

For males, these questions were:

“People are different in their sexual attraction to other people. Which best describes your feelings? Are you. . .

Only attracted to females

Mostly attracted to females

Equally attracted to females and males

Mostly attracted to males

Only attracted to males

Not sure.”

“Do you think of yourself as

Heterosexual

Homosexual

Bisexual

Or something else?”

The wording of these items was based on wording used in previous studies (13–18), along with consultations with the directors of many of those studies and other experts (36). In the rest of this report, when the text says that respondents were “asked” something in ACASI, it means that they saw the question on the computer screen, or heard the question through headphones, or both.

Statistical analysis

All estimates in this report are based on sampling weights that are designed to produce unbiased estimates for the U.S. population. The statistical package SAS Version 9 was used to produce all estimates of percentages and numbers in this report (www.sas.com). SUDAAN software was used to estimate the sampling errors of the statistics; this software takes into account the use of weighted data and the complex design of the sample in calculating estimates of standard errors and significance tests (39). The standard errors of the percentages shown in this report are shown in some of the tables of this report and in Appendix tables.

In the description of the results below, when the percentage being cited is below 10 percent, the text will cite the exact percentage to one decimal point. To make reading easier and to remind the reader that the results are based on samples and subject to sampling error, percentages above 10 percent will be shown rounded to the nearest whole percent. Readers should

pay close attention to the sampling errors and confidence intervals of small groups, such as subgroups of teenagers or men who have sex with men. In this report, percentages are not shown if the denominator is less than 50 cases, or the numerator is less than 3 cases. When a percentage or other statistic is not shown for this reason, the table contains a symbol(*) that means “Statistic does not meet standards of reliability or precision.”

For most statistics, the numerators and denominators are much larger.

Results

Sexual activity of any type in the last 12 months

Table 1 shows men 15–44 years of age by the number of female sexual partners they had in the 12 months before the interview. This answer includes vaginal intercourse and oral or anal sex with females.

For all males 15–44, 10 percent had never had sex, 6.4 percent had had sex in their lifetimes but not in the last 12 months, and 63 percent had had one sexual partner in the last year. Another 8.0 percent had two female partners in the last 12 months, and 10 percent had three or more female partners in the last 12 months. Comparing all men and all women in tables 1 and 2, about 18 percent of men and 14 percent of women reported having two or more partners in the last 12 months (tables 1 and 2 and figure 1).

The highest proportions of men with three or more partners in the last 12 months were found among men 20–24 years of age (19 percent) and black or African-American men (22 percent, table 1). Among women, those 18–19 years of age had the highest proportion reporting three or more male partners in the last 12 months (17 percent). These variations in tables 1 and 2 appear to be strongly related to marital status differences among the groups: for example, the proportions of black males with more than one partner in the last 12 months is related to the fact that they are less likely to be married than white males.

Tables 1 and 2 also contain data by marital status on the date of interview. Since a mutually monogamous relationship is one way to reduce the risk of sexually transmitted infections, including HIV, previous studies have shown data on the proportion of married men and women who have had more than one partner in the last 12 months (17, p. 102; 18,27,28). About 4.5 percent of all married men (table 1) and 3.8 percent of married women (table 2) reported more than one partner in the last 12 months. These results are generally consistent with the results of other surveys for men and women, but it is important to note that these statistics are not certain evidence of infidelity. Some marriages were started within the last 12 months, and it is possible that temporary separations could have occurred within the last 12 months in a small percentage of marriages.

Tables 3 and 4 show data on the proportion of males and females 15–24 years of age who have ever had any sexual contact with the opposite sex; and the proportion who have had vaginal intercourse, oral sex, anal sex, any same-sex contact, and no sexual contact. These data relate to concerns that teenagers may be delaying vaginal sexual intercourse or fulfilling virginity pledges by engaging in other types of sexual contact (7–9, 40, 41). Although these data cannot answer this question fully, they can show the proportion of young males and females who have had any sexual contact with another person and what types are most common in various subpopulations. It is important to recognize, however, that the data in tables 3 and 4 all refer to whether a person has ever done these things, even once, in their lives; the proportion who have done them recently, or are doing them currently, is lower.

Concerns with oral sexual activity among middle-school children (11–14 years of age) cannot be addressed directly with these data because the youngest respondents in the NSFG were 15 years of age when interviewed. (In a recent survey conducted by Princeton Survey Research Associates International for NBC News, 4 percent of teens 13–14 years of age reported (in telephone interviews) that they have had