

# The Health & Healthcare Experiences of Kink-Oriented People 2016 Survey Results

Richard A. Sprott, PhD  
*California State University,  
East Bay*  
&  
*TASHRA - The Alternative Sexualities  
Health Research Alliance*

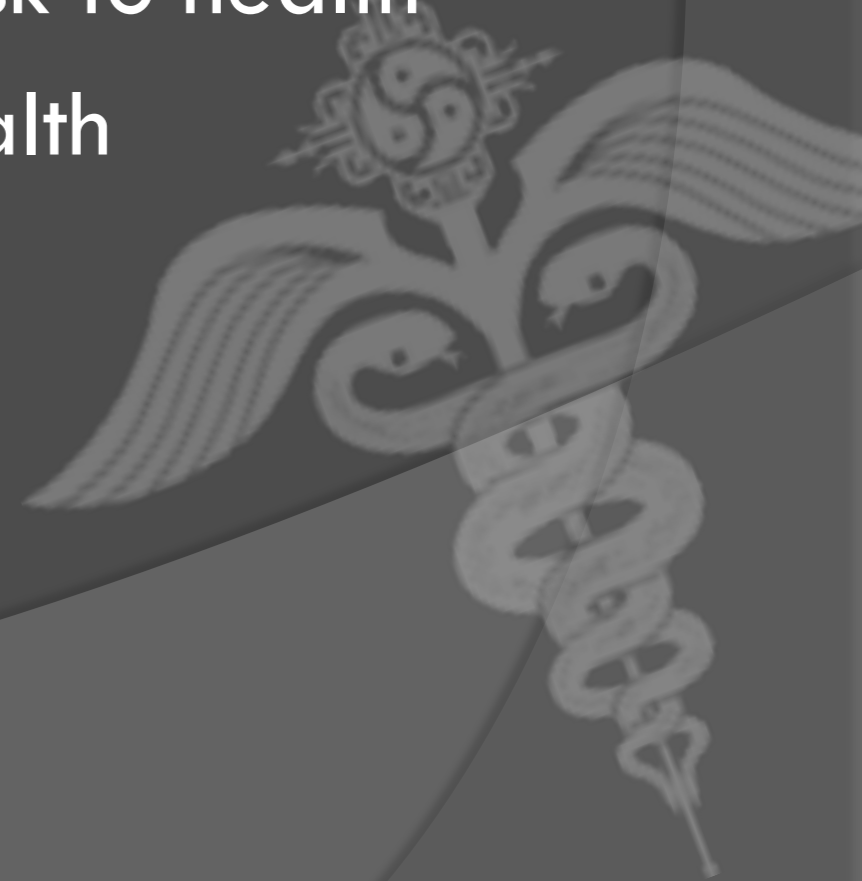
Anna M. Randall, MSW,  
MPH, DHS  
*TASHRA - The Alternative Sexualities  
Health Research Alliance*

*November 19, 2016  
Society for the Scientific Study of Sexuality  
2016 Conference  
Phoenix, AZ*



# Background

- Several reasons to investigate the health of people with non-traditional sexual practices and alternative sexual identities (kink or BDSM)
  - Some behaviors may involve higher risk to health
  - Given social stigma, there may be health disparities related to alt-sex identities

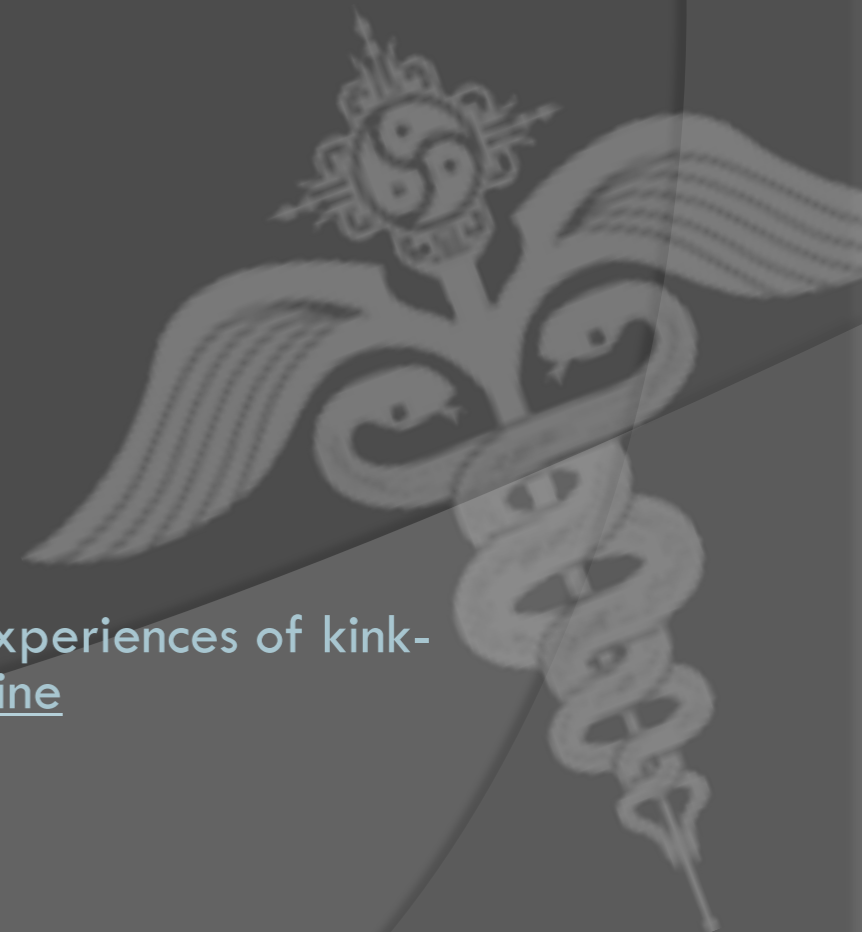


# Previous Study

## *The KINK Health Project*

- First study 2015: interview study, 115 participants, kink-identified, thematic analysis of interviews.
- **KEY FINDINGS:**
  - certain types of injuries experienced,
  - 44% of the sample had visited a doctor for a kink-related health concern;
  - some people hid the origin of concern or injury.
- Anticipated stigma was high;
  - only 38% were out as kinky.

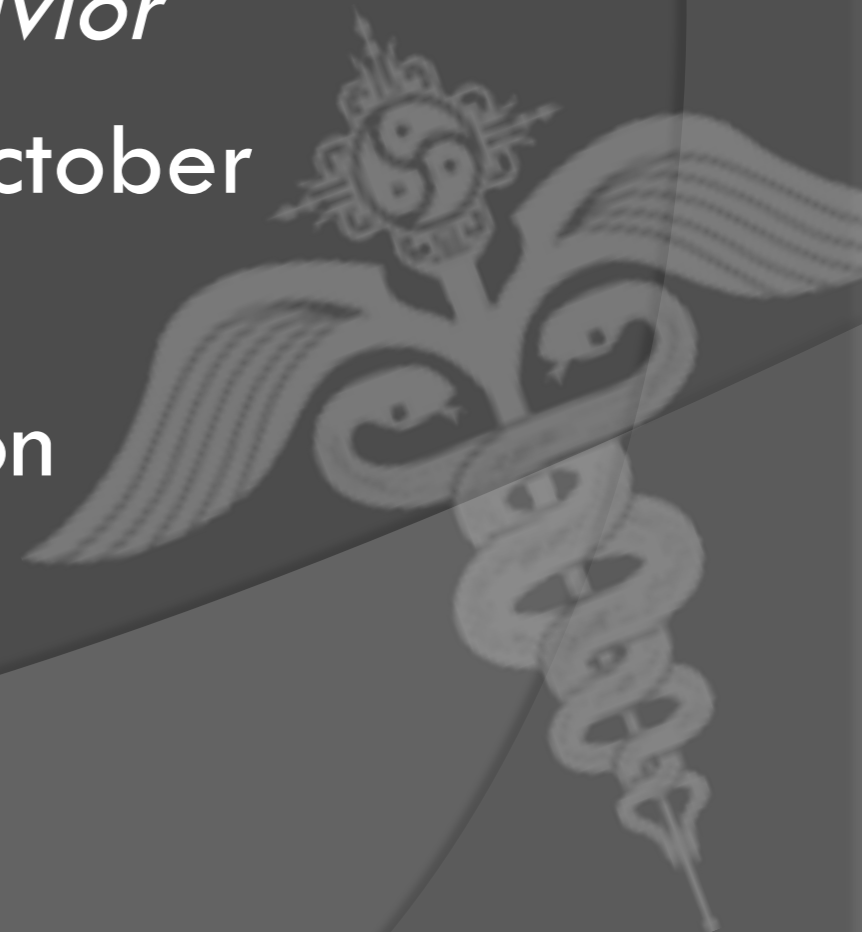
Waldura et al. (2016) Fifty shades of stigma: Exploring the healthcare experiences of kink-oriented patients. October 27 published online, [Journal of Sexual Medicine](#)

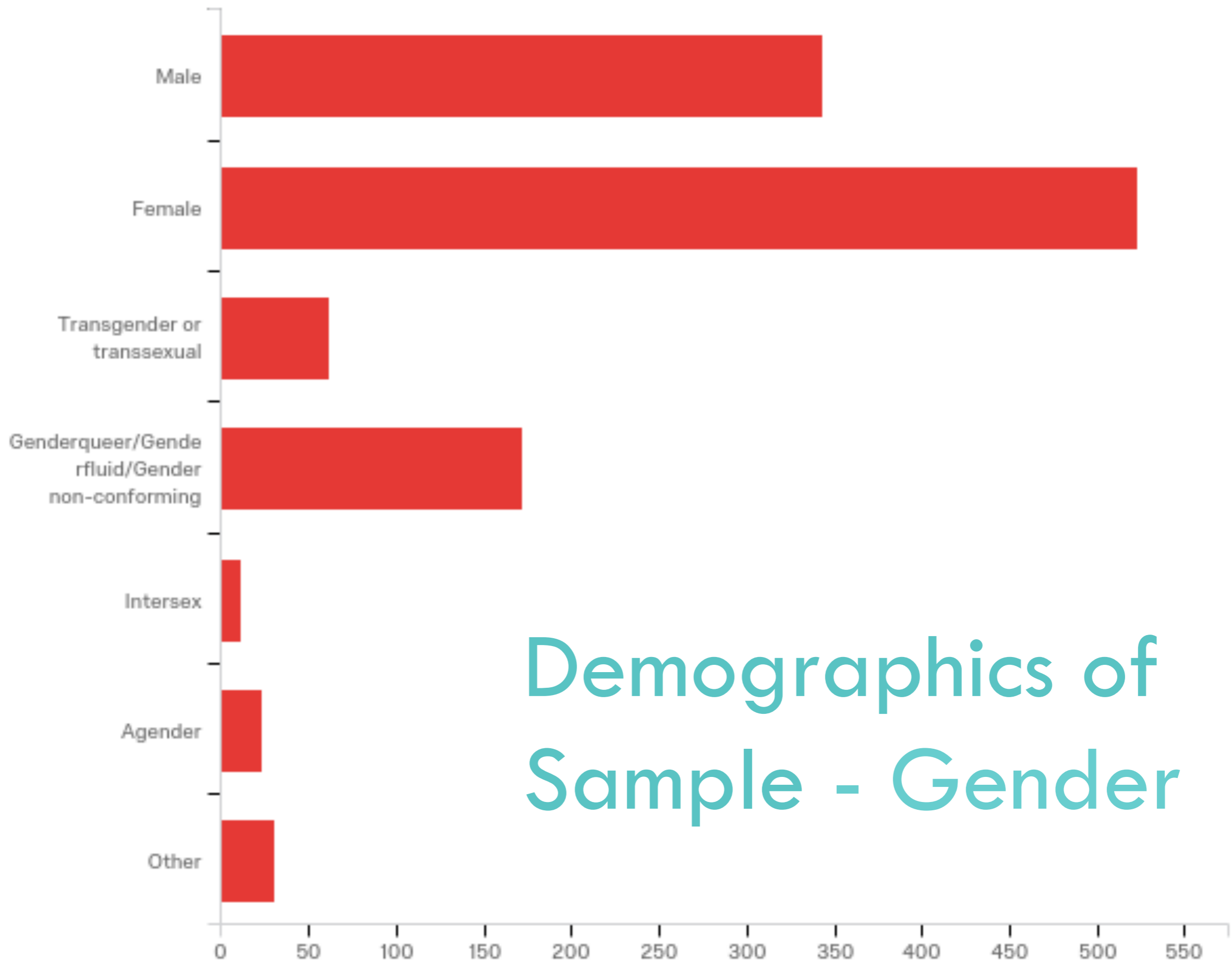


# Our Current Study

## The KINK Health SURVEY

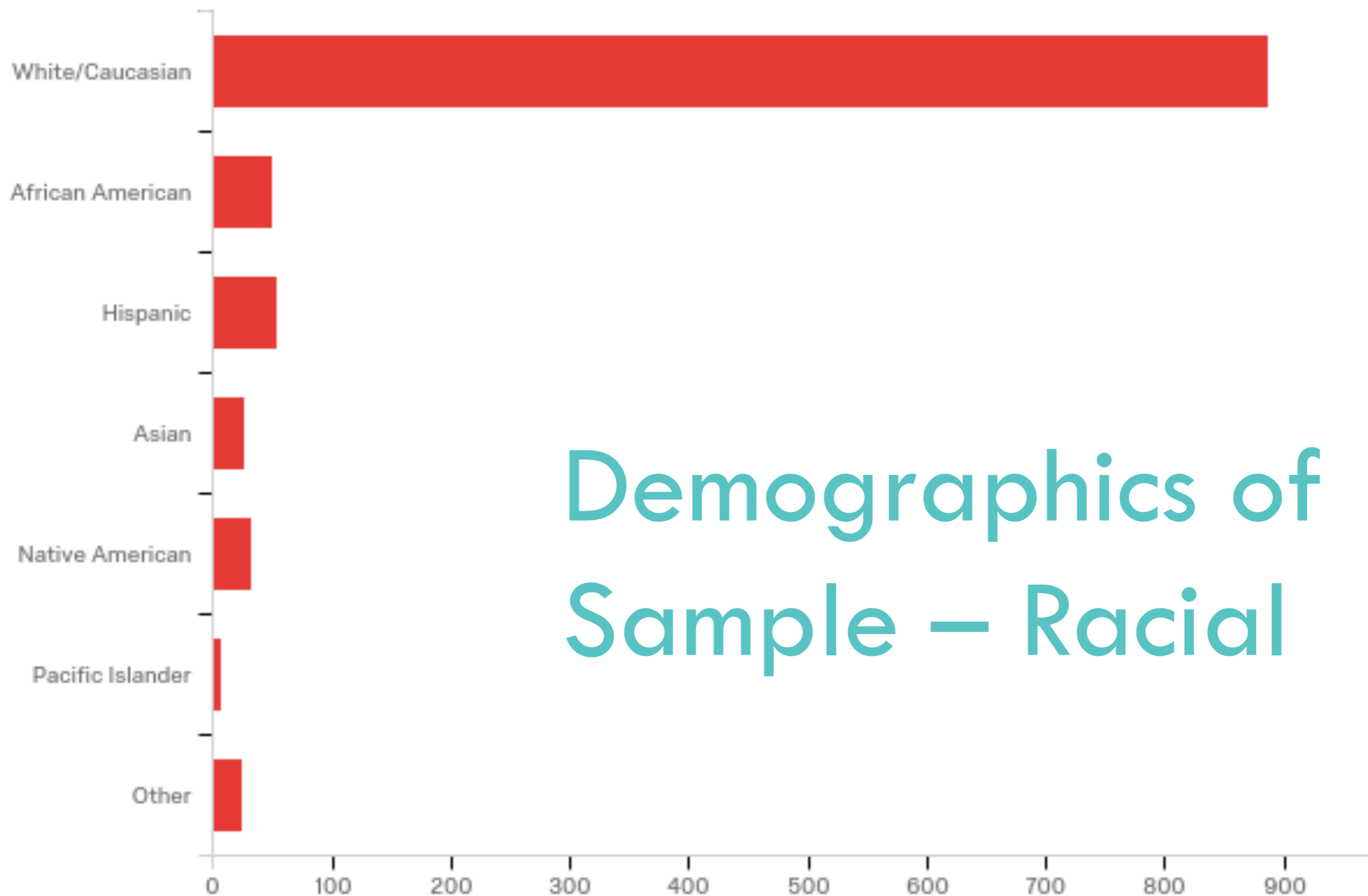
- US National Survey
- Inclusion criteria: 18 years or older, living in the United States, *have had fantasies, desires, longings around kink/fetish, and currently practice a kink or fetish related behavior*
- Data collected from April 2016 to October 2016
- ***PRELIMINARY REPORT*** today based on 987 completed surveys



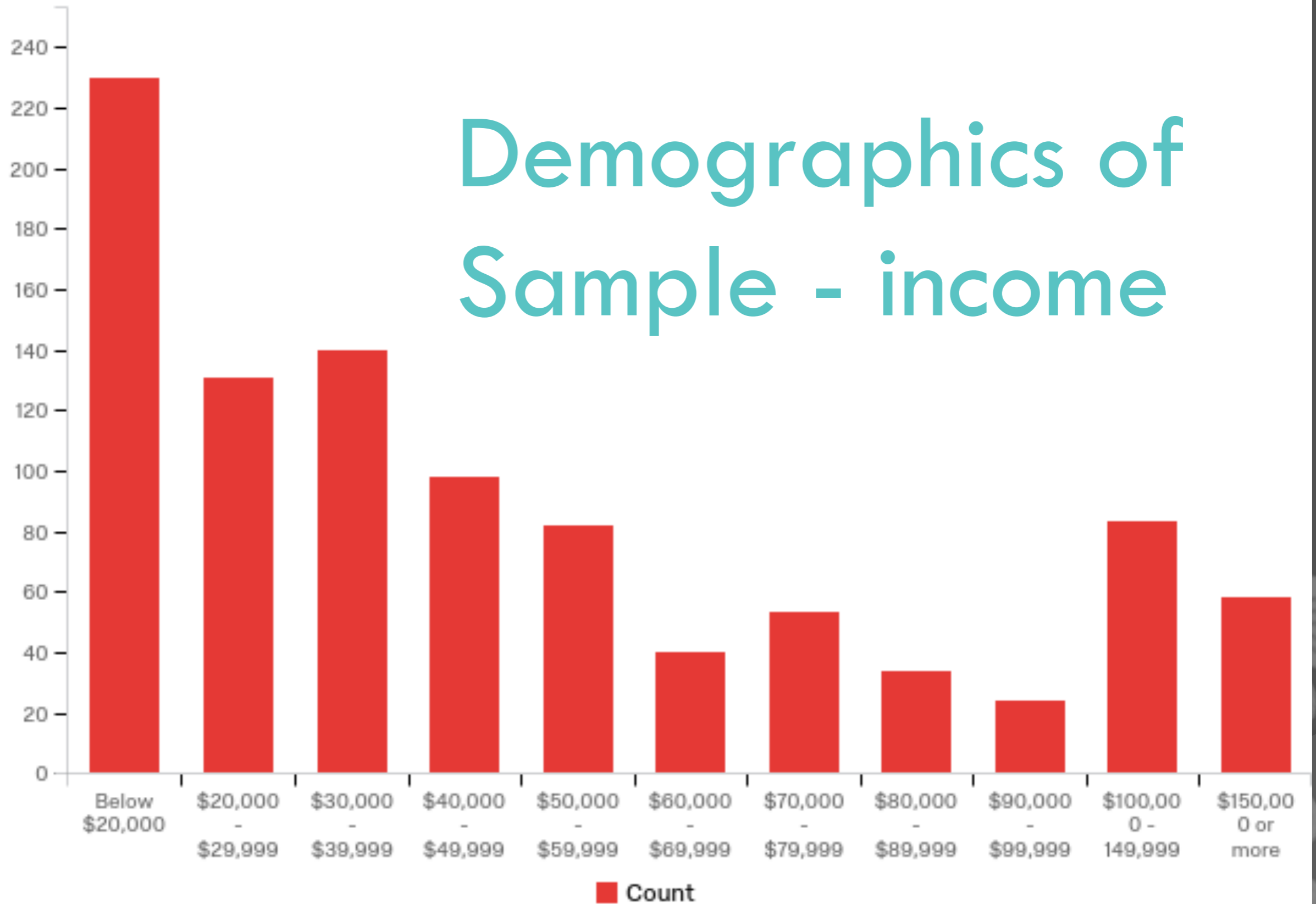


## Demographics of Sample - Gender

# Demographics of Sample – Racial



# Demographics of Sample - income



# Physical Health

- 14% had a *kink-related injury* or medical complication at some point in their lives
- 31% had discussed a *kink-related health concern* or question with a medical professional



# Mental Health

- Ever hospitalized for a mental health concern?
  - 15.75% yes
- Currently taking medication for a mental health condition?
  - 35.74% yes
- Have you ever attempted suicide?
  - 24.70% yes




# Mental Health

Q52 - Have you been treated for any of the following: (Choose all that Apply)

Question	In the last 12 months	Anytime In your lifetime	I Don't Know, I'm Not Sure
Anxiety	40.27%	33.20%	1.23%
Depression	38.84%	41.08%	1.12%
Bipolar	6.42%	5.91%	2.59%
Schizophrenia	0.21%	0.84%	0.52%
Eating Disorder	4.94%	14.62%	1.13%
PTSD (Post Traumatic Stress Disorder)	14.36%	17.98%	2.69%
OCD (Obsessive Compulsive Disorder)	4.97%	7.87%	1.66%

Q52 - Have you been treated for any of the following: (Choose all that Apply)

Question	In the last 12 months	Anytime In your lifetime	I Don't Know, I'm Not Sure
ADHD or ADD (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder)	7.53%	11.15%	2.37%
Asperger Syndrome (Asperger's) or Autism Spectrum Disorder	1.45%	2.17%	1.45%
Sensory Processing Disorder	1.24%	2.07%	2.17%
Non-suicidal self-injury (cutting, etc)	4.43%	17.84%	0.21%



# Eyeball Comparison

Our Sample	National Prevalence
0.52% Hep C	0.305% Hep C
3.72% HIV +	0.378% HIV +
36.83% obesity	state with highest rate: Louisiana at 36.2%
33.2% anxiety - lifetime prevalence	28.8% anxiety - lifetime prevalence
<b>41.8% depression - lifetime</b>	<b>16.6% major depressive disorder - lifetime</b>
<b>5.91% bipolar - lifetime</b>	<b>3.9% bipolar - lifetime</b>
<b>17.98% PTSD - lifetime</b>	<b>6.8% PTSD - lifetime</b>
<b>24.70% attempted suicide - lifetime</b>	<b>4.6% attempted suicide - lifetime</b>

# Very surprising....

- Have you ever *intentionally harmed yourself outside of a consensually negotiated kink scene?* (e.g. self-cutting, scratching, hair pulling, self-hitting, picking skin or scabs, etc.)

45% YES

We need to know more



# Impact of Kink on Mental Health

Do you feel that your involvement in kink has affected your mental health, either positively or negatively?

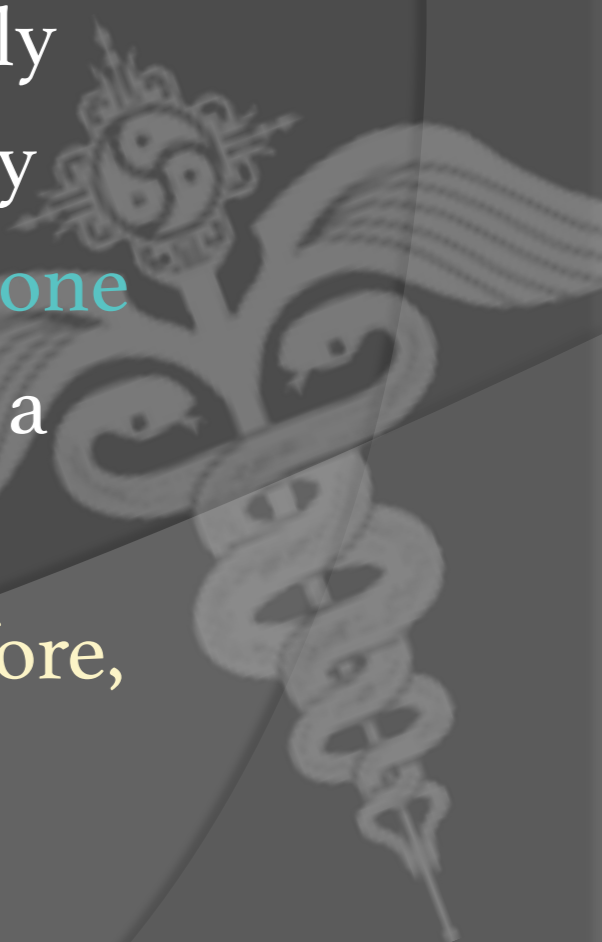
- 78.10 % said YES

Of those:

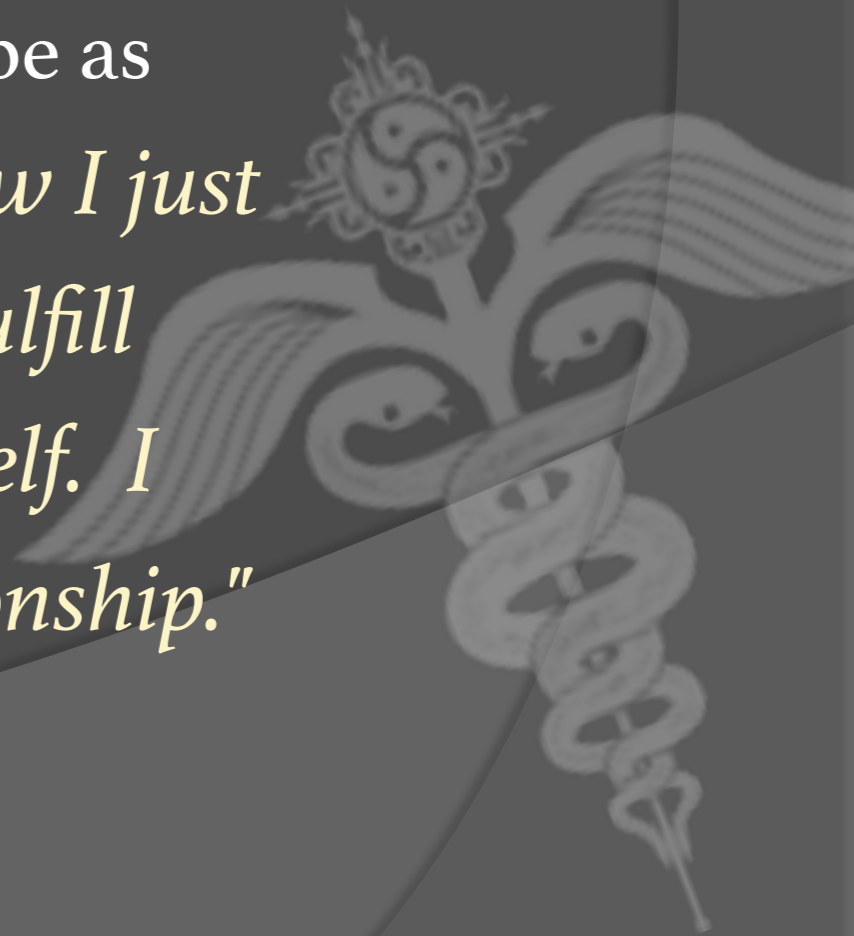
- 85.16% said Positively,
- 1.1% said Negatively,
- 13.67% said BOTH Positively and Negatively



“My relationship with my current primary involves very cathartic scenes, often with him breaking through the barriers that I put up, and ending with really good, deep emotional release. Afterwards, he will hold me and rock me, making me feel as though I have someone who cares about the way I am, for the first time in my life. I have had trust issues, and an inability to let myself be openly vulnerable, due to an absent mother and an emotionally neglectful father. I have taken care of myself from a very young age (grade school) and have never allowed someone to take care of me until him. Our relationship began as a simple D/s one, but has evolved into a Daddy Dom/girl very naturally. ... no one has ever taken me in hand before, nurturing and guiding.”



“Kink helped me heal from the molestation, bullying, anger, depression, and anxiety I felt and experienced. I was broken and in some ways still am, but the kink community and my pagan community have both been instrumental in breaking down those walls and helping me grow. If it were not for the members of my House I would most likely still be lost and searching for an identity....and I don't think that I would be as happy. *When I started I needed the pain....now I just need someone who cares enough to help me fulfill myself and drive me towards being my best self. I don't think I could get that in a vanilla relationship.*”



Download today's slides  
at TASHRA.org

Contact us for more information....

- Contact Richard Sprott at [richard.sprott@csueastbay.edu](mailto:richard.sprott@csueastbay.edu)
- or [richard@tashra.org](mailto:richard@tashra.org)
- Contact Anna Randall at [anna@tashra.org](mailto:anna@tashra.org)

TASHRA.org  
Follow us on Twitter at  
@kinkhealth



**COMING UP:**

*The Southwest Sexual Health Alliance is sponsoring:*

**TASHRA Variance Training for Therapists**

**THE PSYCHOBIOLOGY OF KINK, THE PSYCHOLOGY OF CONSENT,  
AND INTEREST DISCREPANCY IN RELATIONSHIPS:**

***CUTTING EDGES OF ALTERNATIVE SEXUALITIES IN THERAPY***

***CEU CONFERENCE WEEKEND ON ALTSEX***

**with DR. RICHARD SPROTT & DR. ANNA RANDALL**

**Saturday, December 3, 2016**

**9:30am to 3:30pm**

**Omni Hotel, Austin, Texas**



A special day-long (Saturday Dec 3rd) conference open to all professionals and sexual health professionals on working with kink sexualities and consensual non-monogamies, with a focus on mind-body interactions around BDSM, issues around consent and how alternative sexuality communities negotiate consent, and the dynamics of discrepancy in sexuality interests in people's committed relationships with others.

<http://sexualhealthalliance.com/events/>

*CARAS/PASD*

## *Alternative Sexualities Conference 2017*

Friday, May 26, 2017 at the Center on Halsted in Chicago

- *Call for Proposals for the CARAS Alternative Sexualities Conference*
- Proposals are due by March 1, 2017
- You can submit a proposal online : <https://bit.ly/2fpOiL2>
- Registration for the conference opens on February 14, 2017 and early registration ends on May 15, 2017
- A special program for kink-identified clinicians will be held on Saturday, May 27<sup>th</sup>.



carasresearch.org

# Physical Health Concerns

Field	Yes	No	I Don't Know	Total
Cancer (including skin cancer)	6.66%	92.73%	0.61%	976
Obesity	36.83%	61.63%	1.65%	972
Heart Disease	2.89%	96.70%	0.41%	969
High Blood Pressure or High Cholesterol	29.89%	69.91%	0.51%	977
Lung Conditions (e.g. asthma, COPD, others)	18.04%	81.65%	0.31%	970
Stroke	0.93%	98.86%	0.21%	968
Seizures	3.81%	95.98%	0.41%	971
Stomach or Intestinal Problems	22.61%	76.26%	1.23%	973
Thyroid or Endocrine Problems	11.75%	86.91%	1.34%	970
Kidney Disease	2.06%	97.63%	0.31%	972
Chronic Skin Conditions	11.43%	88.36%	0.51%	971
HIV	3.72%	96.18%	0.10%	969
Hepatitis C	0.52%	99.48%	0.00%	969
Men's reproductive issues (e.g. prostate problems, infertility)	4.91%	94.89%	0.31%	958
Women's reproductive Issues (e.g. menstrual problems, fibroids, infertility)	24.27%	75.31%	0.52%	956
Other conditions requiring on-going medical care	35.62%	64.38%	0.31%	963