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Awareness key as LGBTI community reflects more ethnic diversity

Chinese and South Asian participants invited in study that aims to explore views about gay life in Auckland

A 15,000 out and proud crowd at the LYC Big Gay Out meant more than a fantastic kick-off for the Auckland Pride Festival. It also reflected the growing ethnic diversity in the LGBTI community in New Zealand.

The number of South Asian and Chinese men living in Auckland who identify as gay or bisexual has been growing steadily over the last decade, and this was reflected in the diversity of the crowd at last weekend's event. The celebration of diversity was underpinned by the message of safe sex and promoting a condom culture with LYC volunteers distributing 25,000 condoms throughout the day.

"As our community becomes increasingly diverse we need to ensure that our work to promote a condom culture is relevant and engaging to these guys. We're currently doing some research on South Asian and Chinese gay and bisexual men to better understand how factors such as family, culture and identity influence attitudes toward sex and condom use," says Joe Rich, LYC spokesperson at the New Zealand AIDS Foundation (NZAF).

NZAF has partnered with Massey University's SHORE, a multi-disciplinary group undertaking policy and community research and evaluation on a variety of health and social topics, to conduct the research which aims to explore how Chinese and South Asian gay, bisexual and other men who have sex with men (MSM) view gay life in Auckland.

"The findings from this research will go some way in informing policy decisions and health communication to those in the South Asian and Chinese community that identify as gay or bisexual. Men who have sex with men or MSM are the most at risk of HIV. So it is important to gain these insights and the information from participants in the study is confidential," adds Mr. Rich.

Chinese and South Asians are the largest and fast growing ethnic communities in Auckland. Guys will be interviewed about their family and culture, lifestyle in Auckland, socialisation including relationships, sexual identity and condom use.

Any South Asian guys willing to take part in the research can visit www.shore.ac.nz/asian-msm for more details.

For further comment or to arrange an interview please contact:

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