

# Emerging Sexual Identity and Substance Abuse

## Observations from an AoD Treatment Service



# Introduction

- CADS Altered High Youth Service and the Same Sex Attraction Focus
- SSA Youth Experience
- Epidemiological evidence
- Recommendations and future directives
- References



You may not  
be **bigoted...**

but that  
**comment**  
was.

Think before you speak.

# CADS Altered High Youth Service and the SSA Focus

- Established approximately 11 years ago
- Working with 13-20yo
- Currently 18 FTE covering greater Auckland region
- SSA focus role

# SSA Youth Experience

- Hetero-centric society
- External homophobia and bigotry
- Internalised homophobia
- Undervalued psycho-sexual identity
- Higher rates of MH issues and suicidality



**homosexuality**  
was found in more  
than 450 species.



**homophobia**  
in only one.

Which one is  
**unnatural?**

# Mental Health and Suicidality

Figure 10. Depressive symptoms and deliberate self-harming (2007)

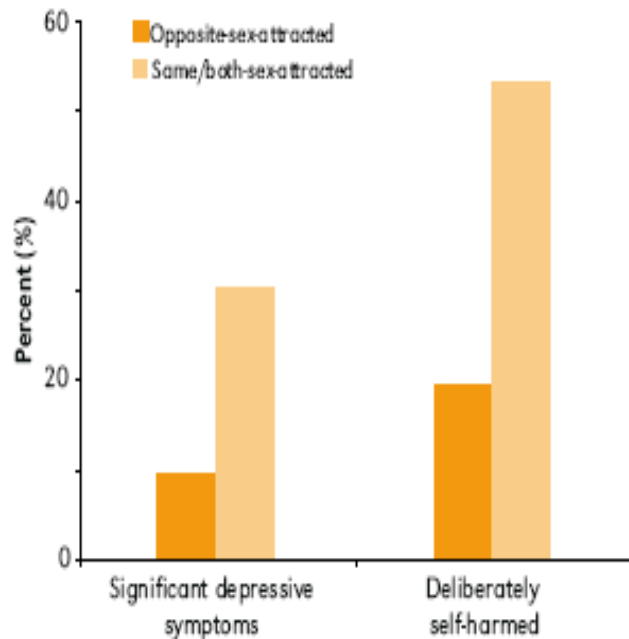
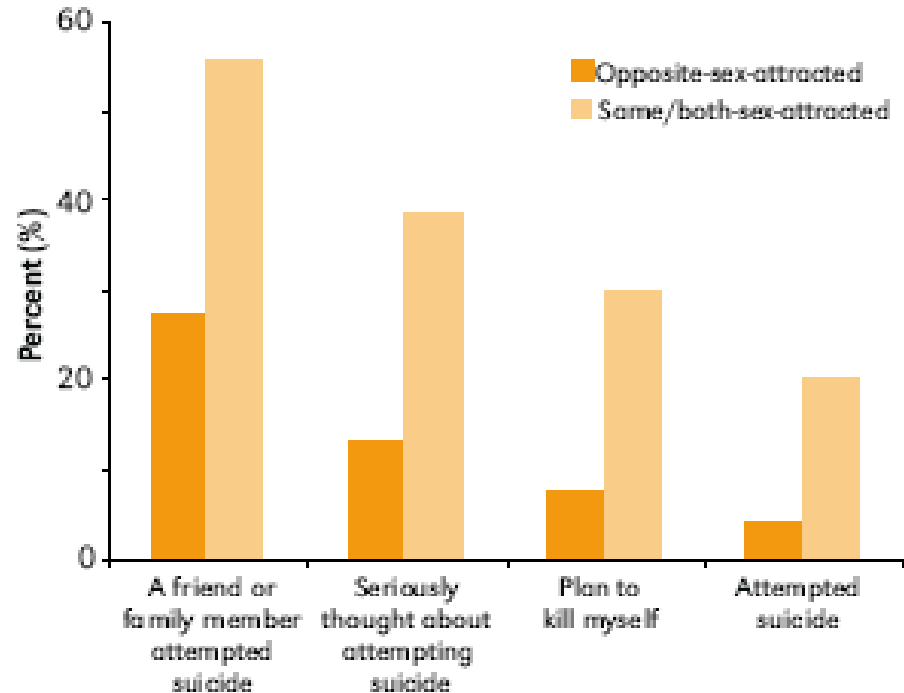
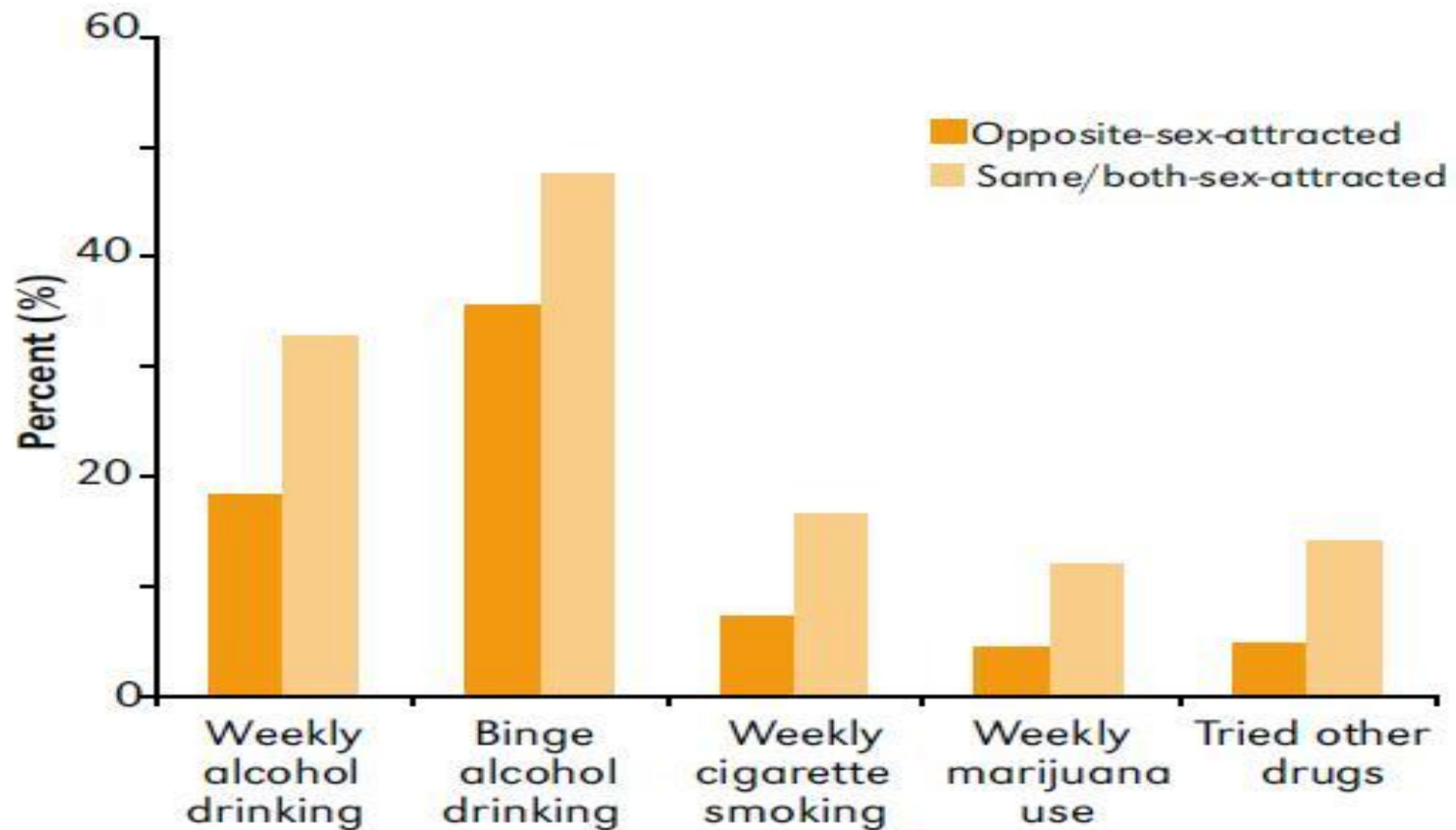


Figure 11. Suicidality (2007)



# AoD use

Figure 13. Alcohol, cigarette, marijuana and other drug use (2007)





# Sexual behaviour

Figure 15. Students who are sexually active (2007)

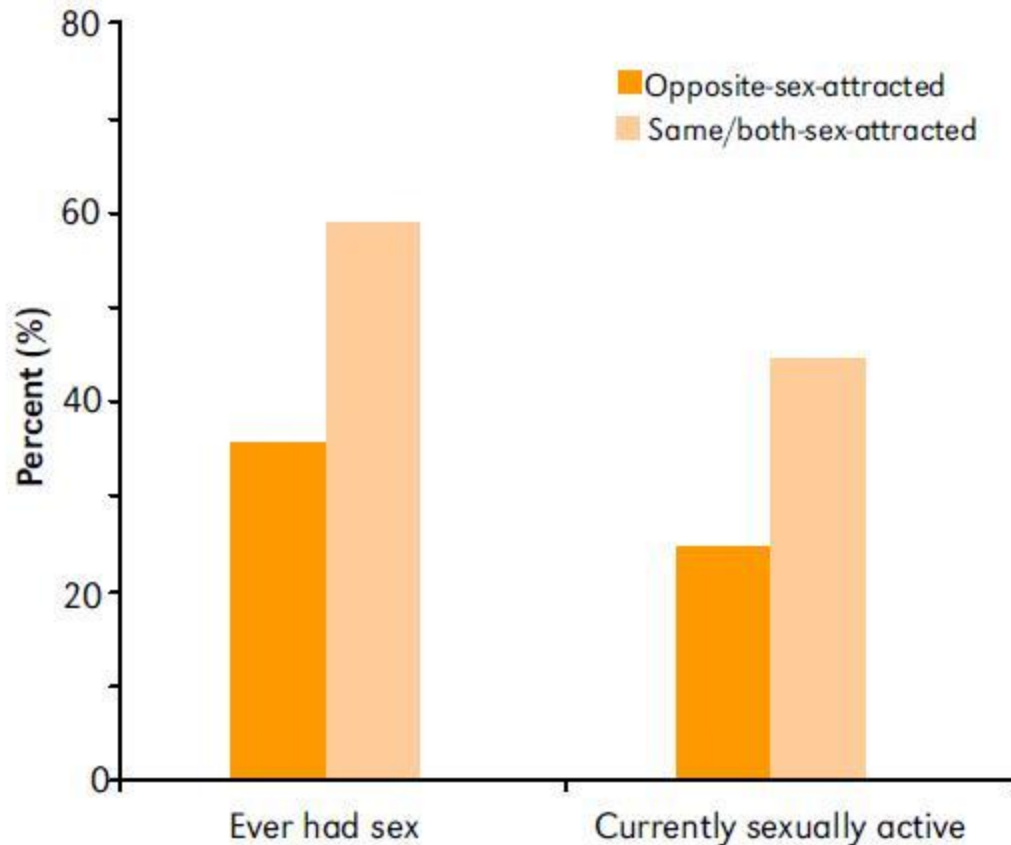


Figure 16. Condom/contraceptive use and sexually transmitted infections among males (2007)

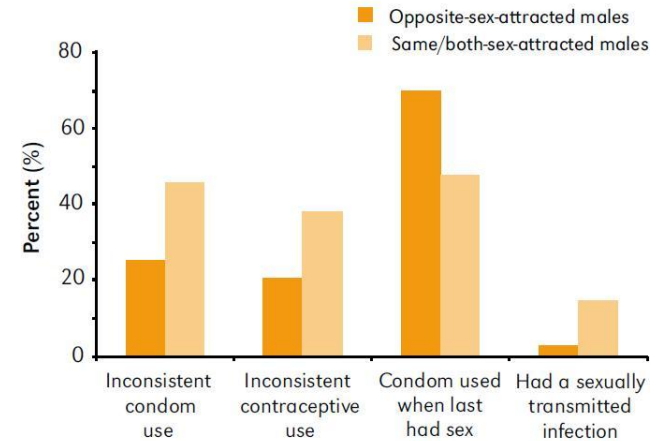
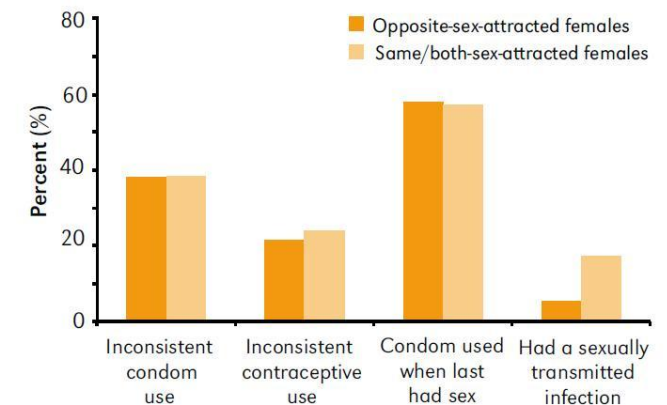


Figure 17. Condom/contraceptive use and sexually transmitted infections among females (2007)



# Epidemiological evidence

- Earlier Sexual experimentation
- Initial and on-going sexual experiences in the context of substance abuse
- Heightened risk of unsafe and risky sexual practices due to intoxication
- Increased level of STIs
- Increased likelihood of on-going heavy use or substance dependence with associated long-term health impact

# Recommendations and future directives

- Assume nothing
- Appropriate screening and questioning
- Talk about it Safely and Respectfully
- Appropriate referral
- Further research

How dare you presume  
that I'm straight?

OOOF!



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