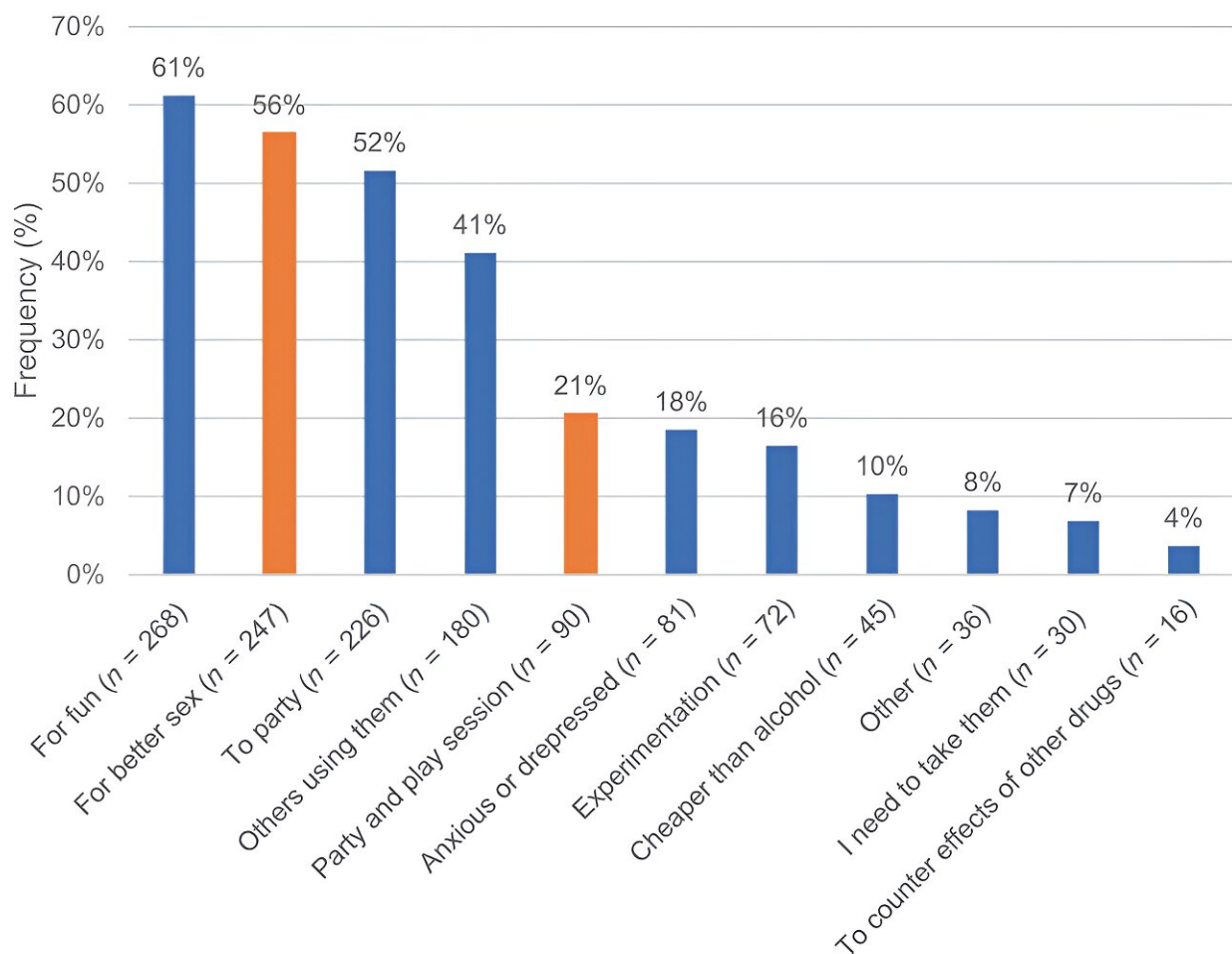


# Research finds the most sexually adventurous gay and bisexual men are also the most vigilant with HIV prevention

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Reported motivation for illicit drug use, among all those who used any illicit drug in the past 6 months (n = 438). Note that multiple motivations could be selected. Motivations of "for better sex" or "party and play session" were considered as recent sexualized drug use. Credit: *Drug and Alcohol Review*

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More than a third of gay and bisexual men in New Zealand report recently having group sex and the same proportion say they use drugs to enhance sexual experiences.

However, those same men are more proactive than others about managing HIV transmission risks through regular testing, [pre-exposure prophylaxis](#) (PrEP), and uptake of HIV treatment.

"HIV prevention efforts have been effective. HIV prevention uptake is highest among those engaging in behaviors that present a risk of HIV transmission, says Samuel Andrews, who led the research for his masters in [population health](#) at Waipapa Taumata Rau, University of Auckland. The findings are now [published](#) in the journal *Drug and Alcohol Review*.

Andrews says there has been minimal research into how [drug use](#) influences [sexual practices](#), particularly in the context of biomedical HIV prevention among gay and [bisexual men](#) within New Zealand.

This study was adapted from the Flux study, an Australian online study developed by the Kirby Institute and carried out from 2018 to 2019.

The study of 739 gay and bisexual men found a third (29.5%) had group sex recently and two-thirds (59.5%) had used illegal drugs, with around a third (35.7%) combining the two to enhance [sexual experiences](#), also referred to as "sexualized drug use."

Of the participants, 17.5% were taking PrEP as a biomedical HIV prevention method. Around half had had a sexual health check in the previous six months.

Of those engaging in sexualized drug use, 84% had recent sexual health checks and 76% had recently been tested for HIV. This group were likely to be using PrEP.

People living with HIV were on treatment and most had an undetectable viral load. These factors are crucial in gaining progress towards the elimination of HIV within New Zealand.

Andrews is now working on the [government's HIV action plan](#).

**More information:** Samuel Andrews et al, Sexualised drug use among gay and bisexual men in New Zealand: Findings from a national cross-sectional study, *Drug and Alcohol Review* (2023). [DOI: 10.1111/dar.13762](#)

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