

Demographic Data and Sexual Risk Behaviors among Users of Elective STI Testing in Cochabamba, Bolivia

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Background

El Instituto para el Desarrollo Humano (IDH) is a non-profit organization in Cochabamba, Bolivia that aims to support the integrated development of people through preventative medicine and defense of human rights. One of the primary goals of the organization is to address the needs of the HIV positive population in Bolivia, which has been historically marginalized, by:

- offering comprehensive HIV care
- providing education to high school students, the LGBTQ population, and medical professionals that aims to reduce stigma and increase utilization of health services by the most at-risk populations.

Introduction

IDH offers a wide variety of STI tests to the general public at no cost to the user. Currently, the organization offers tests for HIV, syphilis, Hepatitis B and C, and chlamydia. Starting in 2017, the organization began to include a short survey on the back side of the informed consent form that asks general questions about the demographic information and risk behaviors of the participants. Participation in the survey was entirely voluntary. Data from the survey was collected between May 2017 and June 2018.

Objectives

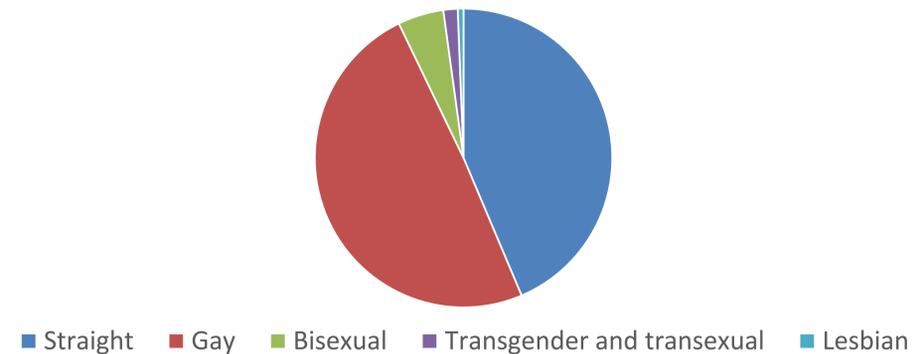
- Elucidate the demographic profile of people from Cochabamba who utilize free STI testing services
- Outline the most common sexual risk behaviors undertaken by participants

Results

Demographic profile of participants

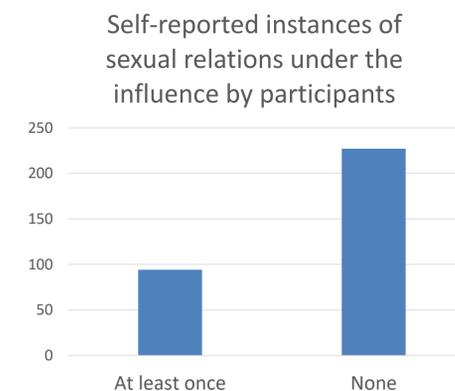
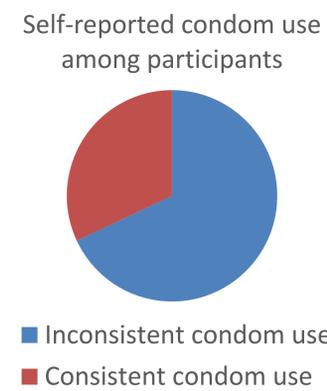
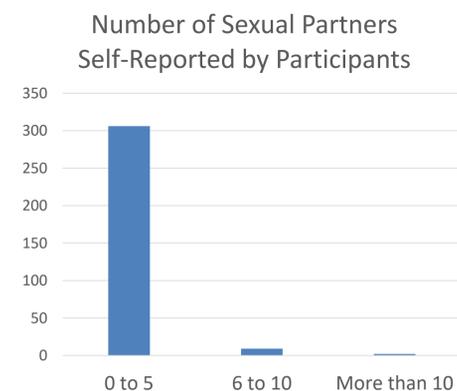
There were a total of 434 surveys completed by a total of 389 people. Of the 282 people who elected to provide information on their gender identity and sexual orientation, 49% identified as straight and 51% identified as LGBTQ+. The average age of the participants was 28.

Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity of Participants



Sexual risk behaviors

Participants were asked to identify the number of sexual partners they had had in the last month and the number of times that they had had sexual relations without a condom or under the influence of alcohol or drugs. The most common risk behavior identified was inconsistent condom use.



Conclusions

- The population in Cochabamba who elected to take STI tests is primarily young and drawn in a large part from the LGBT community.
- The community-based work of the organization, particularly preventative education, is having an impact and reaching the population that is most at risk for STI infection, particularly HIV.
- Inconsistent condom use is the most common risk factor for STI infection among the population of interest and indicates that further education is needed in this area.

Acknowledgments

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Llama on the slopes of Pico Tunari, a mountain close to Cochabamba in the Bolivian Andes.