ANNUAL REPORT 2003
The National Centre in HIV Social Research is funded by the Commonwealth Department of Health and Ageing and is affiliated with the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences at the University of New South Wales.
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Acronyms

ACON   formerly the AIDS Council of NSW
AFAO   Australian Federation of AIDS Organisations
AIVL   Australian Injecting & Illicit Drug Users League
ANCAHRD  Australian National Council on AIDS, Hepatitis and Related Diseases
ANET   AFAO–NAPWA Education Team
ANEX   Association of Needle and Syringe Programs
ARC    Australian Research Council
ARCSHS Australian Research Centre in Sex, Health and Society
CTARC  Clinical Trials and Research Committee [of ANCAHRD]
NAPWA  National Association of People Living with HIV/AIDS
NCEPH  National Centre for Epidemiology and Population Health
NCHSR  National Centre in HIV Social Research
NCHECR National Centre in HIV Epidemiology and Clinical Research
NDARC  National Drug and Alcohol Research Centre
NHMRC  National Health and Medical Research Council
PLWHA  people living with HIV/AIDS
SPRC   Social Policy Research Centre
UNESCO United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFPA  United Nations Population Fund
VAC/GMHC Victorian AIDS Council/Gay Men's Health Centre
The National Centre in HIV Social Research (NCHSR) was established in 1990 by the Commonwealth Government to undertake a program of social research related to HIV. Since that time its focus has broadened to include hepatitis C (HCV) and sexually transmitted infections (STI).

The NCHSR’s major research priorities are:

- to conduct research that contributes to the management of HIV, HCV and related diseases in the most affected communities
- to conduct studies of the shared, everyday understandings of sexuality, sexual practice and illicit drug use, with particular reference to the normative structures and cultural and subcultural understandings that inform those practices
- to conduct studies of the individual, interpersonal and cultural impact of HIV, HCV and related diseases on those directly affected, their carers and their communities; and to identify the strategies and health care models appropriate to deal with that impact
- to identify the individual, interpersonal and societal characteristics that contribute to prevention strategies; and to identify the barriers to their adoption by those at risk of HIV, HCV and related diseases
- to conduct studies of the social and personal aspects of the conduct of clinical trials including vaccines
- to conduct studies of the social and personal aspects of the conduct of clinical trials including vaccines, and
- to conduct research into the personal, social, economic and cultural impact of HIV, HCV and related diseases.
The National Centre in HIV Social Research was reviewed in 2002 and it and its collaborating centre, the Australian Research Centre in Sex, Health and Society, were ‘congratulated for their high-quality, internationally recognised work in HIV social research’. A letter from the Minister for Health and Ageing was received telling us that funding for the period 1 January 2004 to 31 December 2006 had been approved. Although disappointed that Recommendation 101 (Research), that the NCHSR funding cover a period of at least five years, had not been accepted, we were pleased by the reports of the review teams and the Australian Government’s response.

In its response to the Reviews of the National HIV/AIDS and Hepatitis C Strategies and Strategic Research, the Australian Government recognised ‘the important role that research plays in informing the evidence base for policies and practices at a national level’ and the ‘valuable data to enable monitoring of the effectiveness of national public health strategies’ and committed itself to ‘supporting strategy related research and surveillance’.

In its response the government clearly signalled that research into hepatitis C—including the epidemiological, social and cultural aspects of risk and transmission and the barriers to seeking treatment—be further developed and extended. The NCHSR has already moved to take up this challenge and has strengthened its research capacity in regard to hepatitis C. In 2003 we saw the fruits of our research efforts in this area and we finalised and published a number of reports and papers, including those from three important studies that were launched in October with much media interest. The reports from the three studies were: the 3D Study: Diagnosis, Disclosure and Discrimination and Living with Hepatitis C; Initiation and Transmission to Injecting Drug Use among Youth; and Blood Awareness for Hepatitis C Prevention Education.

In the context of increased HIV incidence—for the first time since the HIV epidemic was brought under control—the NCHSR has also strengthened its HIV-related research capacity, continuing to develop innovative research. In particular the NCHSR has led the world in quantifying the occasions of risky unprotected anal intercourse among homosexually active men. We have always known that men either sometimes or never engage in unprotected anal intercourse. We now know what ‘sometimes’ means and for the vast majority of men who sometimes engage in unprotected anal intercourse, ‘sometimes’ means once or twice in any six-month period. This finding alongside the correlates of such risky practice provides extremely important information for HIV-prevention educational initiatives.

The NCHSR continues to be successful in augmenting its core funding from the Commonwealth. In 2003 a number of research proposals were funded by external agencies and funding was received from UNESCO, UNFPA, NHMRC, ARC, the state Departments of Health in NSW, Victoria, South Australia, Western Australia, Queensland and the ACT, and the University of New South Wales.

A very exciting area of expansion was funded by the NSW Health Department in the form of a research capacity building infrastructure grant through a consortium of NCHSR, Social Policy Research Centre (SPRC) at the University of New South Wales, ACON (formerly the AIDS Council of New South Wales), Hepatitis C Council of NSW and PLWHA (NSW). The consortium aims to:
• strengthen the synergy between academic and health service organisations in order to collaborate on areas of state-wide research and policy importance and to jointly apply for competitive research grants

• provide training in the field for health service staff by setting up internships and fellowships at NCHSR and SPRC

• provide social science and health policy scholarships for postgraduate students in the areas of health and health service research

• hold practical research workshops and forums to build research capacity among research staff, policy makers, students and service providers

• provide a research and policy clearinghouse that will support the activities of the consortium as well as other researchers, health service organisations and policy makers in New South Wales.

We have also developed new research links with the Department of Political Science at La Trobe University and are part of an ARC-funded project building a database of policy initiatives in the Asia–Pacific region. The NCHSR has been instrumental in setting up two research projects focusing on multicultural issues: one with health care staff at the Bigge Park Centre at Liverpool Hospital and another with the Multicultural HIV/AIDS and Hepatitis C Service. We have also been very pleased to have had input into the design and development of a research project, initiated by the Department of Health in Western Australia, based on the narrative stories of indigenous Australians living with HIV. Closer to home again, we have this year strengthened our research ties with the Schools of Public Health and Sociology, and the Social Policy Research Centre at the University of New South Wales. The Social Policy Research Centre is a member of the consortium funded by the NSW Department of Health in building capacity aimed at ‘getting research into policy and practice’ and the Schools of Public Health and Sociology are two of the university players in our successful bid for seeding money from the ARC to set up a research network.

Our input into conferences—both international and national—continues. This year members of the NCHSR presented papers at a number of HIV conferences including: the AIDS Impact 6th International Conference in Milan; the AIDS Vaccine meeting in New York; the 17th Annual Meeting of the Japanese Society for AIDS Research, Kobe; the Ontario HIV Treatments Network Conference, Toronto; and conferences focused on HIV and hepatitis C—15th Annual Conference of the Australasian Society for HIV Medicine, Cairns; International Harm Reduction Conference, Thailand;
and the Australian Professional Society for Alcohol and Drugs Conference, Brisbane. Staff also attended a number of other conferences including: interdisciplinary conferences on Risk, Complex Crises and Social Futures run by the Royal Institute Inter-Faith Studies Conference in Amman; the 1st Interdisciplinary Conference on Communication, Medicine and Ethics in Cardiff; the Body Modification: Changing Bodies, Changing Selves Conference and the seminar on Global History, Human Nature and the New World Order held by the Centre for Values, Ethics and the Law in Medicine, both in Sydney. They also attended discipline-based conferences such as the 10th Biennial Conference of The International Society for Theoretical Psychology, Istanbul; the Information, Communication & Society Research Symposium at the Oxford Internet Institute, Oxford; the Sociological Association of Australia Conference in Armidale; and the Women’s Health and Sexual Health Nurses’ Conference in Sydney.

Staff of the NCHSR also presented papers at workshops in Atlanta, Washington, and New York in the US, in Beijing in China, and in a number of cities in Australia. Of those in Sydney I draw your attention to two workshops generated by the research work in the hepatitis C and drug use area. The Blood Awareness project brought together a range of key stakeholders from across New South Wales to consider the results of the research in the context of developing innovative strategies for the health sector. A similar workshop of fifty participants from around Australia, focusing on the outcomes of the Barriers and Incentives to Drug Treatment, was held to consider the main results of the study and generate policy and practice recommendations.

I thank all our collaborators—especially our colleagues in the medical and health service professions, and community sectors—AIDS Councils, PLWHA organisations, hepatitis councils, and injecting drug user organisations and groups, who give so generously of their time and input. I also take this opportunity to thank the participants in all our research projects without whom we would be unable to continue our research. I also congratulate those who were awarded their doctorates in 2003—Limin Mao and Kate Ireland.

We welcome two new members of the Scientific Advisory Committee who take up their positions in 2004—Annie Madden from AIVL and Kerry Paterson from the Australia Hepatitis Council. We look forward to working with the new Commonwealth Ministerial Advisory Committee and its subcommittees and farewell those with whom the NCHSR worked for many years. The NCHSR also welcomes new staff members Wen Cao and Erol Digiusto who have joined us to further strengthen our research in the hepatitis C and injecting drug use area. Welcome also to Rodney McDonald, Lydia Ngai and Christina Rofe who are helping ensure the continuing smooth running and development of the NCHSR.
The NCHSR is advised by the Scientific Advisory Committee.

**Chair**
Professor Allan Kellehear, Health Sciences, La Trobe University

**Members**
Mr Brent Allan, Portfolio Convenor, Community and Capacity Development, National Association of People Living With HIV/AIDS (NAPWA), Sydney, Australia

Dr Robyn Biti*, Commonwealth Department of Health and Ageing, HIV/AIDS and Hepatitis C Section

Mr Alan Brotherton, Australian Federation of AIDS Organisations

Ms Vicki Brown*, Commonwealth Department of Health and Ageing, HIV/AIDS and Hepatitis C Section

Professor Annette Hamilton, Dean, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, The University of New South Wales

Professor John Kaldor, National Centre in HIV Epidemiology and Clinical Research, The University of New South Wales

Professor Susan Kippax, National Centre in HIV Social Research, The University of New South Wales

Associate Professor Pranee Liamputtong, Public Health, La Trobe University

Associate Professor Wendy Loxley, National Drug Research Institute, Curtin University of Technology

Ms Annie Madden, Executive Officer, Australian Injecting & Illicit Drug Users League (AIVL)

Ms Kerry Paterson, Strategic Development Officer, Australian Hepatitis Council

Professor Marian Pitts, Australian Research Centre in Sex, Health and Society, La Trobe University

Associate Professor David Plummer, Australian National Council on AIDS, Hepatitis and Related Diseases

Associate Professor Cindy Shannon, Indigenous Health Program, Population Health, University of Queensland

Professor Sheila Shaver, Pro Vice Chancellor—Research, The University of Western Sydney

Professor Bryan Turner, Faculty of Social & Political Sciences, Cambridge University, UK (Corresponding Member)

Associate Professor Paul Van de Ven, National Centre in HIV Social Research, The University of New South Wales (Observer)

Dr Catherine Waldby, Director, Centre for Research in Innovation, Culture and Technology, Brunel University, Uxbridge, UK (Corresponding Member)

Dr Heather Worth, National Centre in HIV Social Research, The University of New South Wales (Observer)

* No longer with the Commonwealth Department of Health and Ageing. The new Commonwealth Department of Health and Ageing members are to be advised.
PROFESSOR SUSAN KIPPAK, DIRECTOR

Professor Kippax was appointed Director of the National Centre in HIV Social Research in July 1994 after serving as Deputy Director from 1990 to June 1994.

Dr Kippax graduated from the University of Sydney in 1968 with a BA (Hons Class 1) in Psychology. In 1970 and 1971 she held a Rhodes Travelling Fellowship to Lady Margaret Hall, Oxford, and was awarded a PhD (Social Psychology) from the University of Sydney in 1972.

Since 1985 she has worked almost exclusively on researching the impact of HIV and AIDS on individuals and communities, and on documenting social and psychological responses to the epidemic among homosexually active men and heterosexuals as well as those living with HIV and AIDS. Her other major research interest concerns emotions, where her work has uncovered some of the processes in the social construction of emotions and illustrates the advantages of ‘memory work’, a method that has been used in researching sexuality.

Other members of staff in 2002 were:

**DEPUTY DIRECTORS**
Paul Van de Ven, BEd, MA, PhD
Heather Worth, MA(Hons), PhD

**SENIOR RESEARCH FELLOW**
Juliet Richters, BA, MPH, PhD

**RESEARCH FELLows**
Suzanne Fraser, BA(Hons), PhD
Henrike Körner, BA(Hons), DipEd, MA, PhD
Patrick Rawstorne, BA(Hons)
Gary Smith, BA(Hons), Carla Treloar, BSc(Hons), PhD

**POSTDOCTORAL FELLOWS**
John Egan, BA, MA, PhD
Shuguang Wang, MA, PhD

**SENIOR RESEARCH OFFICERS**
Max Hopwood, BA(Hons)
Limin Mao, BMed, PhD
Asha Persson, BA(Hons), PhD
Angela Song, BMed, MPH

**RESEARCH OFFICERS**
Wen Cao, BMed, MPH
Jeanne Ellard, BA(Hons), MPhil
Andrea Fogarty, BPsy(Hons)

Martin Holt*, BSc(Hons), MSc, PhD
Peter Hull, BPsy(Hons)
Hédimo Santana, BA(Hons)
kylie valentine, BA(Hons), PhD

**RESEARCH CONSULTANTS**
Jeanne Abelson*, BA(Hons), PhD
June Crawford*, BA(Hons), PhD
Wendy Lipworth**, BSc(Med) Hons, MBBS

**ADJUNCT PROFESSOR†**
Peter Aggleton, BA, DipEd, MEd, MA, PhD

**ADJUNCT ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR†**
Catherine Waldby, BA(Hons), PhD

**ADJUNCT RESEARCH FELLows†**
Anne Grunseit, BA(Hons), PhD
Sasho Lambevski, DipPolMo, PhD
Marsha Rosengarten, BA, GradDipComms, MA, PhD

**NON-CONTRACT STAFF**
Christy Newman**, BA(Hons)
Kathryn Owler*, BA, PhD
Kane Race*, BA(Hons), LLB
**Senior Finance Manager**  
Sarah Behman, AssDipAcc

**Personal Assistant**  
Janice Knapman, AssDipSocSci

**Administrative Assistants**  
Joseph Lopes  
Kamala Thomas*

**Accounts Assistant**  
Michelle Guth**  
Christina Rofe**

**Community Liaison Officer**  
Dean Murphy, BA(Hons)

**Events Co-ordinator**  
Rodney McDonald, BAppSci*

**Research Resource Manager**  
Maude Frances, BA(Hons),  
GradDipInf&LibMgt

**Assistant Librarian**  
Lydia Ngai, BA, MA, MIM**

**Publications Officer**  
Judi Rainbow‡

* Part year  † Part-time  ‡ Casual  †Honorary
Research at the National Centre in HIV Social Research falls into four broad areas:

**Mapping risk practice**

**Negotiating the medical field**

**Exploring cultural dynamics: risk and health**

**Understanding health knowledges and practices**

**Strengthening research capacity and getting research into policy and practice**

The studies listed under this category are all concerned with the mapping of safe and unsafe practices—both sexual and drug use practices. The first study described below is a longitudinal study; the remainder are repeat cross-sectional or ‘snapshot’ studies. While the snapshot studies of drug use and the national sex survey provide baseline data on risk associated with sexual and drug use practices, the longitudinal and repeat cross-sectional studies allow researchers to monitor practice and to reliably assess changes in risk over time.

All studies examine sexual and drug use practice with reference to the interpersonal and social lives of the populations under study. Thus the meanings of practice are explored and, in the case of the longitudinal study, the determinants of risk are identified.

**HEALTH IN MEN (HIM) COHORT STUDY**

An open cohort enrolling approximately 500 HIV-negative gay men per annum was established in Sydney in 2001 to monitor risk practice and HIV incidence in the context of vaccine initiatives. The study examines sexual and drug risk, beliefs and understandings of prophylactic and therapeutic vaccines, expectations of vaccines and motivations with reference to vaccine trials. Data are collected with regard to the nature of sexual relationships, HIV status of self and partner, sexually transmissible infections, HIV optimism–scepticism, and hepatitis A, B and C. Questions assessing risk practice match those from the earlier cohort study SMASH and are compatible with questions asked in the Periodic Surveys, Male Call/Out projects and the Positive Health cohort study to enable coordinated national data collection on risk practices. The aims of the study are to establish a baseline of risk practice among potential vaccine trial participants, and inform community-based organisations and other agencies engaged in health promotion of men’s current understandings of vaccine initiatives. The study is conducted by the NCHSR in collaboration with the NCHECR, AFAO and ACON.

**GAY COMMUNITY PERIODIC SURVEYS**

The first Periodic Survey of gay men’s sexual practice was conducted in Sydney in February 1996 and the survey has been conducted every six months since then. Cross-sectional data have been collected in a number of other major centres in Australia—Melbourne, Brisbane/Gold and Sunshine Coasts/Cairns and Townsville,
Adelaide, Perth and Canberra. Sample sizes vary according to city/centre but range between 2300 in Sydney and 350 in Canberra. Data are collected on the sexual practice of men recruited from a range of sex venues, social venues and sexual health clinics as well as from annual gay events such as the Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras Fair Day. These data provide useful monitoring of changes in the sexual practice of gay men; they do not provide detailed data on sexual and other practices nor on the interpersonal and socio-cultural contexts of risk. The Periodic Surveys have also provided summary data on drug use among these men. The studies are conducted by the NCHSR in collaboration with the NCHECR and local AIDS Councils.

**SYDNEY ASIAN GAY COMMUNITY PERIODIC SURVEYS**

The first Sydney Asian Gay Community Periodic Survey was conducted in December 1999–January 2000. The first follow-up survey was conducted in November–December 2002. Data are collected on the sex practices of Asian gay men recruited from a range of sex venues and social venues as well as from a number of community events in which Asian gay men participate. These data provide useful monitoring of changes in the sexual practices of Asian gay men and complement data from the Sydney Gay Community Periodic Surveys. The Sydney Asian Gay Community Periodic Surveys are conducted by the NCHSR in collaboration with the NCHECR, ACON Asian Project and NSW Multicultural HIV/AIDS and Hepatitis C Service.

**AUSTRALIAN STUDY OF HEALTH AND RELATIONSHIPS**

This is a national study of men’s and women’s sexual health, behaviour and attitudes, in which 19,307 randomly selected people aged between 16 and 59 were interviewed by telephone. Questions focused on sexual relationships, sexual practice and sexual health. Following successful pilots, interviewing took place from May 2001 to June 2002. The main report was published in the form of 20 papers in the *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Public Health* in April 2003. Further data analysis and publications will follow. This is a collaborative project with ARCSHS, Central Sydney Area Health Service and NCHECR.

**UNIVERSITY STUDENT SURVEYS**

This study ran from 1988 to 1999 at Macquarie University. It surveyed first-year students in Behavioural Sciences or Psychology early each year. The study repeated one that recruited a random sample of students aged 18 to 35 years from the University of Sydney. The data have provided a valuable resource for mapping the sexual practices and HIV and hepatitis C knowledge of young students over an important period of time. In 2002 and 2003 we collected data from UNSW students from a stall at Orientation Week.

**SWASH: SYDNEY WOMEN AND SEXUAL HEALTH**

SWASH is a questionnaire survey of sexual practices and identities and risks for other blood-borne viruses (e.g. injecting drug use) among women in contact with Sydney’s gay and lesbian community. It was conducted first in February 1996 and has been repeated with additions every two years since then. Women are recruited
from the Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras Fair Day and a range of other social and community venues and groups. Sample size has ranged from 585 to 1125. It is a joint study of ACON and NCHSR, with assistance from NCHECR.

**NON-GAY SEXUAL SUBCULTURES**

This pilot study was a preliminary mapping of non-heterosexual sexual subcultures within Sydney, e.g. BDSM scene, swingers, singles clubs. In addition, the study investigated cross-over between these subcultures and the sex industry. The study aimed to pinpoint sites for future ethnographic fieldwork in order to examine sexual risk practices for HIV, STIs and hepatitis in these ‘high-intensity’ sexual subcultures. The study focused on a content analysis of sex contact newspapers and magazines and documented a genre that is in the process of being replaced by the internet.

**INITIATION AND TRANSITION TO INJECTING DRUG USE AMONG YOUNG PEOPLE**

The study documents the history of the initiation and transition to injecting among a range of current injectors 25 years and under, and the relationship between the circumstances of the initial injecting episode and current risk practices with respect to transmission of hepatitis C. The study is original in its focus on transition and initiation and the multiple contexts in which these take place; the range of networks to be studied; the varieties of drugs studied; and the exploration of the interpersonal, subcultural and physical contexts in which young people inject drugs. The project is a collaboration between researchers, educators and clinicians—Ted Noffs Foundation, the National Drug and Alcohol Research Centre UNSW, NSW Users and AIDS Association (NUAA), Australian Injecting and Illicit Drug Users League (AIVL), and Kirketon Road Clinic. The study was expanded with the addition of a Northern Rivers arm in 2001. The report was finalised in 2003 and launched with significant media coverage. Papers arising from the study are being written for publication.

The studies listed here are concerned with the interface between health/illness and clinical practice. They include studies adopting a survey design method but most are studies focused on an in-depth examination of embodied response to medical practice and/or the social production/construction of meaning and practice.

**POSITIVE HEALTH STUDY (PH)**

The Positive Health study is a quantitative cohort study of HIV-positive men who have sex with men (MSM) living in NSW and Victoria. The study seeks to follow the same men across time to gain a better understanding of treatment uptake and difficulties of adherence to drug regimens; decisions to stop treatment; side effects;
knowledge of HIV treatments; sex practice; quality of life; and dosing practices in relation to clinical and bodily experiences of HIV and AIDS. It also seeks to provide ongoing monitoring of changes in CD4 and viral load testing behaviour. A general aim of PH is to provide a basis for assessing the impact over time of HIV and associated treatments on the lived experience of people living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA). Participants are drawn from non-clinic and clinic populations of PLWHA and from urban and rural centres. The fourth round of interviews will be conducted in the first half of 2004. Despite some participants being lost to follow-up, in some cases due to death, each year we seek to recruit a further 100 young positive men to the study to maintain an optimal size. To date, 568 MSM have participated in the study, with 188 of these men having participated in all rounds of data collection. Interviews are scheduled annually. This study is conducted in collaboration with NCHECR, ARCSHS, AFAO and NAPWA.

THE SIDE EFFECTS AND BODY SHAPE CHANGE PROJECT

This qualitative study aims to provide much-needed understanding of the complex issues facing HIV-positive men and women who experience HIV-treatment-related side effects, in particular body shape changes such as fat loss (lipoatrophy) and body fat redistribution (lipodystrophy). Through in-depth interviews the study documents and explores everyday realities of living and coping with side effects, their impact on people’s personal and social wellbeing, on body image and identity, and the potential difficulties that side effects may pose in relation to treatment decisions and health priorities. Data collection was completed in 2002. Findings were presented at conferences and in workshops during 2003. Findings were also disseminated through the community HIV media and used in educational resources. Several papers are scheduled for publication in academic journals in 2004.

LOCATING LIPODYSTROPHY: A REGIONAL STUDY OF BODY SHAPE CHANGE

This qualitative study constitutes the regional arm of The Side Effects and Body Shape Change Project. The study explores how cultural and geographical context impacts on the experience and management of side effects, in particular lipodystrophy (fat redistribution). The Side Effects Project identified several concerns associated with lipodystrophy among affected people in Sydney, primarily around forced HIV disclosure and stigma in inner-city gay community. By exploring lipodystrophy within the substantially different milieu of the Northern Rivers region, this study aims to understand how a specific regional context (e.g. access to medical services, access to information, peer support, local culture and lifestyles) mediates the ways in which lipodystrophy is negotiated, perceived and lived. Data collection and ethnographic fieldwork were completed in November 2002. Findings from the study will be presented through conferences and articles in 2004.

LIVING WITH HIV AND CULTURAL DIVERSITY

This study investigates the intersections of living with HIV and belonging to linguistically and culturally diverse (CALD) groups outside the Anglo-Celtic mainstream. The focus is on common issues across risk exposure categories and cultures/ethnicities. Data are collected through semi-structured interviews exploring
the meaning of diagnosis, access to HIV/AIDS-related information, health care services, treatment and support. Also investigated are the role of family and communities and cultural barriers to disclosure. The findings of the study will contribute to developing linguistically and culturally appropriate information and support. The study is conducted in collaboration with the Multicultural HIV/AIDS and Hepatitis C Service. Data collection is in progress.

BARRIERS TO HIV TESTING AND LATE DIAGNOSIS OF PEOPLE FROM NON-ENGLISH-SPEAKINGBACKGROUNDS

This project explores the barriers to HIV testing among patients presenting with advanced HIV/AIDS. Based on information from sexual health and social work professionals it is hypothesised that major barriers are stigma, fear of disclosure, lack of information and misinformation about HIV/AIDS. All HIV/AIDS patients (English-speaking and non-English-speaking backgrounds) of the Bigge Park Centre are interviewed using a short questionnaire. The questionnaire collects information about demographic details, use of health care services, personal reasons for late testing, disclosure and community, and general attitudes towards HIV/AIDS. The study is conducted in collaboration with the Bigge Park Centre, Liverpool Hospital. Data collection is in progress.

THE 3D PROJECT: DIAGNOSIS, DISCLOSURE, DISCRIMINATION AND LIVING WITH HEPATITIS C

The aim of the 3D Project was to explore the experiences of diagnosis, disclosure and discrimination of people living with hepatitis C. The study involved quantitative and qualitative research components with Phase One consisting of a self-administered short form questionnaire (n = 504) that focused on three main areas. These were: the impacts of a positive HCV diagnosis on people’s relationships, work and interactions with health care service providers; the impacts and outcomes of disclosing a HCV-positive serostatus; and discrimination and its effects on those living with hepatitis C, including one’s ability and desire to access health care. Analysis of these data provided a clear framework for formulating question areas explored during Phase Two. Phase Two of the 3D project comprised the qualitative component, consisting of in-depth semi-structured interviews with (n = 19) people with hepatitis C. This was a comparative study of experiences of diagnosis, disclosure and discrimination and the role of social support in relation to these. Data analysis for this project was completed in 2003 and a report launched in October 2003. So far, one paper from this study has been published in an international journal, with several other published papers anticipated for 2004.

BARRIERS AND INCENTIVES TO DRUG TREATMENT

This study aims to identify incentives and barriers to treatment uptake and adherence for substance misuse, and to identify predictors of successful uptake and adherence. Participants are recruited for interviews in three capital cities and two rural sites based on a scoping/consultation process. A purposive sampling frame is utilised in order to recruit 680 participants according to a number of behavioural and social variables including current treatment status, geographic location, drug of choice,
stage in drug use career, social support and social milieu. Participants are sampled according to the treatment options they have engaged in (methadone maintenance, naltrexone, rehabilitation etc.). A structured questionnaire covering areas such as drug use career, treatment history career, functionality, reasons for treatment uptake and adherence, reasons for non-uptake, reasons for non-adherence, current points of access to treatment and referral pathways is being utilised. The sample was extended in 2002 with funds from NSW Health. The data collection and analysis of this project was completed in 2003 with a report being provided to the Commonwealth for their consideration prior to wider dissemination of the results which is planned for 2004.

The focus of these studies is on the cultural and social contexts in which health and risk are practised. The studies include examination of the social and other contextual factors around sexual practice, and the interpersonal and discursive production of risk practices and health-seeking activities.

HIV RISK AND SEXUAL ADVENTURISM AMONG GAY MEN IN SYDNEY

This study is investigating HIV, HCV and STI risk in relation to gay men’s sexual practice, involvement in sexual networks (e.g. sex venues, private sex parties and use of the internet) and recreational drug use. The notion of ‘sexual adventurism’ is grounded in the type, variety and frequency of sex, the context of sexual engagement, and the use of recreational drugs to enhance sexual pleasure. Thirty-one qualitative interviews have been conducted with Sydney gay men who combine sexual activity with drug use (especially injecting drug use) and whose pattern of sexual activity is ‘adventurous’. The major themes being explored include gay men’s understanding of sexual health and risk, especially in relation to the transmission of HIV, HCV or STIs, and how these understandings inform sexual practice. The study is being conducted in consultation with representatives from the AIDS Council of NSW, AFAO, NAPWA, NSW Health and NCHECR, with funding from NSW Health.

SEROCONVERSION STUDY

The Seroconversion Study, begun in 1993, is a case series of men who have recently seroconverted to HIV. One of its major aims is to identify the determinants of seroconversion. The other is to document and analyse the discursive understandings of risk as they are used in the men’s narrative accounts to explain the events they believe led to their becoming infected. The data have also been used to examine narratives of ‘safe’ and ‘unsafe’ sexual practice. To date 118 seroconverters have been interviewed. This is a collaborative study between NCHSR, NCHECR, ARCSHS and the Albion Street Centre.
CHANGING COMMUNITY, CHANGING PRACTICE?: QUALITATIVE INTERVIEW-BASED STUDY

There is some evidence that the notion of gay community is undergoing change in Sydney. The advent of antiretroviral therapy has altered the meanings surrounding HIV and, by association, those surrounding ‘gay community’. Some argue that the HIV epidemic is receding from the consciousness of many gay men—particularly those who know no one with HIV or AIDS and who are not part of the political gay scene. How accurate are these views? This project interviewed 15 gay men aged between 18 and 27 in order to ascertain their views on gay community and HIV. Participants were recruited via fliers, advertisements, websites and by peer recruiters. Data analysis is nearing completion, and writing of the report is now under way. Two journal articles have also been produced thus far from the data. It is expected that the project will be completed by May 2004.

POST-EXPOSURE PROPHYLAXIS (PEP)

The PEP study aims to document the reasons for requesting PEP. It was begun in late 1998. Its major aim is to provide an estimate of the demand for PEP and to describe the reasons for requesting PEP. Another aim is to provide a parallel to the Seroconversion Study in its documentation and analysis of the discursive understandings of risk as they are used in the individual narrative accounts of the perceived risk event. This study is conducted in collaboration with NCHECR. A report of the qualitative arm of the study was published in 2003.

AN ANALYSIS OF ‘BLOOD AWARENESS’ FOR THE PURPOSES OF HEPATITIS C PREVENTION, EDUCATION AND HEALTH PROMOTION

The promotion of ‘blood awareness’ has been identified as a key strategy for containing the spread of blood-borne viruses. However, the development of a heightened awareness of blood as a source of infection requires consideration of many sensitive social and health implications, such as increased phobias about blood, which can be linked to discrimination around injecting drug use, and racial, ethnic and sexual identity categories. This study aims to identify the different ways in which individuals and communities of individuals relate to their own blood and the blood of others, to determine the extent to which understandings of blood play a role in HCV transmission and thus its prevention, and to produce a typology of the ways in which blood can be characterised for effective health promotion. Seventy-eight interviews were completed and preliminary analysis of some of the data has taken place. Data collection and analysis was completed in 2003. Funds were obtained from NSW Health to conduct a research feedback session in May 2003 with 100 stakeholders from around NSW invited to consider the project’s results and innovations in health promotion and to discuss the NSW Health Promotion Plan for Hepatitis C. Also, the report of this project was launched in October 2003 and a number of publications are anticipated in 2004.
ACCESS TO NEEDLE AND SYRINGE PROGRAMS IN SOUTH-EAST SYDNEY

Routine data collected at needle and syringe programs (NSPs) in south-east Sydney show that a number of population groups do not routinely access NSPs. In particular, youth and people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds were under-represented in the NSP clients. A collaboration between South East Health, NCHSR and NCHECR was formed to survey people who inject drugs but do not access NSPs to ascertain their drug use histories and practices as well as barriers and incentives to NSP access. The aims of this project were to develop recommendations for service delivery which meets the needs of this ‘hidden’ group of injecting drug users. Data collection was completed in 2003 with 294 participants completing an interviewer-administered questionnaire. Most interviewers for this project were recruited as peers from the local area. Data analysis and reporting are expected to be completed in 2004.

These studies are more applied and focus on evaluation and needs assessment. In particular they are concerned with levels of health knowledges and modes of education and health promotion delivery in Australia as well as in other countries.

INTERNATIONAL COLLABORATION ON HIV OPTIMISM

This consortium focuses on the use of common scale items to measure optimism–scepticism in the context of current HIV treatments. In 1999 a reliable 12-item scale was developed to provide a measure of optimism–scepticism with regard to the likelihood that those with low viral load will transmit HIV. The scale is being used in surveys both in Australia and overseas. A network of researchers from Australia, Europe, the UK and Canada has been established to provide comparative data. A number of publications and conference presentations have been organised.

HIV VACCINE ATTITUDES

This study aimed to develop reliable and valid scales of HIV vaccine attitudes. In all, 776 gay men were recruited at the 2001 Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras Fair Day and completed a questionnaire containing 38 items about HIV vaccines. Factor analysis revealed four distinct factors: Comfort with Participation in HIV Vaccine Trials; Optimism about HIV Vaccines/Vaccine Trials; Sexual Freedom; Willingness to Participate. The preliminary evidence is of sound reliability and validity. Alongside HIV vaccine trials, these scales will be a useful adjunct to social research in gay communities. Accordingly, the scales have been incorporated in a number of other studies and ongoing analyses are under way.
A COMPARATIVE ETHNOGRAPHY OF MSM IN VANCOUVER AND SYDNEY

This is an in-depth qualitative inquiry into the experience and perspectives in two cohorts of 17- to 22-year-old gay, bisexual and queer men in Sydney (n = 14) and Vancouver (n = 12). Data collection includes extended participant-observation fieldwork, juridical and structural analyses and semi-structured iterative interviews. Exploratory themes include family life, school, awareness of gayness/homosexuality, examining one’s own sexual identity, exploring and seeking gay community/culture and knowledge and experience regarding HIV/AIDS. The findings from this study will enrich our understanding of the forces that inform young queer men’s notions of self and society, as well as assist service providers working with queer youth. This study is conducted by the NCHSR in collaboration with ACON.

PREVENTING HIV ACROSS THE DUAL SOCIAL SYSTEM OF THE PEOPLE’S REPUBLIC OF CHINA (PRC)

This project (funded through an NHMRC Sidney Sax postdoctoral fellowship) examines HIV risk behaviour and prevention among self-employed young men in the dual employment system of the PRC. It assesses various peer-based interventions within urban, suburban and rural contexts, centred on the city of Chengdu and the nearby town of Yaan in Sichuan Province, PRC. Data collection was completed in 2002 and analyses are being undertaken in 2003–2004.

INFORMATION NEEDS AND SEEKING PRACTICES OF PEOPLE WITH HEPATITIS C

This study aims to understand how people with hepatitis C use the internet, in conjunction with other media, to access information. By situating internet use within people’s everyday realities, the research will provide insights into the sociocultural conditions that facilitate or impede its use. Particular attention will be paid to the impact of hepatitis-C-related discrimination and stigma on information practices. Drawing on sociological and information studies theories, as well as findings from public health research, the study will enable an integrated approach to providing appropriate information for this group. This project will also form the basis of a Master of Information Studies for Maude Frances. Research funding has been obtained, liaison with key stakeholders conducted, and the internet survey is in progress. Data collection is anticipated to be completed in 2004.
These activities are aimed at strengthening the capacity of Australian researchers to undertake best practice social research into HIV/AIDS and hepatitis C. A major activity commenced in 2003 was the Consortium for Social and Policy Research on HIV, Hepatitis C and Related Diseases described below. Other activities, including the Research Link Project and the training of postgraduate students, are detailed elsewhere in this report.

CONSORTIUM FOR SOCIAL AND POLICY RESEARCH ON HIV, HEPATITIS C AND RELATED DISEASES

This project, funded by NSW Health, aims to build and strengthen research capacity at the intersection between academic and health service organisations in the area of HIV, hepatitis C and illicit drug use in NSW, and to encourage collaborative research and the formation of healthy public policy in these fields. In 2003, planning began for an MA by Research program (to begin in 2004) which will offer scholarships for postgraduate students who wish to gain qualifications in the area. In addition, planning was undertaken for a series of six practical research workshops in 2004 to build research capacity amongst NSW research staff, policy makers, students and service providers.
The NCHSR has established relationships with other research institutions, universities, government bodies, non-government organisations and the community. These are listed below.

Members of the National Centre in HIV Social Research serve on the following committees:

**INTERNATIONAL/NATIONAL**

- **Member of the International Advisory Committee of the Polaris HIV Seroconversion Study: Understanding the Evolution and Impact of HIV Infection, Faculty of Medicine, University of Toronto, Canada (Kippax)**
- **Member of UNAIDS Inter Agency Task team on Education: Experts' Review Meeting, Paris, France (Kippax)**
- **Member of Global HIV Prevention Working Group, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation (Kippax)**
- **Member of the Program Executive Committee and the Clinical Program Committee of the Australian Thai HIV Vaccine Consortium (Kippax)**
- **Member (ex officio) of the Clinical Trials and Research Committee (CTARC) of ANCAHRD (Kippax)**
- **Member of the HIV/AIDS Committee of ANCAHRD (Kippax)**
- **Member of the Clinical Program Committee of the Australian Thai HIV Vaccine Consortium (Van de Ven)**
- **Member of the Scientific Advisory Committee of the Australian Research Centre in Sex, Health and Society (Kippax)**
- **Member of the Scientific Advisory Committee of the National Centre in HIV Epidemiology and Clinical Research (Kippax)**
- **Members of 4-Centre HIV/AIDS Research Initiative (4-CHARI), National Centre in HIV Social Research, The University of New South Wales, Sydney, Australia; The HIV Social, Behavioural and Epidemiological Studies Unit, University of Toronto, Canada; Thomas Coram Research Unit, Institute of Education, University of London, UK; and Centre for the Study of AIDS, University of Pretoria, South Africa (Kippax, Van de Ven)**
- **Managing Editor of the Canadian Journal for the Study of Adult Education (Egan)**
- **Board Member of the Australian Centre for Lesbian and Gay Research (Frances)**
STATE/COMMUNITY

- Hepatitis C Council of NSW Medical Advisory Panel (Kippax)
- NSW Ministerial Advisory Committee on AIDS (Kippax)
- Social Research Advisory Committee of the AIDS & Infectious Diseases Branch of NSW Health (Kippax)
- Steering Committee, Enquiry into Hepatitis C-related Discrimination, Anti-Discrimination Board of New South Wales (Kippax)
- ACON Liaison Committee (Kippax, Van de Ven)
- Consortium for Social and Policy Research on HIV, Hepatitis C and Related Diseases (Kippax, Worth, Treloar)
- HIV/AIDS Library Network (Frances)
- PEP Awareness Working Group (Körner)
- AFAO–NAPWA Education Team Steering Committee (Race)
- Ministerial Advisory Committee on AIDS Strategy, Health Promotion Sub-committee, NSW Health (Rawstorne)
- ACON, Sydney Women and Sexual Health Research Project Management Committee (Richters)
- NSW Health Department Sexual Health Advisory Committee (Richters)
- NSW Ministerial Advisory Committee on Hepatitis (Treloar)

THE UNIVERSITY OF NEW SOUTH WALES

- Standing Committee, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences (Kippax)
- Human Research Ethics Advisory Panels (Körner)
- Toxicology/Pharmacology Working Group, National Centre in HIV Epidemiology and Clinical Research (Persson)
- Postgraduate Research Coordinator, National Centre in HIV Social Research (Richters)
- Postgraduate Affairs Committee, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences (Richters)
- Research Committee, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences (Worth)
NCHSR staff members edit professional journals/newsletters and book series and sit on editorial boards.

**NCHSR EDITORS**

- *Culture, Health and Sexuality: An International Journal for Research, Intervention and Care* (Kippax, Foundation Editor)
- *BioFutures, BioCultures* book series, Routledge (Waldby, Editor)
- *In Vivo: The Cultural Mediations of Biomedical Science*, University of Washington Press (Waldby)

**EDITORIAL BOARD MEMBERS**

- *AIDS Care* (Kippax)
- *Critical InQueeries* (Waldby)
- *Feminist Theory* (Kippax)
- *FibreCulture: Critical Internet Studies* (Waldby)
- *International Journal of Critical Psychology* (Kippax)
- *Journal of Medical Humanities* (Waldby)
- *Reproductive Health Matters* (Richters)
- *Sexualities* (Kippax)
- *Word Is Out: Online Journal for Gay Lesbian and Queer Liberation* (Frances)

**REFEREES/REVIEWS**

In 2003, NCHSR staff continued to review articles for a number of prominent journals, including:

- *AIDS*
- *AIDS Care*
- *AIDS Education and Prevention*
- *American Journal of Public Health*
- *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Public Health*
- *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Social Issues*
- *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Sociology*
- *Australian Health Review*
- *Australian Feminist Studies*
In addition to reviewing NHMRC and ARC grant applications, NCHSR staff have been involved in reviewing all ANCAHRD health promotion publications and grant applications to the Health Research Council of New Zealand. They have also reviewed material for the Australian Commonwealth and state health departments, the Canadian Health Department, the Hepatitis C Council of NSW, the Terrence Higgins Trust of England, the HIV/AIDS, Hepatitis and Related Diseases (HHARD) Social Research Conference, the Wellcome Trust, the 2003 ASHM Conference, the AIDS Impact Conference and the Medical Research Council (UK).
Members of the National Centre in HIV Social Research served on the following conference organising committees:

- Member of the Scientific Committee, AIDS Impact Conference (July 2003), Milan, Italy
- Co-organiser of the Public Intellectuals Conference (September 2003), Auckland, NZ
- Co-organiser of World AIDS Day, UNSW Meeting (NCHSR, NCHECR and School of Public Health) (December 2003) at UNSW, Sydney, Australia

Members of the National Centre in HIV Social Research attended the following conferences in 2003:

1st Annual Adult Education Research Conference Queer Pre-Conference (June 2003), San Francisco, USA
1st Interdisciplinary Conference on Communication, Medicine and Ethics (June 2003), Cardiff University, Cardiff, UK
6th International AIDS Impact Conference (July 2003), Milan, Italy
9th NAPWA Biennial National Conference ‘Art of Living’ (October 2003), Cairns, Qld
10th Biennial Conference of the International Society for Theoretical Psychology (June 2003), Istanbul, Turkey
15th Annual Conference of the Australasian Society for HIV Medicine (ASHM) (October 2003), Cairns, Qld
16th World Sexology Congress (March 2003), Havana, Cuba
17th Annual Meeting of the Japanese Society for AIDS Research (November 2003), Kobe, Japan
44th Annual Adult Education Research Conference (June 2003), State University, San Francisco, California, USA
Aboriginal Sexual Health Workshop (September 2003), Albury, NSW
AIDS Vaccine 2003 International Conference (September 2003), New York, USA
ANEX Harm Reduction Conference (June 2003), Melbourne, Victoria
Annual Conference of the Australian Sociological Association (December 2003), Armidale, NSW
APSD (Australian Professional Society for Alcohol and Drugs) (November 2003), Brisbane, Qld
Body Modification: Changing Bodies, Changing Selves Conference (April 2003), Macquarie University, Sydney, NSW
British Sociology Association Annual Conference (April 2003), York University, UK
Centers for Disease Control workshop on Prevention Communication (February 2003), Atlanta, USA
Global Health Symposium (September 2003), Sydney, NSW
HIV Educational Practice in a Changing Environment: A Social Research & Educational Practice Forum (February 2003), Brisbane, Qld
Information, Communication & Society Research Symposium (September 2003), Oxford Internet Institute, Oxford, UK
IHRC (International Harm Reduction Conference) (April 2003), Chiang Mai, Thailand
‘My blood is always dark red’: Research Reportback Forum and Hepatitis C Health Promotion Plan Discussion (May 2003), Sydney, NSW
National HIV Prevention Conference (July 2003), Atlanta, USA
OAR/CDC Workshop on Increasing the Efficacy of HIV Prevention Efforts for MSM (January 2003), Washington DC, USA
Ontario HIV Treatments Network Conference (November 2003), Toronto, Canada
PLWHA Conference (October 2003), Cairns, Qld
Public Intellectuals Conference (September 2003), Auckland, NZ
Royal Institute of Inter-Faith Studies Conference (October 2003), Amman, Jordan
Sociology Association of NZ Annual Conference (December 2003), Auckland, NZ
VELIM seminar, Global History, Human Nature and the New World Order (August 2003), University of Sydney, NSW
World AIDS Day, Prevention-treatment nexus: The challenges of sustaining safe sex (December 2003), University of New South Wales, Sydney, NSW

Since 1999 the Commonwealth Department of Health and Ageing has funded a NCHSR-based project called the Research Link Project to undertake activities to enhance relationships between HIV social researchers and those working in the fields of HIV education, health promotion, policy development and care and support. In 2003, the project also involved work in the area of hepatitis C for the first time.

The work of the Research Link Project covers the following areas: research dissemination; capacity development of educators in community sector organisations; liaison and partnership building with the community sector; and the involvement of the community sector in research processes.

RESEARCH DISSEMINATION
The Research Link Project plays an important role in supporting the distribution of HIV social research findings to those working in HIV education, health promotion, policy development and care and support. Dissemination strategies aim to provide timely access to relevant social research findings and opportunities to explore the implications of these findings for HIV education and health promotion.
An important and ongoing strategy of the Research Link Project is to organise feedback sessions both for communities in which social research projects were conducted and for workers in the sector. These sessions involve the presentation of new research findings and an opportunity to explore the implications of these findings for HIV education and health promotion. In 2003, sessions were organised for the Sydney, Melbourne, Queensland and Perth Gay Community Periodic Surveys, the Sydney Gay Asian Men’s Survey, the Health In Men (HIM) study, the Cruising and Connecting Online report and the Annual Report of Behaviour. Social research updates for AFAO’s Education Strategies Group were also organised, as well as presentations on topical issues to various community organisations. In the area of hepatitis C, Research Link organised a joint community and media launch of three NCHSR reports: the 3D study report, the Initiation & Transition study report, and the Blood Awareness Project (summary of findings) in October 2003.

In 2003, the Research Link Project began producing and distributing the quarterly Social Research Briefs and biannual Social Research Issues Papers funded by NSW Health. Issues covered by these publications included: the internet and gay men; risk among gay men; serodiscordant relationships; sexually transmissible infections; and new treatments for hepatitis C infection.

**COMMUNICATION AND PARTNERSHIP BUILDING**

The project plays a crucial role in developing and fostering collaborative relationships between government departments, health promotion and education agencies and research organisations. Activities this year included the development of a session called Demystifying Research at the NAPWA conference in October and an in-service with staff at the Albion Street Centre on issues for gay men in serodiscordant relationships. The project officer participated in a number of policy working groups and committees. One of these was the newly established NSW HIV Increase Action Plan Interagency which was set up to respond to the rise in HIV infections in that state. Other new committees included the Victorian HIV/STIs testing campaign consortium, the Sexual Health Website Reference Group (VAC/GMHC) and the organising committee of the HIV satellite day of the 18th World Conference on Health Promotion and Health Education (April 2004).

**CAPACITY BUILDING**

The project conducted a number of workshops in 2003. These included a research-into-practice workshop (Brisbane, March 2003), a national workshop on the use of research in planning chat-site outreach programs (and other internet-based education activities) for gay men (Sydney, September 2003) and a textual analysis workshop (Melbourne, December 2003).

In late 2003 the Research Link Project also undertook an analysis of print media coverage of the news of an increase in HIV infections in mid-2003 with a view to providing an insight into how community-based HIV organisations and gay men were being represented by the media in the context of the first increase in notifications of new HIV infections for many years.

In the hepatitis C area the project was involved in the production and distribution of papers from the Blood Awareness Project forum, held for NSW health promotion workers in May 2003.
The NCHSR has undertaken a Memorandum of Understanding with the HIV Social, Behavioural and Epidemiological Research Unit, University of Toronto; the Centre for the Study of AIDS, University of Pretoria, South Africa; and the Thomas Coram Research Unit, Institute of Education, University of London, UK.

A Memorandum of Understanding has been developed between NCHSR and the School of Health, University of New England, Armidale, NSW.

NCHSR continues to work collaboratively with the Australian Research Centre in Sex, Health and Society, La Trobe University, Melbourne.

Other collaborative research has been undertaken with NCHECR, NDARC, NCEPH at ANU, Canberra, and other institutions such as:

ACON (formerly the AIDS Council of New South Wales)
ACON Northern Rivers
AIDS Action Council of the ACT
AIDS Council of South Australia
AIDS Treatment Project Australia (ATPA)
Albion Street Centre
Australasian Society for HIV Medicine (ASHM)
Australian Federation of AIDS Organisations (AFAO)
Australian Hepatitis Council
Australian Injecting & Illicit Drug Users League (AIVL)
Australian National University, Canberra, ACT
Bigge Park Centre, Liverpool Hospital, NSW
Central Sydney Area Health Service
Centre for Values, Ethics and the Law in Medicine, University of Sydney, NSW
Corrections Health Service, NSW Health Department
Department of Anthropology, University of Auckland, NZ
Drug Users Network, Education & Support (DUNES)
Feminist Studies, University of Canterbury, NZ
Hepatitis C Council of New South Wales
Hepatitis Council of Western Australia
Kirketon Road Centre, Sydney, NSW
LMS Consulting
National Association of People Living With HIV/AIDS (NAPWA)
National Centre in Education and Training on Addictions (NCETA), Flinders University, SA
National Drug Research Institute (NDRI), Curtin University, WA
NSW Multicultural HIV/AIDS and Hepatitis C Service
NSW Users and AIDS Association (NUAA)
People Living With HIV/AIDS (PLWHA), NSW
People Living With HIV/AIDS (PLWHA), Vic
Queensland AIDS Council
Queensland Alcohol and Drug Research and Education Centre (QADREC), University of Queensland
Queensland Positive People
School of Education, University of Auckland, NZ
School of Humanities, University of Western Sydney, NSW
School of Psychology, University of Western Sydney, NSW
School of Public Health, Curtin University, WA
Sichuan Academy of Social Science, China
South East Sydney Area Health Service (HARD Unit), NSW
Ted Noffs Foundation, Randwick, NSW
Thai Red Cross/HIV-NAT, Bangkok, Thailand
Victorian AIDS Council/Gay Men’s Health Centre
Western Australian AIDS Council
Western Australian Department of Health

During 2003, all new items in the NCHSR library catalogue were added to the HIV/AIDS Library Network Database, available online through RMIT University.

The HIV/AIDS Database (HIVA) covers 1980 to the present time and includes journal articles, books, reports and audiovisual titles from the catalogues of the NSW HIV/AIDS Library Network. It deals extensively with clinical, medical, social and psychological aspects of HIV/AIDS and hepatitis C and is designed to provide information support for doctors, health care workers and allied professionals, students, researchers, and people with HIV/AIDS and hepatitis C.

HIVA includes selected holdings from the following library catalogues:

Albion Street Centre
Drug and Alcohol Services Library (formerly CEIDA)
AIDS Council of NSW (ACON)
FPA Health
NSW Department of Corrective Services
NCHSR
NCHSR hosts regular colloquia and in 2003 they were:

7 Feb  Ms Angela Kelly, PhD candidate, Department of Sociology, Macquarie University, and Australian Research Centre in Sex, Health and Society, La Trobe University, ‘My brain was pickled and fried’: Listening to personal narratives of the lived experience of AIDS dementia.

7 Mar  Dr Marsha Rosengarten, Research Fellow, Department of Sexually Transmitted Diseases, Royal Free & University College Medical School, University College London, and Visiting Research Fellow, National Centre in HIV Social Research, Consumer activism in the pharmacology of HIV.

7 Mar  Dr Rae Frances, Associate Professor of History, University of New South Wales, Containing what? Changing approaches to the management of the sex industry in Kalgoorlie and their implications for the health of workers (and clients), 1895–2002.

17 April Professor Peter Aggleton, Thomas Coram Research Unit, Institute of Education, University of London, Social capital, social inclusion and HIV/AIDS: Re-reading prevention success.

24 April Professor Jonathon Elford, Institute of Health Sciences, City University, London, The internet, HIV and risk.

12 May Dr Scott Burris, James E. Beasley Professor of Law, Temple University, Beasley School of Law, Governance and health: Preliminary thoughts.

15 May Dr Ian Lubek, Psychology Department, University of Guelph, Ontario, Canada, ‘Sorry Sir, Srei Neamb can’t serve you tonight, she’s dead from AIDS’: Gender inequity, international beer sales, globalization and corporate (ir)responsibility in Cambodia.

5 June Craig Osmond, Casual Lecturer, Sociology Department, Macquarie University, Towards a productive conceptualisation of gay desire in casual sex assemblages.

26 June Dr Juliet Richters, Senior Research Fellow, National Centre in HIV Social Research, The University of New South Wales, Sex in Australia: An overview of the Australian Study of Health and Relationships.

14 Aug Dr Catherine Waldby, Director of the Centre for Research in Innovation, Culture and Technology, Brunel University, West London, The UK Stem Cell Bank: Managing the tissue economy.

27 Nov Dr Catherine O’Connor, Director, Sexual Health Service, Central Sydney Area Health Service, HIV in Australia & Vietnam: Sexual health promotion for Sydney’s Vietnamese community.
Visitors

AUSTRALIA
Dr Niamh Stephenson, University of Western Sydney

CANADA
Professor Ian Lubek, Psychology Department, University of Guelph, Ontario

SOUTH AFRICA
Professor Mary Crewe, Director, Centre for the Study of AIDS, University of Pretoria

UNITED KINGDOM
Professor Peter Aggleton, Thomas Coram Research Unit, Institute of Education, University of London
Professor Jonathan Elford, City University, London
Dr Annabelle Mooney, Centre for Language and Communication Research, Cardiff University
Dr Catherine Waldby, Director of the Centre for Research in Innovation, Culture and Technology, Brunel University, Uxbridge
Staff of the NCHSR delivered a number of lectures and workshops during 2003.

**Professor Susan Kippax** presented the following workshops and lectures:

- **Social science-based HIV prevention: Methodological and measurement issues**, invited paper at the OAR/CDC Workshop on Increasing the Efficacy of HIV Prevention Efforts for MSM, Washington DC, USA, January 2003
- **Prevention in context: The changing face of the epidemic**, invited paper at Centers for Disease Control workshop on Prevention Communication, Atlanta, USA, February 2003
- Discussant/panellist at VELIM seminar, Global History, Human Nature and the New World Order, The University of Sydney, NSW, August 2003
- Co-organised and presented (with Dr Heather Worth), **Living in a serodiscordant relationship**, a symposium organised for the 15th Annual Conference of the Australasian Society for HIV Medicine, Cairns, Australia, October 2003

**Ms Jeanne Ellard** presented a paper (with Sean Slavin from the Australian Research Centre in Sex, Health and Society [ARCSHS]) entitled **Kinship and sociality: Gay and lesbian relationships in contemporary Australian society** at the ACON Roundtable, Sociality & Belonging: Gays and Lesbians—Out Fitting In, February 2003; and ran a workshop for the staff of the Albion Street Centre entitled Serodiscordant Relationships: One Size Fits All? (presented with Dean Murphy), August 2003.

**Dr Henrike Körner** gave two lectures in the School of Modern Language Studies and reported on findings from the Post-exposure Prophylaxis study to the AFAO Education Studies Group.

**Mr Dean Murphy** presented (with Patrick Rawstorne) data from the Gay Chat Sites Survey to AFAO’s Education Strategies Group, June 2003; gave a paper on community collaboration at the HIV Center for Clinical and Behavioural Studies, Columbia University, July 2003; gave a paper entitled **Reducing the risk: The Australian experience** at Gay Men’s Health Crisis (GMHC), New York, July 2003; ran a workshop on Serodiscordant Relationships: One Size Fits All? (presented with Jeanne Ellard) for the staff of the Albion Street Centre, August 2003.

**Dr Asha Persson** reported on findings from the Side Effects and Lipodystrophy Project at an ACON Healthy Life+ workshop, a program for HIV-positive gay men and part of ACON’s HIV Living Project.
Mr Patrick Rawsthorne presented (with Dean Murphy) data from the Gay Chat Sites Survey to AFAO’s Education Strategies Group, June 2003; gave a lecture entitled Behaviour and epidemiology: Sexual transmission to MPH and MIPH students at the University of Sydney, August 2003. He also delivered workshops or presentations entitled: (i) Sexual practice in the context of HIV transmission risk among MSM at the NSW Department of Health Rural HIV/AIDS Coordinators Meeting, March 2003; (ii) Recreational drug use among men who have sex with men (including PLWHA): Prevalence rates and contexts of use at the Australasian Society for HIV Medicine, Short Course in Medicine, April 2003; (iii) Engaging in HIV-positive community, February 2003, and Use of gay chat sites among gay men in Sydney and Melbourne, June 2003, at AFAO Education Studies Group meetings; and (iv) Update on behavioural studies at the Ministerial Advisory Committee on AIDS Strategy (CAS) meeting, December 2003.

Dr Juliet Richters gave several lectures, talks and workshops on: (i) sex research and (ii) pornography for Diploma in Sexual Health Counselling, the Australasian College of Sexual Health Physicians; (iii) Sex as social behaviour: Researching sexuality and culture for Co-Workers’ Meeting, Multicultural HIV/AIDS Service, Central Sydney Area Health Service; (iv) Critiquing qualitative research in sexual health for Sydney Sexual Health Centre, Sydney Hospital; (v) Researching social aspects of HIV/AIDS for Social Work SOCW2001, Human Behaviour 2, Physical and Psychological Health, the University of New South Wales; and (vi) Sex research and the Australian Study of Health and Relationships, Post-registration Sexual Health Nurses Course, Sydney Hospital.

Dr Carla Treloar gave presentations on the research findings of the Blood Awareness for Hepatitis C Prevention Education project at: (i) the Sydney Hospital Hepatitis C Course for Nurses and (ii) the South East Sydney Interagency meeting. She also gave a presentation on the research findings from the Initiation and Transition project to the South East Sydney Interagency meeting on Young People and Injecting Drug Use: Prevention and Transition, and was part of the organising committee for the final meeting which brought together almost 100 people working in the youth and drugs sectors.

Associate Professor Paul Van de Ven was an invited international expert at the Behavioural Surveillance Workshop for the Ministry of Health in Beijing; reviewed MSM research protocols for Family Health International in Bangkok; and presented NCHSR research findings at a QuAC meeting in Brisbane and an AFAO board meeting in Sydney.

Dr Heather Worth gave two lectures in the School of Sociology at the University of New South Wales in 2003. She ran a day workshop on evaluation for the NSW Aboriginal Sexual Health Workers Conference in Albury. She also spoke at a Heplink workshop about the activities of the Consortium for Social and Policy Research on HIV and Hepatitis C.
In 2003 there were ten PhD students attached to the NCHSR, some of them co-supervised elsewhere in the university. There was one Master of Information Studies student co-supervised in the School of Information Systems, Technology and Management. Their projects are described below.

**PHD STUDENTS**

**Psychosocial examination of euthanasia and assisted suicide**

Suzanne Bermingham

This project examines the practice of euthanasia and assisted suicide, primarily through the experiences of health care professionals, family members and other caregivers who have assisted someone to die. The study focuses on AIDS-related assisted deaths, and includes interviews conducted in Australia and The Netherlands.

- **Time frame:** 1995–2003
- **Supervisor:** Prof. Susan Kippax (NCHSR)

**Implicit and explicit attitudes of health care workers and their hepatitis-C-positive clients: Are they related to quality of care?**

Loren Brener

This research examines the health care experiences of people who have hepatitis C virus, and assesses how the implicit and explicit attitudes of both service providers and their hepatitis-C-positive clients may affect the health care and treatment outcomes for people with hepatitis C. It addresses some limitations of previous research by using various instruments, not only self-report measures, to assess both the implicit and explicit attitudes of the target groups.

- **Time frame:** 2003–2005
- **Supervisors:** Prof. Susan Kippax (NCHSR), Dr William von Hippel (Psychology, UNSW)

**Male factors influencing participation in PMTCT programs in Tanzania, East Africa**

Michael Burke

This study examines the role of men in community acceptance and support of opportunities to reduce the risk of vertical transmission of HIV in a rural African setting. Factors and themes related to gender roles, stigma and communication are explored.

- **Time frame:** 2002–2005
- **Supervisors:** Prof. Susan Kippax (NCHSR), Prof. John Kaldor (NCHECR)

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Dr Kate Ireland, Doctor of Philosophy (Interdisciplinary Studies in Sexuality, Health and Culture)

Dr Limin Mao, Doctor of Philosophy (Interdisciplinary Studies in Education, Sexuality, Health and Culture)
**Sexual attitudes and behaviour of international backpackers visiting Australia**

Cari Egan

Using theories derived from anthropology, sociology and psychology, this project examines the sexual attitudes and behaviour of young international travellers to Australia, specifically comparing their casual sex and condom use behaviour prior to and during travel. In addition to exploring traveller sexual behaviour both quantitatively and qualitatively, this study also explores the perceptions held by hostel and sexual health/travel clinic employees of travellers’ sexual safety while abroad. The importance of self, adventure, liminoid space and place for the traveller will also be explored.

**Time frame:** 2002–2005  
**Supervisors:** Dr Juliet Richters, Prof. Susan Kippax (NCHSR)

**Press ‘enter’: information technologies and the textual construction of sex**

Abigail Groves

Generated by contemporary information technologies, ‘cybersex’ has recently emerged as a new site of sexuality within popular culture. This project interrogates the construction of ‘sex’ in and around this site and examines its implications for discourses of technology, subjectivity and the body. Utilising qualitative data drawn from interviews with authors of cybersex texts, the project also examines users’ own experiences of internet sexuality and their ethical practices in generating the collaborative text of cybersex.

**Time frame:** 2003–2005  
**Supervisors:** Dr Heather Worth, Dr Juliet Richters (NCHSR)

**Dishing it up: food, gay men and identity**

Michelle Imison

This study explores the dynamics of food, cooking and eating in relationships between and among gay men in Sydney. It considers how gay men are negotiating cooking and eating, and the possible consequences for conceptualisations of gay bodies, sex, identities and relationships.

**Time frame:** 1999–2003  
**Supervisors:** Dr Juliet Richters (NCHSR), Ms Mira Crouch (Sociology, UNSW)

**Sociocultural context and Iranian women’s sexual understandings**

Effat Merghati Khoei

This project seeks to explore the social and cultural meanings related to women’s sexual understandings in a culturally distinct group of women—Iranian women living in Sydney. This qualitative study draws on ethnographic data collected from women’s sexual life stories to explore the sociocultural context in which the sexual meanings, perceptions, experiences and beliefs have been shaped. The study contributes to the development of an explanatory model of sexuality for this group of women. This
model will inform and direct public health endeavours to restrain the spread of HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmissible diseases and to reduce sexual abuse. Findings will be a starting point for possible sexual health interventions.

Time frame: 2002–2005
Supervisors: Prof. Maurice Eisenbruch (Centre for Culture and Health, UNSW), Dr Juliet Richters (NCHSR)

LOOKING AFTER YOURSELF: THE CULTURAL POLITICS OF HEALTH MAGAZINE READER LETTERS

This project investigates the contemporary function of health magazines, examining reader letters in three ‘commercial’ (Good Medicine, Men’s Health and Nature & Health) and three ‘community’ (Talkabout, Users’ News and The Professional) publications, and interviewing magazine editors. Although each of these six magazines constitutes its audience through differences in cultural identity (e.g. ‘men’ or ‘sex workers’), their reader letters validate a medicalised sociality and a shared political ethics of consumer advocacy. This research endorses interdisciplinarity in social research, particularly between the fields of media/cultural studies and health/medical sociology.

Supervisors: Dr Catherine Waldby (Brunel University, UK), Prof. Philip Bell (Media & Communications, UNSW)

PLEASURE CONSUMING MEDICINE

This study examines the political investment in medical authority that arises in the context of the culture of consumption. It argues that drugs and the discourses surrounding them raise important questions about the exercise of power in consumer society, showing the relation of medical authority to the politics of pleasure. Using a range of empirical and historical examples, the thesis attempts to develop a practical theory of ethics and embodiment that does not allow drugs to swallow up the framing of political problems and solutions but rather aims to locate their activity.

Supervisors: Prof. Susan Kippax (NCHSR), Dr Rosalyn Diprose (Philosophy, UNSW)

THE MEANINGS AND PRACTICE OF ANAL INTERCOURSE BETWEEN MEN

This study investigates the meanings and practice of anal intercourse in contemporary Western culture, with special reference to Australian gay men. It is argued that anal intercourse has become increasingly ‘civilised’ or ‘normalised’ in Western culture, especially following the sexual revolution of the 1960s and the AIDS epidemic of the 1980s.

Supervisors: Prof. Susan Kippax (NCHSR)
MASTER OF INFORMATION STUDIES BY RESEARCH

AN INVESTIGATION OF INFORMATION NEEDS AND SEEKING PRACTICES OF PEOPLE WITH HEPATITIS C

Maude Frances

This study aims to understand how people with hepatitis C use the internet, in conjunction with other media, to access information. By situating internet use within people’s everyday realities, the research will provide insights into the sociocultural conditions that facilitate or impede its use. Drawing on sociological and information studies theories, as well as findings from public health research, the study will enable an integrated approach to providing appropriate information for this group. The research includes quantitative and qualitative arms, with an online survey and follow-up interviews.

Time frame: 2003–2006
Supervisors: Assoc. Prof. Connie Wilson (School of Information Systems, Technology and Management, UNSW), Dr Carla Treloar (NCHSR)

EXCHANGE STUDENT

Rebecca Sutton

Rebecca Sutton is currently undertaking a degree in psychology at the University of Bath, England, which involves doing a mandatory work placement for 30 weeks during the third year of the course. For this placement Rebecca worked as a research assistant at the NCHSR, under the supervision of Dr Carla Treloar, in the research areas of hepatitis C and injecting drug use. Rebecca was involved in analysis of data, the write-up of reports, and the planning and preparation of a future study, and she also had the opportunity to attend seminars and visit various health centres to broaden her knowledge. The placement also allowed Rebecca to plan and prepare for her dissertation, a major piece of work counting towards her university degree.

Theses examined

Research Masters Thesis, School of Sociology and Communications, Brunel University, United Kingdom, 2003
PhD Thesis, Faculty of Arts, Queensland University of Technology, Australia, 2003
PhD Thesis, Department of Sociology and Social Policy, Faculty of Arts, University of Sydney, Australia, 2003
MA Thesis, Department of Sociology, University of Auckland, New Zealand, 2003
MA Thesis, School of Film, Television and Media Studies, University of Auckland, New Zealand, 2003
MA Thesis, School of Nursing, Centre for Nursing Research, Queensland University of Technology, Australia, 2003
BA (Honours) Thesis, School of Women’s Studies, Australian National University, Australia, 2003


Fraser, S. (2003, October). ‘I enjoy the scene ... sometimes I think the scene enjoys me’: Young gay men, safe sex and gay community. Paper presented at 15th Annual Conference of the Australasian Society for HIV Medicine, Cairns.


Van de Ven, P., Mao, L. & Prestage, G. (2003, October). *Against the national trend: No change in rates of unprotected anal intercourse among gay Asian men in Sydney,*


Funding was received from the following sources in 2003:

### COMMONWEALTH FUNDING

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### NSW DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

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### QUEENSLAND DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

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### VICTORIAN DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

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HEALTH DEPARTMENT OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA


DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

Adelaide Gay Community Periodic Survey Van de Ven 38 357

NATIONAL INSTITUTES OF HEALTH (NIH) USA

HIV Vaccine Design & Development Project Kippax & Van de Ven US$535 553

ACT HEALTH

Canberra Gay Community Periodic Survey Van de Ven 8 120

ACON (FORMERLY AIDS COUNCIL OF NSW), VICTORIAN AIDS COUNCIL, AUSTRALIAN FEDERATION OF AIDS ORGANISATIONS (AFAO)

Report on internet use among gay men Van de Ven 6 417

INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR EDUCATIONAL PLANNING (UNESCO)

UNESCO Policy Brief in HIV Education Lipworth 12 710

UNITED NATIONS POPULATION FUND (UNFPA)

UNAIDS Thematic Consultation on Young People (2002/03) Lipworth & Kippax 25 195

NHMRC FELLOWSHIP


ARC LIEF

Asia/Pacific HIV/AIDS Database: support for regional policy research Kippax, Cooper, Kaldor & Zwi 20 000
SOUTH EASTERN SYDNEY AREA HEALTH SERVICE

Improving Access to Needle and Syringe Programs
Treloar 65,328

UNIVERSITY OF NEW SOUTH WALES RESEARCH SUPPORT PROGRAM


Women in Research 21 Program Persson 500

Women in Research 21 Program Fraser 500

Postgraduate travel to Cardiff Newman 3,060

Honours graduate research 1,650

Casual teaching 32,709

Research Quantum funding (2002, paid in 2003) 174,000

Research Infrastructure Building Grant (2002, paid in 2003) 160,000