

Bisexual and gay men have less casual sex during the corona crisis

Research shows a strong adaptation of sexual behaviour.

05-06-20



Dit is de omschrijving

Research by the Institute of Tropical Medicine (ITM) in Antwerp, the University of Antwerp (UA), Sensoa and çavaria shows that since the start of the corona measures on 18 March, gay men have adapted their sexual behaviour very strongly. Worryingly, however, surveyed LGBTQI persons* reported experiencing more feelings of depression and loneliness.

Through an online survey, LGBTQI persons were questioned about their experiences and their sexual contact during the lockdown. Only 9% of the 692 bisexual and gay men surveyed said they still had loose, new or anonymous sex partners in April, compared to 59% before the lockdown. "Compliance to the preventive measures against COVID-19 is relatively good. We suspect that this will also lead to a decrease in the number of HIV and STI infections in Belgium," says Thijs Reyniers of ITM. The research team supports Sensoa's campaign calling on bisexual and gay men to be [tested for HIV before the end of the lockdown](#).

The preventive measures against the spread of COVID-19 also appear to have a major impact on feelings of depression, anxiety and loneliness in LGBTQI persons. For example, 7.6% of the 965 respondents struggled several days a week with feelings of suicide or wanting to hurt themselves, an increase of no less than 74% compared to the period before 18 March. "The [COVID-19 report](#) we published last week already showed that the impact of the crisis on the mental well-being of LGBTQI persons is enormous. These figures are particularly worrying knowing that the average mental well-being in this group is lower than the average and the suicide rate is higher," says Stijn Depoorter of çavaria: "Loneliness, isolation or a difficult situation at home makes for more pondering and doubting. Especially if you're struggling with issues such as sexual orientation, gender identity or your coming-out."

Now that preventive COVID-19 measures have been relaxed, ITM, UA, Sensoa and çavaria emphasise that it is still not a good idea to engage in casual sex. Meanwhile, Sensoa is calling on the National Security Council, in consultation with experts, to draw up advice on intimacy and sexuality for non-cohabitating partners from various 'bubbles'.

If you are a LGBTQI person and in need of a chat or a listening ear, you can find one at [Lumi](#).

*Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and Intersex.