

Study targets sexual health and Rugby World Cup 2011

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(Medical Xpress)—A new in-depth analysis of sexual health clinic attendance and diagnoses during last year's Rugby World Cup (RWC) reveals increased risk and harm for attendees who had sex related to this sporting event.

The collaborative study carried out by University of Otago epidemiologists and public [sexual health](#) clinics in four cities (Auckland, Hamilton, Wellington and Dunedin) recorded diagnoses during the time of the RWC.

The study also collected further information about risk from people who had 'RWC-related sex': defined as New Zealanders who had sex related to the RWC or other associated events, New Zealanders whose sexual event leading to the clinic visit was with an overseas visitor primarily in New Zealand for the RWC, and individuals visiting New Zealand primarily for the RWC.

The study, which appears in the latest issue of the international journal *Sexual Health*, also looked at routine data collected during the RWC and comparable periods of previous years.

Lead author Rebecca Psutka, a Research Fellow in Epidemiology at the University of Otago, says diagnoses and clinic attendance during the Rugby World Cup in 2011 did not differ significantly from previous years.

"But by using a survey of each clinical visit, which provided more information than routine data collection, we found that about 151 people, about 7%, of those visiting sexual health clinics had RWC-related sex".

More men than women attended clinics after RWC-related sex. These men who had RWC-related sex had an increased risk of some sexually transmitted infection (STI) diagnoses compared to other men attending the clinics. They had twice the risk of [chlamydia](#), three times the risk of non-specific urethritis, and five times the risk of [gonorrhoea](#).

"This indicates that, for men, sex related to the Rugby [World Cup](#) may have been more risky," explains Wellington Sexual Health clinician Dr Jane Kennedy.

Most of those who had RWC-related sex had consumed three or more [alcoholic drinks](#). Study co-author and University of Otago Professor Jennie Connor says this is not surprising given the promotion and availability of alcohol around the event, and New Zealand's drinking culture.

Only about 20% had used a condom.

"This obviously explains a lot of the STI diagnoses in this study and may reflect poor decision-making under the influence of alcohol," says study co-author Dr Jane Morgan of Hamilton Sexual Health clinic.

"Those who used condoms had only one-third the risk of getting an STI. Condoms are effective at preventing STIs if used consistently," points out study co-author Dr Sunita Azariah, an Auckland Sexual Health physician.

Four of the 54 (7%) women who had RWC-related sex reported that the

event had not been consensual, something study co-author Dr. Jill McIlraith, clinical leader at Dunedin Sexual Health Clinic describes as "concerning".

The authors of the study concluded that for future large sporting events, a reduction in the promotion and availability of alcohol as well as the continued promotion of condoms may reduce sexual health and other harm.

Provided by University of Otago

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