

Researcher explores the barriers stopping men seeking information on sexually transmitted infections

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Credit: Birmingham City University

A researcher at Birmingham City University is undertaking research into the social and cognitive barriers hindering men who have sex with other

men (MSM) from finding out more information about sexually transmitted infections (STIs).

Psychology researcher, Naomi Pierce from Carlisle, hopes the research will help to better identify how different [social groups](#) may have different risk profiles when it comes to catching and passing on STIs.

"There has been a lot of progress in tackling HIV and AIDS, but other STIs can sometimes be overlooked", said Naomi.

"STI rates within the community of men who have sex with other men are on the rise."

A report published by *Public Health England* in 2015 revealed increases in STI diagnosis in men who have sex with other men – syphilis by 46%, gonorrhoea by 32%, chlamydia by 26% and genital herpes and warts by 10% each.

Naomi is currently in the early stages of her research and has begun to speak with local healthcare organisations to share her plans.

Through a combination of [focus groups](#) and questionnaires, Naomi will explore the social issues deterring men who have sex with men from seeking information on STIs, which may include social groups and peer behaviour

Naomi will also look into the cognitive barriers, including the thinking patterns surrounding STIs that might make information seeking difficult.

Focus groups will ask MSM participants for their views on why seeking [information](#) about STIs might be difficult, whilst anonymous questionnaires will ask MSM participants about sexual health more generally.

Provided by Birmingham City University

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