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**Correlates of Sexual Contact, COVID Testing, and Comfort  
Attending Sexual Venues During the COVID-19 Pandemic in a Global  
Sample of Gay, Bisexual, and Other Men Who Have Sex with Men**

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# Background

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Gay social and sexual venues are important targets for HIV prevention engagement



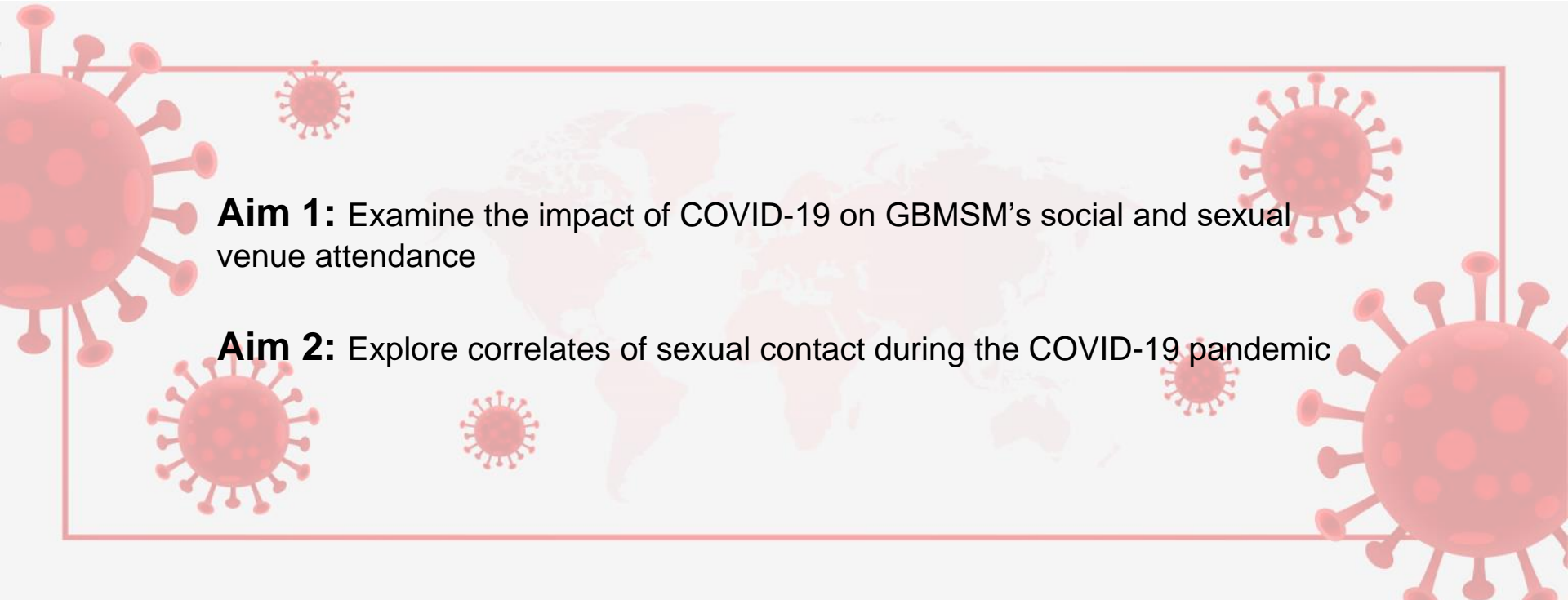
Many venues faced closure and operational restrictions due to the COVID-19 pandemic



GBMSM continued to remain connected through gay geo-social networking apps throughout the pandemic

# Objectives

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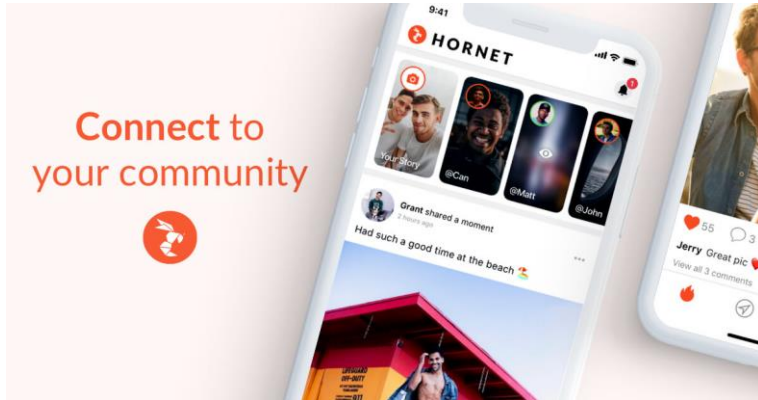


**Aim 1:** Examine the impact of COVID-19 on GBMSM's social and sexual venue attendance

**Aim 2:** Explore correlates of sexual contact during the COVID-19 pandemic

# Methods

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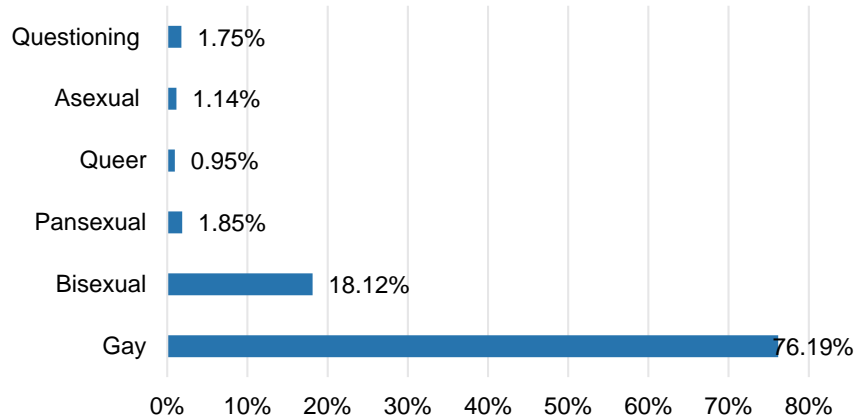


- ❑ Eligibility
  - ❑ Aged 18 and above
  - ❑ Current Hornet user
  - ❑ Provided informed consent
- ❑ Recruitment
  - ❑ 10/25/2020-11/19/2020
- ❑ Criteria for this analysis (n = 15,499)
  - ❑ Cisgender men
  - ❑ 134 countries

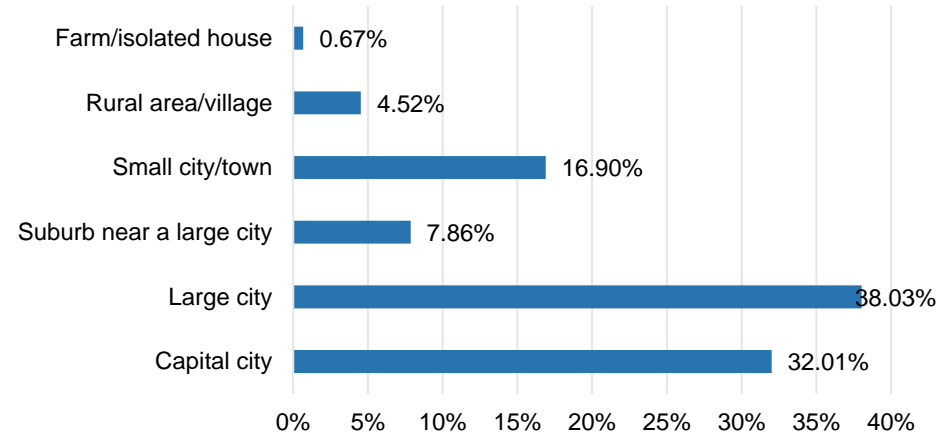
 **HORNET** 25 million users globally

# Participant Characteristics (N=15,499)

## Sexual Orientation



## Place of Residence

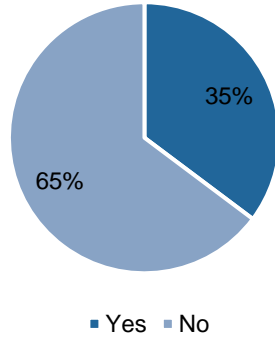


Average Age: 35

# Results

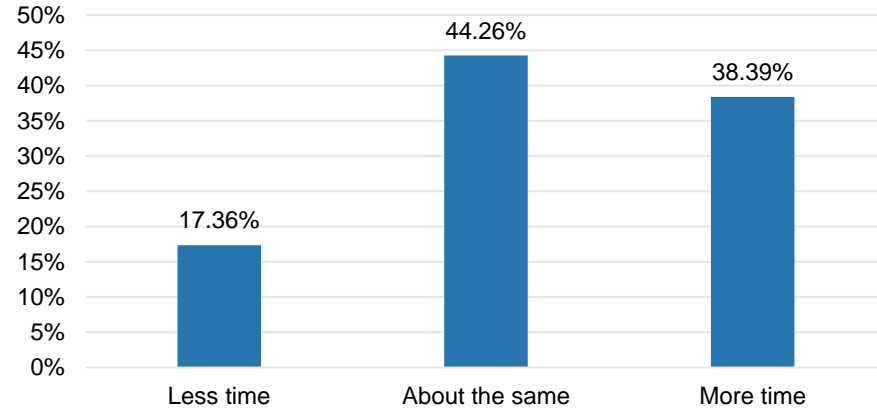
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## Sexual Contact



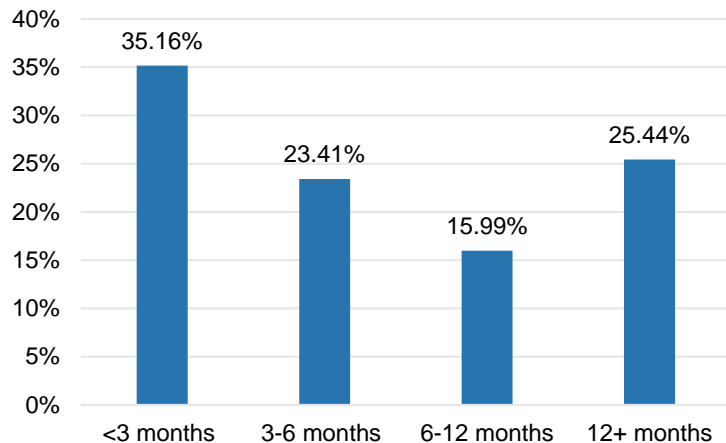
Sexual partners in the past month (mean): 2.42

## Time Spent on Gay Social Networking Apps

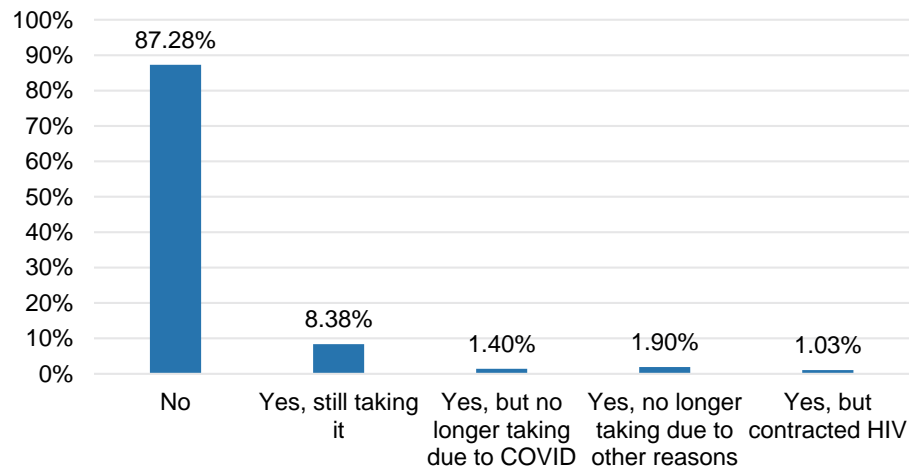


# Results

### When was your last HIV test?

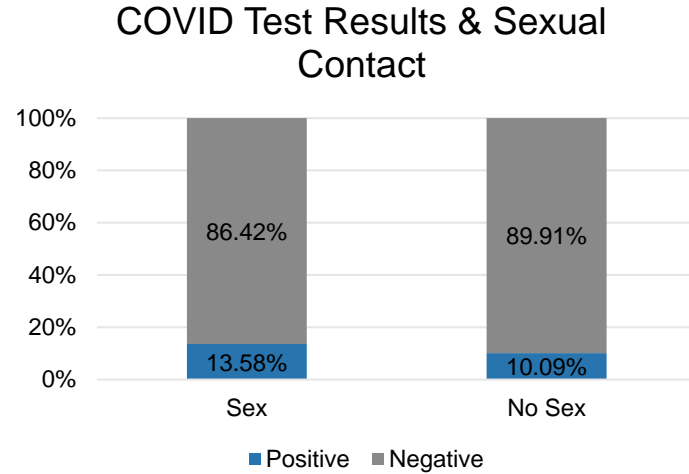
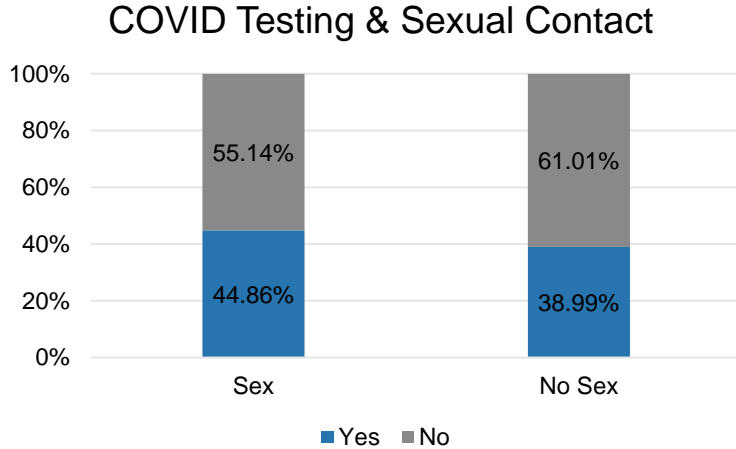


### Have you ever taken PrEP?



**12.13%** reported having no or less access to condoms and/or lubricants during the COVID-19 crisis

# Results



- Compared to those who did not have a COVID test, those who did were 1.30 times more likely to have sexual contact
- Compared to those who tested negative for COVID, those who tested positive were 1.28 times more likely to have sexual contact



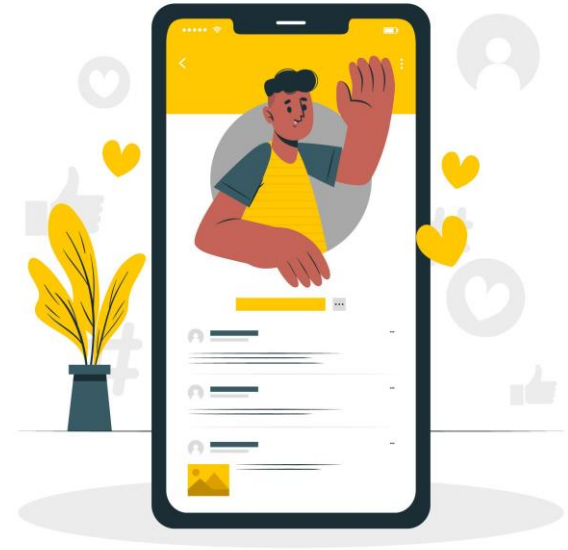
# Social and Sexual Venue Attendance

	Adjusted Odds Ratio	95% CI	p-value
<b>Comfort Bars (ref: comfort now)</b>	-	-	-
<i>Once public health officials indicate it's safe</i>	0.56	[0.49, 0.64]	<.001***
<i>Once there's a vaccine</i>	0.45	[0.39, 0.51]	<.001***
<i>Once my friends start going</i>	0.63	[0.49, 0.82]	<.001***
<b>Comfort Sauna (ref: comfort now)</b>	-	-	-
<i>Once public health officials indicate it's safe</i>	0.47	[0.40, 0.55]	<.001***
<i>Once there's a vaccine</i>	0.38	[0.32, 0.44]	<.001***
<i>Once my friends start going</i>	0.73	[0.52, 1.02]	0.061
<b>Comfort Sex Party (ref: comfort now)</b>	-	-	-
<i>Once public health officials indicate it's safe</i>	0.35	[0.29, 0.42]	<.001***
<i>Once there's a vaccine</i>	0.29	[0.25, 0.34]	<.001***
<i>Once my friends start going</i>	0.43	[0.32, 0.59]	<.001***

# Discussion

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- ❑ Sexual partnerships forged online have continued among GBMSM during the COVID-19 pandemic
- ❑ Over half of participants (65%) had physical sexual contact with a partner they met on a gay social networking app since the COVID-19 crisis began
- ❑ Those who felt comfortable attending social/sexual venues now were more likely to have sexual contact



# Future Directions

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- ❑ A need for ongoing attention to HIV prevention focused on social and sexual venues GBMSM frequent



- ❑ Leveraging geosocial networking applications to reach users with COVID-19 vaccination and testing information



- ❑ Tailoring messaging to foster trust between GBMSM and public health officials

# Limitations

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- ❑ Participants were recruited from the internet
  - ❑ Generalizability
- ❑ Self-reported data
  - ❑ Social desirability bias
  - ❑ Recall bias
- ❑ Public health changes since data collection

# Acknowledgements

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- Dr. Ian Holloway
- Chenglin Hong



- Sean Howell
- All the participants



- Alex Garner

# Thank You

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