

# NATIONAL HIV BEHAVIORAL SURVEILLANCE (NHBS)

## Years Survey Included Sexual and Gender Minority (SGM)-Related Questions

2003–Present

### Survey Description

The National HIV Behavioral Surveillance (NHBS) survey is created and distributed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The goal of the NHBS is to help state and local health departments establish and maintain surveillance systems to monitor selected behaviors and prevention services among groups at increased risk for HIV infection. To do this, the CDC provides grants to project areas with high HIV prevalence.

The NHBS is a cross-sectional survey that collects data related to behavioral risk factors for HIV (e.g., sexual behaviors, drug use), HIV testing behaviors, receipt of prevention services, and use of prevention strategies (e.g., condoms). As part of the survey, participants are asked if they are willing to provide blood samples to assess the prevalence of HIV virus (seroprevalence).

The NHBS is currently in its fifth round of surveillance data collection. Each cycle focuses on a different priority population at increased risk for HIV infection: men who have sex with men (MSM; the “MSM cycle/population”), heterosexuals at increased risk for HIV infection (HET; the “HET cycle/population”), and people who inject drugs (the “inject drug use [IDU] cycle/population”). Each round includes an eligibility screener and a core questionnaire. All participants are asked questions about their demographics, sexual behavior, alcohol and drug use history, HIV testing and prevention experiences, health conditions, and engagement in prevention activities.

### Survey Sample Population

This survey looks at three populations at increased risk for HIV infection:

1. The MSM population.
2. The IDU population.
3. The HET population.

In the most recent round, round 5 (2017–2019), the goal is for the 22 project areas to each collect 500 responses for each cycle (MSM, IDU, HET), up to 33,000 responses. Project areas include, but are not limited to, Boston, Chicago, Philadelphia, Miami, San Francisco, and Denver. Access a full list of round 5 project areas here: <https://www.cdc.gov/hiv/statistics/systems/nhbs/projectareas.html>

## Survey Mode

All surveys are conducted in person using a computer-assisted personal interview (CAPI) software.

Before each NHBS cycle, a formative assessment is conducted to learn more about each local population and to inform operational procedures. To identify potential participants for the MSM cycle, local health department staff identify venues frequented by MSM (e.g., bars, clubs, organizations, and street locations), as well as days/times when men frequent those venues. Venues (and specific day/time periods) for recruitment are chosen randomly each month.

To identify potential participants for the HET and the IDU cycles, local health department staff select a small number of initial participants who complete the survey and engage their help in recruiting their peers to participate. Recruitment and interviewing continue until the goal sample size is reached.

All survey participants are compensated. Compensation varies by site. The average compensation rate is \$25 for completion of the survey and an additional \$25 compensation for providing a specimen for testing. To help assess the validity of each interview, the interviewer is asked to provide their confidence in the validity of each respondent’s answers and a rationale for their answers at the end of each interview.

## SGM-Related Questions

Because the NHBS is fielded to three different populations, interview questions may vary based on the population being interviewed. In the table below, the “Respondent” column identifies which population, referred to as a cycle, is being asked the question as well as any exclusions (e.g., gender) that may apply to the question. The following questions include histories for rounds 2–5 (round 1 is considered a pilot by CDC).

Category	Most Recent Version of the Question	Respondent	Question History
Sexual Identity	Currently no questions are asked in this category.	Not applicable.	Not applicable.
Sexual Attraction	Currently no questions are asked in this category.	Not applicable.	Not applicable.
Sexual Behavior	(ES9a) Have you ever had vaginal or anal sex with a woman? 0. No 1. Yes 9. Don’t Know 7. Refuse to Answer	MSM Cycle respondents only.	This question was added to the MSM eligibility screener in round 3 (2011–2013).  This is the only version of the question that has been used (2011–2019).

Category	Most Recent Version of the Question	Respondent	Question History
	<p>(ES9b) Have you ever had oral or anal sex with a man?</p> <p>0. No 1. Yes 9. Don't Know 7. Refuse to Answer</p>	MSM Cycle respondents.	<p>This question was added to the MSM eligibility screener in round 3 (2011–2013).</p> <p>This is the only version of the question that has been used (2011–2019).</p>
	<p>(ES17) Have you had sex with a [if R is male, fill with “woman”; if R is female, fill with “man”] in the past 12 months?</p> <p>0. No 1. Yes 9. Don't Know 7. Refuse to Answer</p>	Male and female HET Cycle respondents.	<p>This is the current version for the question which will be used for all round 5 surveys (2017–2019).</p> <p>The following question was used in round 2 (2008–2010):</p> <p>(ES18) Have you had vaginal or anal sex with a [insert “man” if respondent is female; insert “woman” if respondent is male] in the past 12 months?</p>
	<p>(ES17a) Did you have vaginal sex? by vaginal sex, I mean [if R is male fill with “you put your penis in her vagina”; if R is female, fill with “he put his penis in your vagina”].</p> <p>0. No 1. Yes 9. Don't Know 7. Refuse to Answer</p>	Male and female HET Cycle respondents.	<p>This question was added to the round 3 screener (2011–2013).</p> <p>This is the only version of the question that has been used (2011–2019).</p>

Category	Most Recent Version of the Question	Respondent	Question History
	(ES17b) Did you have anal sex? By anal sex I mean [If R is male, fill with “you put your penis in her anus or butt; if R is female, fill with “he put his penis in your anus or butt”]. 0. No 1. Yes 9. Don’t Know 7. Refuse to Answer	Male and female HET Cycle respondents.	This question was added in round 3 (2011–2013).  This is the only version of the question that has been used (2011–2019).
	(ES17c) Have you had sex in the past 12 months? 0. No 1. Yes 7. Refused to answer 9. Don’t Know	Male and female HET Cycle respondents.	This question was only included in rounds 3 and 4 (2011–2016).
Gender Identity	(ES8) What was your sex at birth? [DO NOT read choices.] 1. Male 2. Female 3. Intersex/ambiguous 9. Don’t Know 7. Refuse to Answer	All Cycles.	This is the only version of the question that has been used (2008–2019).
	(ES9) Do you consider yourself to be male, female or transgender? 1. Male 2. Female 3. Transgender 9. Don’t Know 7. Refuse to Answer	All (MSM, HET & IDU) Cycle respondents.	This is the only version of the question that has been used (2008–2019).
Household Relationships	Currently no questions are asked in this category.	Not applicable.	Not applicable.

Category	Most Recent Version of the Question	Respondent	Question History
Sexual Identity	(DM10) Do you consider yourself to be: [READ choices] 1. Heterosexual or “Straight” 2. Homosexual, Gay or Lesbian 3. Bisexual 9. Don’t Know 7. Refuse to Answer	All Cycles.	This is the only version of the question that has been used (2008–2019).  In round 2 (2008–2010) this question was labeled as question 10.
Sexual Attraction	(SO1) Have you ever told anyone that you are attracted to or have sex with men? 0. No 1. Yes 9. Don’t Know 7. Refuse to Answer	MSM Cycle respondents.	This is the only version of the question that has been used (2008–2019).  In round 2 (2008–2010) this question was labeled as question 10a.
Sexual Behavior	(SO 5) In the past 12 months, how often have you used the internet to meet or socialize with gay men either for friendship or sex? This could include social network sites, like Facebook, websites directed towards gay men, like Manhunt, dating sites like OkCupid, or apps like Grindr. Was it...  [Give respondent flashcard H]  [Read Choices] 4. At least once a day 3. At least once a week but not every day 2. At least once a month but not every week 1. Less than once a month 0. Never 9. Don’t Know 7. Refuse to answer	MSM Cycle respondents.	This is the current version for the question which will be used for all round 5 surveys (2017–2019). The following question was used in round 3 (2011–2013) and round 4 (2014–2016): (X-51) In the past 12 months, how often have you used the internet to meet or socialize with gay men either for <i>friendship or sex</i> ? These could include social network websites (such as Facebook or MySpace), websites directed towards gay men (such as Manhunt or Gay.com), dating websites, or the use of mobile social applications (such as Foursquare or Grindr). Was it: 0. Never 1. More than once a day 2. Once a day 3. More than once a week 4. Once a week 5. More than once a month 6. Once a month

Category	Most Recent Version of the Question	Respondent	Question History
			<p>7. Less than once a month. 77. Refused to answer 99. Don't know</p> <p>The following version of the question was used in round 2 (2008–2010):</p> <p>(Pg. 49, 66) In the past 12 months, how often did you use the internet to look for sex partners? Was it:</p> <p>0. Didn't use 1. More than once a day 2. Once a day 3. More than once a week 4. Once a week 5. More than once a month 6. Once a month 7. Less than once a month. 77. Refused to answer 99. Don't know</p>
	<p>(SX1) Have you ever had vaginal sex or anal sex with a woman?</p> <p>0. No 1. Yes 9. Don't Know 7. Refuse to Answer</p>	<p>Male respondents in IDU Cycle.</p>	<p>This is the current version for the question which will be used for all round 5 surveys (2017–2019).</p> <p>The following question was used in round 2 (2008–2010), round 3 (2011–2013), and round 4 (2014–2016):</p> <p>(SX1) Have you ever had vaginal or anal sex with a woman?</p> <p>0. No 1. Yes 7. Refuse to Answer 9. Don't Know</p> <p>In round 2 (2008–2010) this question was labeled as question 11.</p>

Category	Most Recent Version of the Question	Respondent	Question History
	<p>(SX2) How old were you the first time you had vaginal or anal sex with a woman?</p> <p>Range .... 0- 70</p> <p>Don't Know ... 99</p> <p>Refuse to Answer ... 77</p>	<p>MSM, HET, and IDU respondents who have indicated having sex with a woman in SX1.</p>	<p>This is the only version of the question that has been used (2008–2019).</p> <p>In round 2 (2008- 2010) this question was labeled as question 12.</p>
	<p>(SX9) Have you ever had oral or anal sex with a man?</p> <p>0. No</p> <p>1. Yes</p> <p>9. Don't Know</p> <p>7. Refuse to Answer</p>	<p>Male IDU and HET Cycle Respondents.</p>	<p>This is the only version of the question that has been used (2008–2019).</p> <p>In round 2 (2008–2010) this question was labeled as question 39.</p> <p>In round 3 (2011–2013) and round 4 (2014–2016) this question was labeled as question SX-26.</p>
	<p>(SX10) How old were you the first time you had oral or anal sex with a man?</p> <p>Range ....0-70</p> <p>Don't Know .... 99</p> <p>Refuse to Answer... 77</p>	<p>All male respondents who have indicated having sex with a female previously in the interview.</p>	<p>This is the only version of the question that has been used (2008–2019).</p> <p>In round 2 (2008–2010) this question was labeled as question 40.</p> <p>In round 3 (2011–2013) and round 4 (2014–2016) this question was labeled as question SX-27.</p>

Category	Most Recent Version of the Question	Respondent	Question History
	<p>(SX17) Have you ever had vaginal sex or anal sex with a man?</p> <p>0. No 1. Yes 9. Don't Know 7. Refused to Answer</p>	<p>Female IDU Cycle respondents only.</p>	<p>This is the current version for the question which will be used for all round 5 surveys (2017–2019).</p> <p>The following question was used in rounds 2,3 and 4 (2008–2016):</p> <p>(SX54) Have you ever had vaginal sex or anal sex with a man?</p> <p>0. No 1. Yes 9. Don't Know 7. Refused to Answer</p> <p>In round 2 (2008–2010) this question was labeled as question 68.</p>
	<p>(SX18) How old were you the first time you had vaginal or anal sex with a man?</p> <p>Range.... 0- 70 Don't know .... 99 Refuse to Answer ....77</p>	<p>All female respondents who have indicated having sex with a man previously in the interview.</p>	<p>This is the only version of the question that has been used (2008–2019).</p> <p>In round 2 (2008–2010) this question was labeled as question 69 and in round 3 (2011– 2013) and round 4 (2014–2016) this question was labeled as question SX-55.</p>
	<p>(SX75) Now I'm going to answer you about having sex with other women. In the past 12 months, with how many different women have you had sex?</p> <p>Range .... 0-1000 Don't Know .... 9999 Refuse to Answer ....7777</p>	<p>All female respondents.</p>	<p>This is the only version of the question that has been used (2008–2019).</p> <p>In round 2 (2008–2010) this question was labeled as question 97.</p> <p>In round 3 (2011–2013) and round 4 (2014–2016) this question was labeled as question SX-80.</p>

Category	Most Recent Version of the Question	Respondent	Question History
Gender Identity	Currently no questions are asked in this category.	Not applicable.	Not applicable.
Household Relationships	(DM4) What is your current marital status? [READ choices] 1. Married 2. Living together as married 3. Separated 4. Divorced 5. Widowed 6. Never Married 9. Don't Know 7. Refuse to Answer	All Cycles.	This is the only version of the question that has been used (2008–2019).  In round 2 (2008–2010) this question was labeled as question 4.
	(DM4a) Is your formal marital status separated, divorced, widowed, or never married? 1. Separated 2. Divorced 3. Widowed 4. Never Married 9. Don't Know 7. Refuse to Answer	Any participant who selected “living together as married” in DM4.	This is the only version of the question that has been used (2008–2019).  In round 2 (2008–2010) this question was labeled as question 4a.
Additional SGM-Related Questions: Discrimination	(SO3) READ: During the past 12 months, that is, since [fill with interview month, formatted as text] of last year, have any of the following things happened to you because someone knew or assumed you were attracted to men?  (SO3a) You were called names or insulted 0. No 1. Yes 9. Don't Know 7. Refuse to Answer  (SO3b) You received poorer services than other people in restaurants, stores, other businesses or agencies	MSM Cycle respondents.	This is the current version for the question which will be used for all round 5 surveys (2017–2019).  The following question was used in round 3 (2011–2013).  (DM-12) During the past 12 months, have any of the following things happened to you because someone knew or assumed you were attracted to men? [READ CHOICES, CHECK NO OR YES FOR EACH ONE.]  a. You were called names or insulted 0. No 1. Yes 7. Refused to answer 9. Don't know

Category	Most Recent Version of the Question	Respondent	Question History
	0. No 1. Yes 9. Don't Know 7. Refuse to Answer  (SO3c) You were treated unfairly at work or school 0. No 1. Yes 9. Don't Know 7. Refuse to Answer  (SO3d) You were denied or given lower quality health care 0. No 1. Yes 9. Don't Know 7. Refuse to Answer  (SO3e) You were physically attacked or injured 0. No 1. Yes 9. Don't Know 7. Refuse to Answer		b. You received poorer services than other people in restaurants, stores, other businesses or agencies. 0. No 1. Yes 7. Refused to answer 9. Don't know  c. You were treated unfairly at work or school. 0. No 1. Yes 7. Refused to answer 8. Does not apply 9. Don't know  d. You were denied or given lower quality health care. 0. No 1. Yes 7. Refused to answer 8. Does not apply 9. Don't know  e. You were physically attacked or injured. 0. No 1. Yes 7. Refused to answer 9. Don't know

## Response Rates

### Round 4 (2014–2016) Descriptive Data and Response Rates by Cycle

2016 HET cycle descriptive data and response rates are not yet available.

IDU Cycle Descriptive Data and Response Rate (2015) *	
	Descriptive Data
Number of participants screened	13,633
Number of eligible participants	10,678
Number of participants excluded for other reasons (ex., incomplete data)	193
	Response Rate
Total number of participants	10,485

\*Target number of participants = 10,000 (500 x 20 project areas)

<b>MSM Cycle Response Rate (2014) *</b>	
	<b>Descriptive Data</b>
Number of men approached to participate	41,719
Number of men screened to participate	14,103
Number of eligible men	10,457
Number of men excluded for other reasons (ex., incomplete data)	817
	<b>Response Rate</b>
Total number of participants	9,640

\*Target number of participants = 10,000 (500 x 20 project areas)

### *Round 3 (2011–2013) Response Rates by Cycle*

<b>HET Cycle Responses Rate (2013) *</b>	
	<b>Descriptive Data</b>
Number of participants recruited	12,530
Number of eligible participants	10,695
Number of participants excluded for other reasons (ex., incomplete data)	2,591
	<b>Response Rate</b>
Total number of participants	8,104

\*Target number of participants = 9,000–10,000 (450–500 participants x 20 sites)

<b>IDU Cycle Response Rate (2012) *</b>	
	<b>Descriptive Data</b>
Number of participants recruited	13,093
Number of eligible participants	10,281
Number of participants excluded for other reasons (ex., incomplete data)	164
	<b>Response Rate</b>
Total number of participants	10,117

\*Target number of participants = 9,000–10,000 (450–500 participants x 20 sites)

<b>MSM Cycle Response Rate (2011) *</b>	
	<b>Descriptive Data</b>
Number of men approached to participate	39,792
Number of men screened to participate	12,123
Number of eligible men	10,166
Number of men excluded for other reasons (ex., incomplete data)	2,154
	<b>Response Rate</b>
Total number of participants	8,012

\*Target number of participants = 9,000–10,000 (450–500 participants x 20 sites)

## **Organizations Involved**

This survey is created by the CDC and is administered through local health departments in project areas across the United States.

## **Survey Links**

### *Questionnaires*

The survey questionnaires from rounds 3 and 4 can be accessed on the CDC NHBS page under the “Protocol and Operations” tab. Use the following link and then expand the “Questionnaires” menu.  
<https://www.cdc.gov/hiv/statistics/systems/nhbs/operations.html>

### *Data*

Raw NHBS data are not available online, but data and findings can be found in published reports and publications.

Use the following link to access reports from rounds 1, 2, 3, and 4.

<https://www.cdc.gov/hiv/statistics/systems/nhbs/reports.html>

Use the following link to access publications that utilize NHBS data.

<https://www.cdc.gov/hiv/statistics/systems/nhbs/publications.html>

### *General Information*

General information on the NHBS can be found on CDC’s NHBS website:

<https://www.cdc.gov/hiv/statistics/systems/nhbs/index.html>

## **References**

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