



LETTERS

SEXUAL BEHAVIOUR

# Engage with the next wave of Britain's National Survey of Sexual Attitudes and Lifestyles

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Poor sexual and reproductive health causes major morbidity. Sexually transmitted infection diagnoses continue to rise;<sup>1</sup> teenage pregnancy rates, although falling,<sup>2</sup> remain among the highest in Europe; and societal acknowledgment of the extent and consequences of sexual violence has shifted.<sup>3</sup> *The BMJ* recently published the latest output from Britain's National Surveys of Sexual Attitudes and Lifestyles (Natsal), which investigated changes in, and factors associated with, the frequency of sex in Britain,<sup>4,5</sup> unpacking the finding of a decline in the frequency of sex originally published in the *Lancet* in 2013.<sup>6</sup> This earlier paper documented changes in several sexual behaviours over time, the life course, and generations, reflecting the power of Natsal as large, probability sample, bio-behavioural surveys, representative of the British population.

Work on the next wave of Natsal (Natsal-4) has just begun and is funded by a five year Wellcome Trust longitudinal population studies grant with contributions from the Economic and Social Research Council and the National Institute for Health Research. Natsal-4 aims to interview 10 000 people aged 15-59 who will be randomly selected from across Britain to take part in a computer assisted personal interview.<sup>7</sup> It will repeat the cross sectional design, which enables a contemporary picture to be presented while also capturing generational changes and broad societal shifts. As such, Natsal-4 will add to previous Natsal evidence of the context, influences, and consequences of sexual lifestyles and will prove vital for informing national and international sexual health interventions, strategies, guidelines, and policies. The questions asked in this new wave, and the resulting data, must be fit for purpose so that Natsal can continue to affect policy, practice, and the scientific and public dialogue

about sex as a critical aspect of our lives. Updates on the Natsal study can be found on [www.natsal.ac.uk](http://www.natsal.ac.uk) and on Twitter (@NatsalStudy) and can be requested by emailing [natsal@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:natsal@ucl.ac.uk).

Competing interests: CHM and PS are co-principal investigators of the Natsal Resource, Britain's National Surveys of Sexual Attitudes and Lifestyles. The Natsal Resource is supported by a grant from the Wellcome Trust (212931/Z/18/Z), with contributions from the Economic and Social Research Council and the National Institute for Health Research.

Full response at: <https://www.bmj.com/content/365/bmj.l1961/rr-1>.

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