressed when collecting data on sexual experiences and practices (e.g., GAPSS), and when designing sexual health campaigns.
- Research that addresses the ways the dynamics of sexual coercion – and silence around it – are nuanced for and between men from different ethnic communities is needed.

Norms, power and vulnerabilities

- Education and/or prevention campaigns that explicitly discuss and interrogate sexual practices, norms, expectations, pressures and pleasures associated with sex between gay, bisexual and other men who have sex with men, may be of value for young and/or inexperienced men.
- Within such campaigns, strategies could be promoted that help men to make informed choices about, and determine, their own *personal* boundaries for wanted and unwanted sex.
- It is important that such education also targets older, more experienced men, and gay communities more widely, and does so in a way that urges older/more experienced men to acknowledge their relative position of power, and the coercive potential of such positions.
- It is important to recognise that men do not always feel in control of their sexual choices, or able to act according to their own desires.
- Promoting an 'ethic of care' and attentiveness to the rights and wellbeing of sexual partners may be one way to counterbalance the risks of (unwitting) coercion.
- It is important to recognise that sexual norms – particularly those that are rigid and/or implicit – can work coercively to limit individual choices.
- It is important to recognise the ways in which gay male sexuality is marginalised within the broader heteronormative and heterosexist society, and the ways in which this not only directly supports sexual coercion among gay and bisexual men, but also limits possibilities for prevention.

- The promotion of a diverse range of masculinities and sexualities, which allow for multiple variations of same-sex desire, practice and identities, could provide a backdrop that fosters open communication and enhances choice.

The Internet, venues and risk

- The Internet appears to provide risks as well as opportunities for gay and bisexual men. Same-sex-specific dating sites should be encouraged to carry information regarding safe sex, both in relation to sexual coercion, and in terms of HIV and other STI prevention. This information could be presented in such a way that it does not conflict with the commercial imperatives of such sites.
- It needs to be acknowledged that sexual coercion can occur at sex-on-site venues. These sites, and their staff, should be encouraged to develop an orientation towards safety that promotes non-coercive sex.
- The use of alcohol (and other drugs) as a means of bolstering sexual confidence appears to be a risky strategy; alcohol-related health promotions could highlight risks relating to sexual coercion and safer sex, for men who have sex with men, as well as more generally.

HIV and sexual health

- In addition to their current foci, sexual health campaigns must acknowledge, and build into the strategies, a recognition that men are not always in full control of their sexual experiences, and thus sexual health is not always a straightforward 'choice'.
- This research, furthermore, highlights the need to explore new ways to address the competing 'rationalities' of sex, and their intersections with the power dynamics of sexual interactions and relationships.
- The fundamental paradox of the 'just say no' strategy needs to be acknowledged and addressed. That is, while this is postulated as an 'ideal' in sexual health, this is *not* the way individuals manage and perform refusals in everyday life – and people know this. Therefore, more attention needs to be paid to encouraging recognition that other forms of refusal – such as hesitations and excuses – are, in fact, the ways speakers of the English language typically say 'no'. Education campaigns would be better designed if they explained this point, and acknowledged the various forms of communicating sexual refusals (as well as acceptances), rather than prioritising 'saying no' as the best (or, indeed, only) way of declining or refusing sex.

Specific Issues for Māori

- There is a significant paucity of ethnicity-specific research around sexual coercion among men who have sex with men. It is recommended that any quantitative research undertaken in Aotearoa/New Zealand incorporate questions specific to ethnicity, and that Māori-specific research be undertaken in this area to address the current lack of relevant research.
- Sexual coercion among takatāpui tāne is not only an issue for these men in relation to their sexuality, but is also a cultural concern. It is recommended that programmes that address sexual coercion among men, especially among Māori men, take this into account by targeting Māori through whānau and iwi networks, as well as through gay organisations and communities.
- Takatāpui tāne may experience particular spiritual impacts from sexual coercion and assault, and benefit from culturally specific models of healing as well as more mainstream methods. It is recommended that services that are established for men who experience sexual coercion include trained Māori staff who are able to provide culturally appropriate support for takatāpui tāne clients.

DISSEMINATION

Manuscripts currently under journal submission

Fenaughty, J., Schmidt, J., Gavey, N., & Braun, V. (2006). *Sexual coercion among gay and bisexual men in Aotearoa/New Zealand*. Manuscript under submission.

Manuscripts currently in preparation for journal submission

Cultural contexts of risk? Sexual coercion and unwanted sex among gay and bisexual men [working title]. Manuscript in preparation.

HIV prevention and coercive/unwanted sex among men who have sex with men [working title]. Manuscript in preparation.

Reports currently in preparation

Reynolds, P. & Aspin, C. (2006). *Preliminary Investigation into the phenomena of rape, sexual coercion, pressured and unwanted sex among Māori men who have sex with men (MSM)* [working title]. Ngā Pae o te Māramatanga, The University of Auckland.

Honours dissertations

le Grice, J. (2006). *Gay and bisexual men's experiences of sexual coercion: Narratives of victimisation and resistance* [working title]. Honours dissertation, Department of Psychology, The University of Auckland. In preparation.

Kirova, K. (2006). *Sexual Coercion Among MSM Within the Context of Gay Venues: Talk Around Risk and Protection* [working title]. Honours dissertation, Department of Psychology, The University of Auckland. In preparation.

Conference papers/posters presented

Fenaughty, J. (2002). *Non consensual sex between men who have sex with men: What are the issues?* Paper presented at the Health in Difference 4 (HiD4) Conference, 31 October - 2 November, Sydney.

Fenaughty, J. (2002). *A conspiracy of silence: Non-consensual sex and men who have sex with men*. Paper presented at the University of Western Sydney Critical Psychology Postgraduate Conference, 15-16 November, Sydney.

Fenaughty, J. (2003). *Gay men, non-consensual sex, and a "male sexual needs" discourse: A case of the little head ruling the big head?* Paper presented at the Society of Australasian Social Psychologists 32nd Annual Meeting, 24-27 April, Sydney.

Fenaughty, J. (2003). *Giving it (up) to him: Intimacy, relationships and unwanted sex between bisexual and gay men*. Paper presented at the International Conference of Critical Psychology, 27-31 August, Bath.

Fenaughty, J. (2003). *An unhealthy silence: non-consensual sex between men who have sex with men*. Paper presented at the Third Conference of the International Society of Critical Health Psychology, 10-12 April, Auckland.

Semp, D., & Fenaughty, J. (2003). *Critically Re-appraising Representation – Doing critical research on queer health*. Poster presented at the Third Conference of the International Society of Critical Health Psychology, 10-12 April, Auckland.

Fenaughty, J. (2004). *Pressured and Unwanted Sex: Challenges to HIV prevention among men who have sex with men*. Paper presented at the International Interdisciplinary Conference on Gender, Sexuality and Health, 10-13 June, Vancouver.

Semp, D., & Fenaughty, J. (2004). *Critically Re-appraising Representation – Critical research on queer health in a heteronormative world*. Paper presented at the 33rd Annual Meeting of The Society for Australasian Social Psychologists, 15-18 April, Auckland.

Reynolds, P., & Aspin, C. (2006). *Rape, violence and HIV transmission among Māori men who have sex with men*. Paper presented at the XVI International AIDS Conference, 13-18 August, Toronto.

Conference papers accepted for presentation

Braun, V., Fenaughty, J., Schmidt, J., & Gavey, N. (2006). *Experiences of Rape and Sexual Coercion among Gay and Bisexual Men in Aotearoa/New Zealand*. 9th Asia Oceania Congress of Sexology, 1-4 November, Bangkok.

Aspin, C., & Reynolds, P. (2006). *Māori men and unwanted sex: Challenges for indigenous communities*. 9th Asia Oceania Congress of Sexology, 1-4 November, Bangkok.

Other conferences where papers will be presented

36th Annual Meeting of the Society of Australasian Social Psychologists, Brisbane, April 2007.

18th World Congress of the World Association of Sexual Health, Sydney, April 2007.

Fifth Biennial Conference of the International Society of Critical Health Psychology, Boston, July 2007.

Seminars presented

Fenaughty, J., Gavey, N., & Braun, V. (2003, May). *Non-consensual, forced, pressured and coercive sex between men who have sex with men*. Presentation at The University of Auckland, Department of Psychology.

Braun, V. *Making sense of rape, sexual coercion, and unwanted sex among gay and bisexual men in Aotearoa/New Zealand*. (2006, September). Presentation at Victoria University of Wellington, School of Psychology.

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