

Their review of prior literature suggests that the prevalence of sexual coercion (including a fairly broad range of acts) is 14–51% among men who have sex with men, a rate that is higher than that of the general male population.

The authors discussed the political dangers of raising issues of sexual assault by gay men, including the risk of further confirming cultural stereotypes of gay men as being sexually aggressive, and adding further stigma to an already marginalised group. Their interpretations suggest that ‘it appears that it is gay and bisexual men’s *masculinity*, rather than their *sexuality*, that is the key feature to consider. It is important that this be recognised, so that gay male communities are *not* (further) targeted as ‘inherent’ sites of sexual risk’ (p. 37).

The report documents how heterosexism operates to dissuade gay men from reporting sexual assault. This was evidenced in the men’s experience with police and medical professionals. The authors conclude by promoting an ‘ethic of care’ as a positive strategy for creating non-abusive sexual interactions, which incorporates consideration of power and care for one’s sexual partner as integral features of sexual practice.

The report is available at www.psych.auckland.ac.nz/research/research-groups/GCG/HRC%20report%20final.pdf

REVIEW

Sex and the law

A guide for health and community workers in New South Wales

REVIEWED BY HALEY CLARK

FPA Health. (2006). *Sex and the law: A guide for health and community workers in New South Wales*. Sydney: Redfern Legal Centre Publishing. 160pp.

This book provides a guide to the laws relating to sexual and reproductive health in New South Wales. The publication is targeted to an audience of community and health workers, with an aim of helping to establish clear knowledge of legal and ethical issues relevant to their work. The book is written in clear, simple English and so may also be useful to community members more broadly. The publication provides information on a range of legal issues as they apply in New South Wales, including: medical treatment, clients’ rights, privacy, reproduction, contraception, sexually transmissible infections, sexual offences, domestic violence, disability, minors and sex work. The book provides an overview of definitions of a range of both legal and illegal sexual behaviours, and makes reference to the Acts that govern sexual offences. The topics covered include: consent, sexual preference, ‘special care’ relationships, aggravating circumstances, masturbation, sexual assault, indecent assaults, attempts to commit a sexual offence, aiding and abetting sexual offences, mandatory reporting, sexual harassment and domestic violence. Case studies are provided throughout the book to illustrate the legal issues presented. The book also includes a glossary, as well as providing lists of relevant agencies and references.

FPA Health (previously known as Family Planning Australia) also provide FPA Healthline (1300 658 886), a telephone information service staffed by clinical nurses and specialists, and FPA Healthweb (www.fpahealth.org.au), which contains current information relating to sexual and reproductive health.

Haley Clark is a Project Officer with the Australian Centre for the Study of Sexual Assault, at the Australian Institute of Family Studies.