

Experiences of Childhood Sexual Abuse Among Sexual Minority Men in Canada, 2019-2020

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Background

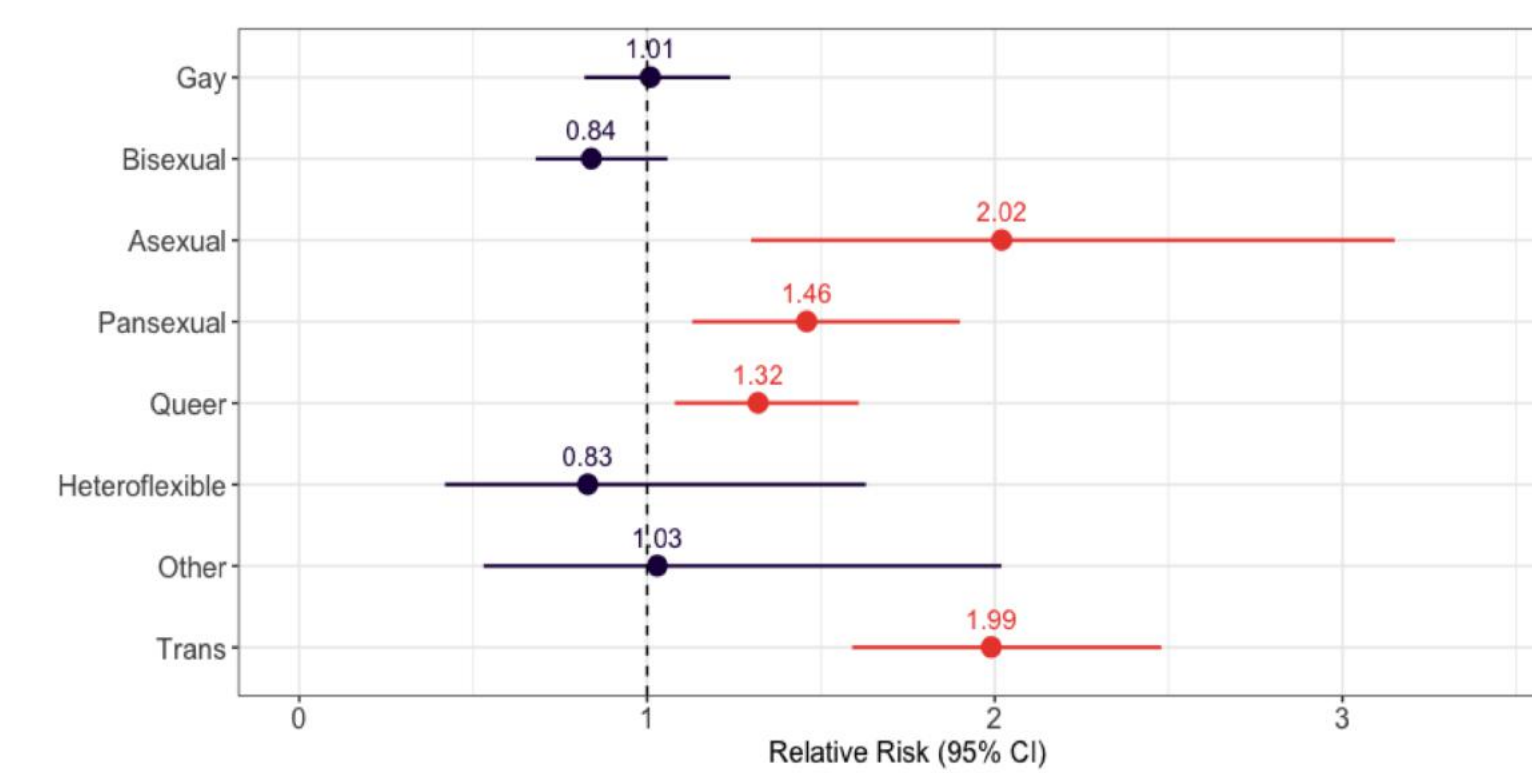
- US estimates of childhood sexual abuse (CSA) in men who have sex with men (MSM) can be as high as 47%¹
- CSA defined as unwanted or inappropriate sexual contact between child and a person at least 5 years older²
- Previous studies have found high rates of HIV and risk-taking behaviour in MSM with CSA experience^{2,3}
- Little research has been done in Canada to compare effect of CSA on MSM population

Methods

- Data collected from the online *Sex Now 2019* survey
- Participants sampled from sexual/social networking sites, community-based newsletters, and word-of-mouth
- Participation was entirely voluntary, there was no compensation
- Total participants who completed the survey: 14,364
- Total who answered CSA question and included in analysis: 6,169
- Analysis (uni-, bivariate) and graphs made via RStudio v1.3
- Relative risk (RR) calculated by comparing experience of CSA to referent group (opposite response) for secondary variables
- Significance determined by Chi² test to determine CSA outcomes

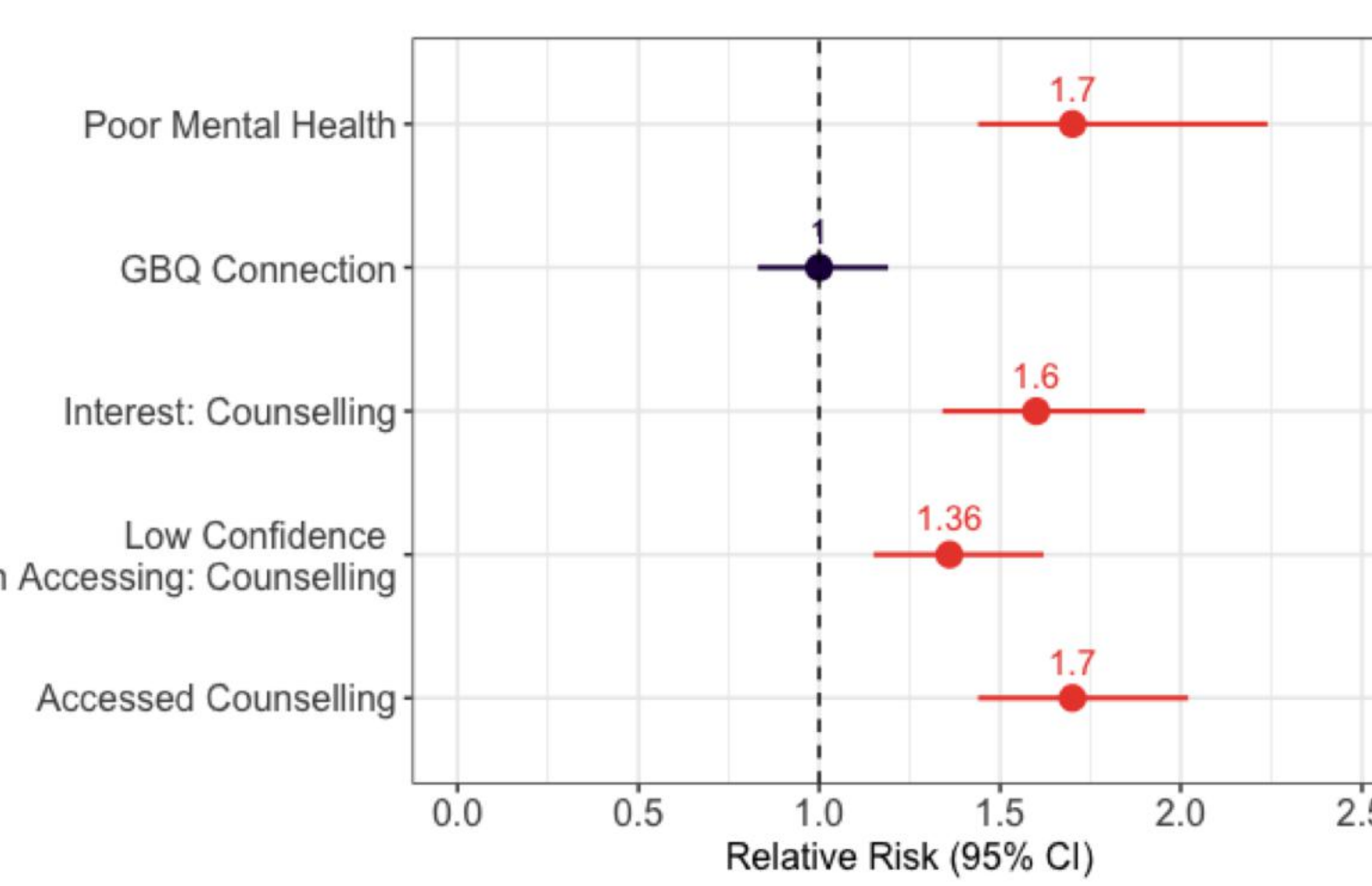
Results

Note counts may not add up due to missing responses or poor data quality

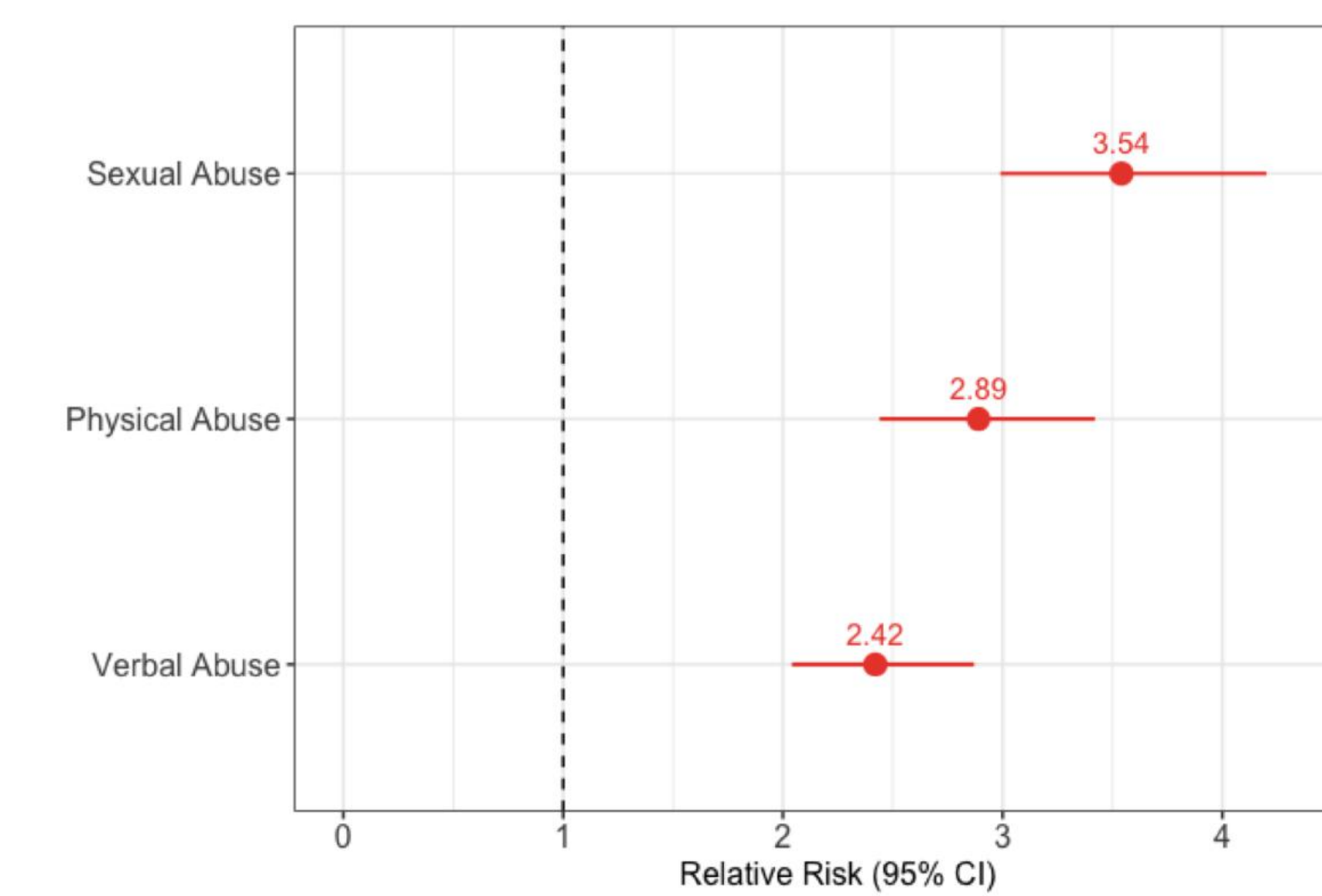


Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity	Total n = 6169	Experienced CSA		Chi2
		Yes n = 504	No n = 5666	
GAY*	4847 (78.7)	396 (78.9)	4451 (78.7)	Not significant
BISEXUAL*	1225 (19.9)	87 (17.3)	1138 (20.1)	Not significant
ASEXUAL*	105 (1.7)	17 (3.4)	88 (1.6)	0.004257
PANSEXUAL*	487 (7.9)	56 (11.2)	431 (7.6)	0.006326
QUEER*	1071 (17.4)	109 (21.7)	962 (17.0)	0.009069
HETEROFLEXIBLE*	118 (1.9)	8 (1.6)	110 (1.9)	Not significant
OTHER SEXUAL ORIENTATION*	95 (1.6)	8 (1.6)	87 (1.5)	Not significant
TRANS	549 (9.0)	81 (16.4)	468 (8.4)	3.20e-09

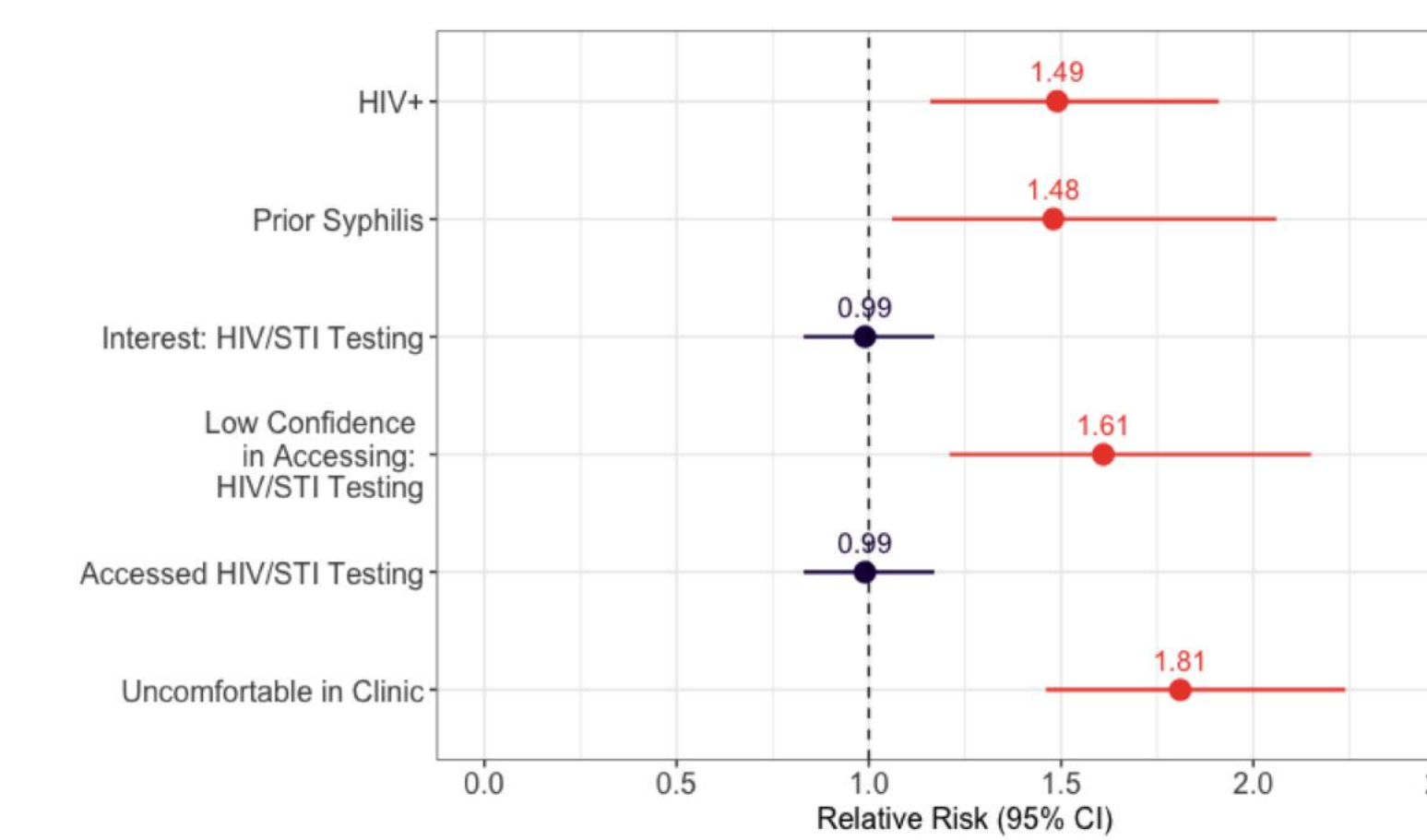
*survey allowed multiple responses, overlap in responses



Psychosocial Health	Total n = 6169	Experienced CSA		Chi2
		Yes n = 504	No n = 5666	
POOR MENTAL HEALTH	1758 (28.5)	203 (40.4)	1555 (27.5)	Not significant
CONNECTED TO GBQ COMMUNITY	4148 (67.8)	338 (67.7)	3810 (67.9)	Not significant
INTERESTED IN COUNSELLING	3046 (50.5)	304 (61.9)	2742 (49.4)	1.51e-07
LOW CONFIDENCE IN ABILITY TO ACCESS COUNSELLING	2415 (39.9)	235 (47.6)	2180 (39.3)	0.0003609
ACCESSED COUNSELLING	1818 (29.7)	209 (41.9)	1609 (28.6)	7.63e-10

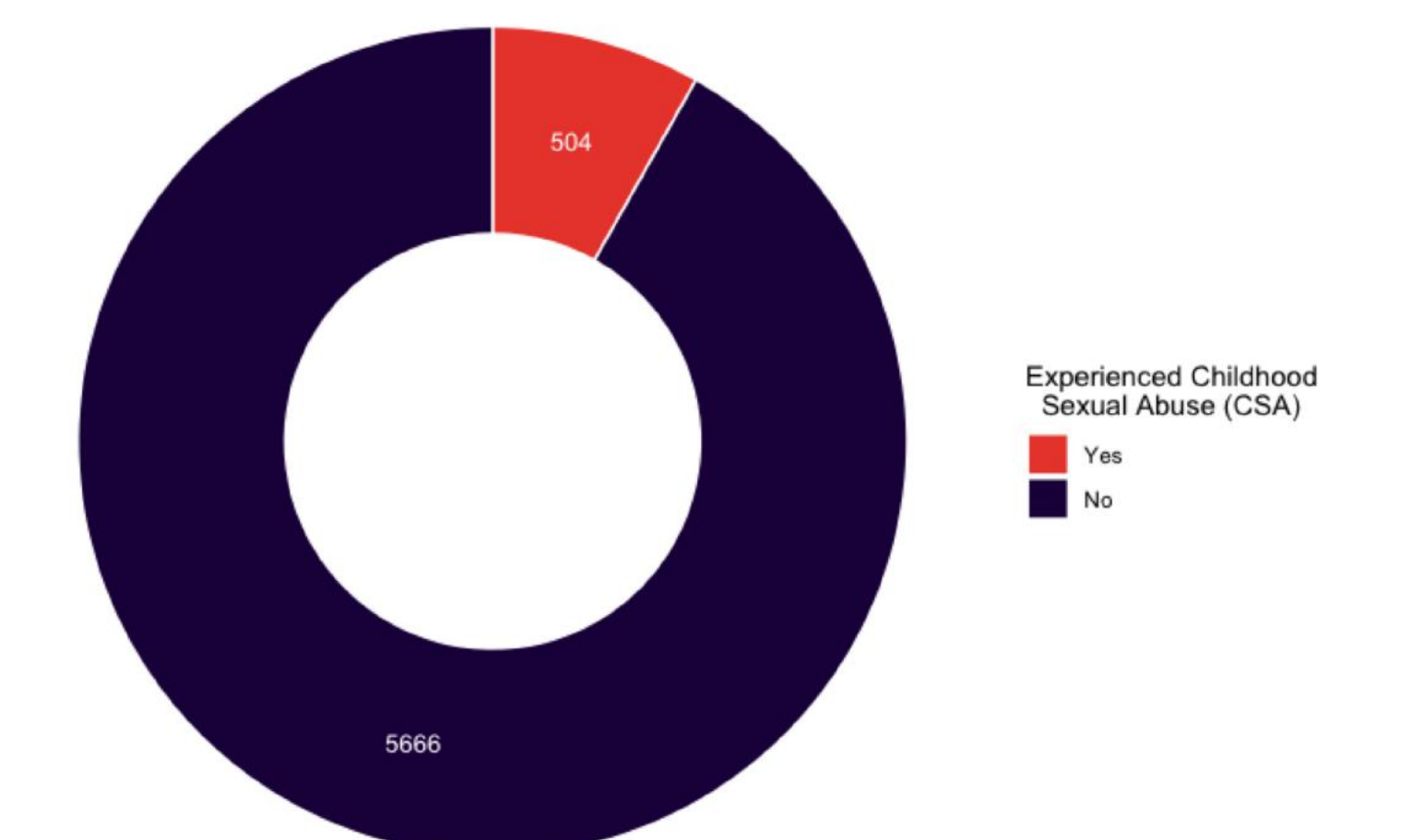


Domestic Violence by Lover/Boyfriend	Total n = 6169	Experienced CSA		Chi2
		Yes n = 504	No n = 5666	
SEXUAL	722 (12.0)	163 (32.7)	559 (10.2)	<2.2e-16
PHYSICAL	1016 (16.9)	185 (37.1)	831 (15.1)	<2.2e-16
VERBAL	2217 (37.0)	293 (58.7)	1924 (35.0)	<2.2e-16

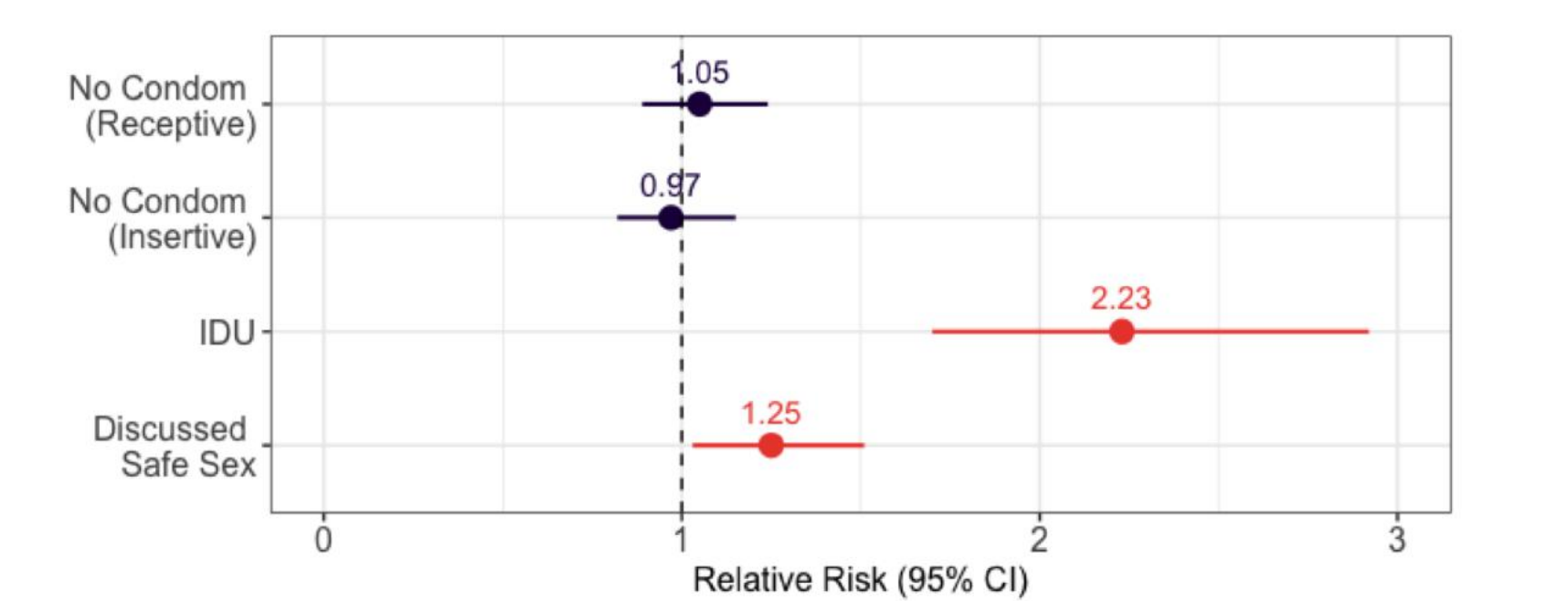
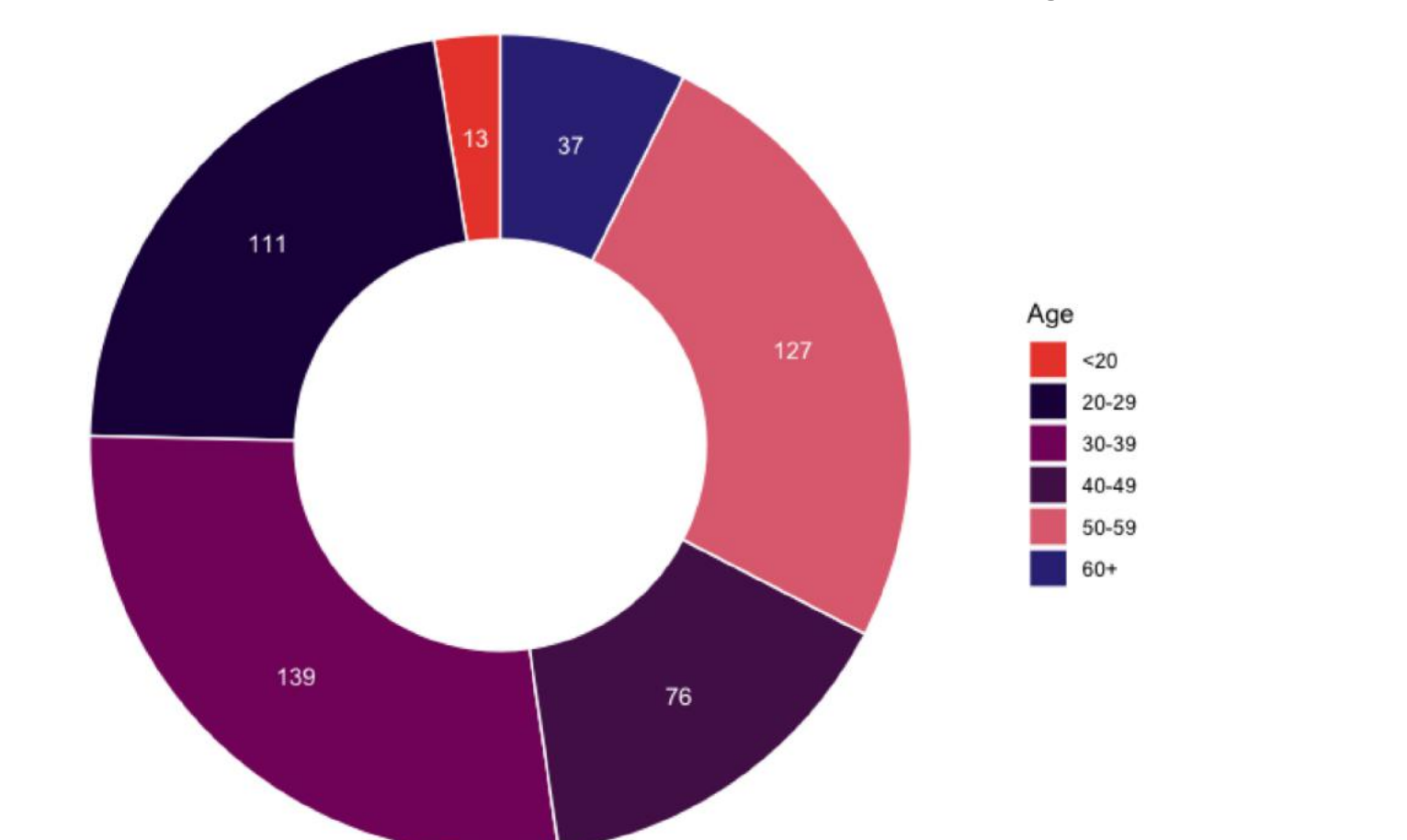


Sexual Health	Total n = 6169	Experienced CSA		Chi2
		Yes n = 504	No n = 5666	
HIV POSITIVE	553 (9.0)	64 (12.8)	489 (8.7)	0.002409
PRIOR SYPHILIS DIAGNOSIS	271 (4.9)	33 (7.0)	238 (4.7)	0.02982
INTERESTED IN HIV/STI TESTING	3341 (55.3)	270 (55.0)	3071 (55.4)	Not significant
LOW CONFIDENCE IN ABILITY TO ACCESS HIV/STI TESTING	363 (6.0)	45 (9.3)	318 (5.7)	0.001957
ACCESSED HIV/STI TESTING	3341 (55.3)	270 (55.0)	3071 (55.4)	Not significant
UNCOMFORTABLE IN CLINICS	689 (11.8)	92 (19.5)	597 (11.1)	1.06e-07

Distribution of CSA Experience Within Sample



Age Distribution of MSM with CSA Experience



Risky Behaviour	Total n = 6169	Experienced CSA		Chi2
		Yes n = 504	No n = 5666	
NO CONDOM (RECEPTIVE)	2938 (47.8)	245 (49.0)	2693 (47.7)	Not significant
NO CONDOM (INSERTIVE)	2890 (47.0)	231 (46.2)	2659 (47.1)	Not significant
INJECTION DRUG USE, IDU (EVER)	285 (4.6)	49 (9.7)	236 (4.2)	2.16e-08
DISCUSSED SAFE SEX	3180 (59.4)	279 (64.6)	2901 (58.9)	0.02484

Discussion and Conclusions

- Canadian CSA prevalence (8.2%) much lower than US estimates, consistent with findings of decreasing rates of Canadian CSA⁴
- Increased risk of HIV and syphilis infection attributed to "riskier" sex in literature, reason differs from US estimates
 - Not consistent with literature: condom use and safe sex discussion in MSM w/ CSA experience at same risk as MSM with no CSA experience
 - Consistent with literature: MSM w/ CSA experience at increased risk for injection drug use
- CSA experience greatly increases risk for domestic violence (sexual, physical, and/or verbal) by a sexual partner
 - Likely due to increased susceptibility to depression, anxiety, PTSD²
- Limitations: volunteer bias may not accurately represent MSM population; survey did not allow control of confounding factors, e.g. CSA age of onset, history, and specific CSA details; analysis did not include other sexual risky behaviours outside of condom use due to time constraint
- Strengths: examines CSA in Canadian context; determines significant association between CSA and domestic violence risk from a lover/partner; highlights that MSM with CSA experience do seek help to overcome the abuse despite a lack of confidence in accessing those services

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2. Hidalgo MA, Kuhns LM, Kwon S, Mustanski B, Garofalo R. The impact of childhood gender expression on childhood sexual abuse and psychopathology among young men who have sex with men. Child Abuse & Neglect. 2015 Aug 1;46:103-12.

3. Mimiaga MJ, Noonan E, Donnell D, Safren SA, Koenen KC, Gortmaker S, et al. Childhood Sexual Abuse is Highly Associated With HIV Risk-Taking Behavior and Infection Among MSM in the EXPLORE Study. JAIDS Journal of Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndromes. 2009 Jul;51(3):340-348.

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