

Annual Report 2003

Gay Men's Health Project East Coast Area Health Board

June 2004

The Report in Numbers

1	full STI Screening clinic per week (vvednesdays)
1	fulltime counsellor
2	the number of clinics per week
2	the number of full-time outreach staff
4	the number of personal development and assertiveness courses (PDAC) in 2003
13	the total number of PDAC between November 2000 to end 2003
18	the number of men aged over 50 at the GMHP clinics for the first time in 2003
19	the number of men aged 29 and younger attending full-time counselling in 2003
24	the average number attending the Tuesday Clinics in 2003
27	the number of men aged 40 and older attending full-time counselling in 2003
52	the average number of men attending the Wednesday Clinics in 2003
78	the number of men incorporated in the counselling report 2003
76	the average number of men attending the two GMHP Clinics per week in 2003
46	the number nationally of MSM's diagnosed with HIV in 2002 (www.ndsc.ie)
88	the number of clinics at GMHP in 2003 (50 Wednesdays and 38 Tuesdays)
105	the address of Outhouse Community Centre(GMHP outreach and counsellor base
251	the number of men tested on-site (gay pubs/clubs and saunas) for syphilis in 2003
297	the number of men in their 20s attending GMHP clinics for the first time (51%)
364	the total number of people diagnosed with HIV in the Republic in 2002
582	the number of first-time attendees at GMHP clinics in 2003
689	the national cumulative total figures for MSM's diagnosed with HIV to 2002
1 020	the number of men seen by counsellors at GMHP clinics in 2003
1 210	the number of HIV tests at GMHP Clinics in 2003
1 353	the number of Syphilis tests at GMHP Clinics in 2003
3 470	the total number registered at the GMHP clinics between 1997 and 2003
3 560	the total number of visits to the GMHP clinics in 2003
4 199	the total number of Syphilis test at GMHP for 2001-2003
5 607	the number of nursing procedures at the GMPH clinics in 2003
18 290	the number of visits by men to the GMHP clinics between 1997 and 2003

30 000 the number of contacts by outreach workers and Johnny in 2003

30 000 the number of safe sex packs (condoms and lubricant) distributed by Outreach51 000 the estimated adult gay and bisexual male population in the Eastern Region

Introduction

Welcome to the Annual Report 2003 for the Gay Men's Health Project. GMHP established in 1992 is now in its 11th year and is administered by the East Coast Area Health Board for the three Area Health Boards in the ERHA.

Some important events in 2003 were, "Viva La Diferencia" the 1st All Ireland Gay Health Forum, the Syphilis "onsite testing", establishment of the website www.gaymenshealthproject.ie, and the All Ireland Internet Survey of 968 men for Vital Statistics 2003 with The Rainbow Project and Sigma.

In 2003 the GMHP clinic remained busy and although there was a reduction of twelve clinics when adjusted attendance figures showed an 11% increase over 2002. Meanwhile the Outreach Worker and Counsellor services remained in demand.

As the only statutory gay sexual health service in Ireland (and one of the very few in Europe), the clinic environment and staff reflect the community we serve. Staff changeover and shortages during the year added to the pressure on an already busy team. It is our intention to continue providing quality clinical and outreach services throughout 2004.

Clinical Numbers 2003

GMHP continues to provide quality clinical services to a significant number of gay and bisexual men (see page 4 and www.gaymenshealthproject.ie for details of service).

In 2003 the clinical team of doctors, nurses, counsellors, health advisor, general assistants, lab technicians, secretarial and outreach staff were as busy as ever. Because of an industrial dispute there were twelve less Tuesday clinics and a reduction of medical staff at the Wednesday clinics. Taking this into account when adjusted figures showed a real increase of 11% in attendances over 2002

In 2003 there was 3560 client visits at 88 clinics (50 for Wednesdays and 38 for Tuesdays). There was an average of 76 clients attending per week (52 for Wednesdays and 24 for Tuesdays).



Of the $18\ 290\$ client visits in the seven years between $1997\$ and $2003\$ nearly $11\ 000\ (59\%)$ had attended in the three years $2001\$ to 2003.

First timers

In 2003 a significant number, 584 men attended the clinic for the first time, similar to previous years. Most of these men have never had an STI screen, hepatitis or HIV test prior to this visit. Of the 3 470 first visits in the seven years 1997 and 2003 up to 1 900 (54%) had registered in the three years 2001 to 2003.

Table 2 - First time attendees 1997 - 2003			
Year	Totals		
2003	584		
2002	648		
2001	638		
2000	544		
1999	401		
1998	354		
1997	301		

For new clients the procedures can involve five visits over nine months for results and vaccines if required.

Age Profile First Time Attendees

Age Profile First Time Attendees

More younger men are attending for the first time. In 2003 the first time attendances by men in their 20s and younger was 7% higher than previous year.

Table 3 - Age Range of First Time Attendees						
Year	Number	<19	20-29	30-39	40-49	50>
2003	582	4%	51%	28%	13%	3%
2002	648	4%	44%	32%	14%	6%
2001	638	1%	44%	32%	16%	7%

The Gay Health Network (GHN) survey showed an age profile of 5% (<19), 50% (in their 20s), 34% (30s), 9% (40s) and 2% aged 50 and older. This indicates that the men attending GMHP for the first time are of similar age to those in the GHN study.

It is worth mentioning here that while the rates of syphilis diagnoses lessened during 2003, in the first half of the year the number of MSM (gay and bisexual men) HIV diagnoses in the Republic increased by 92% (when compared to the first half of 2002). This more than anything shows how important GMHP's work is and the need for it to be adequately maintained.

Finally, much gratitude is owed to the staff of the GMHP who carry out their work in a professional and dedicated manner. Hopefully this 2003 report provides a flavour of both their work and the services provided. It is also an opportunity on behalf of myself and the team to thank Mr Martin Gallagher, CEO and Dr Brian Redehan, Deputy CEO, ECAHB management and others who supported GMHP. Special thanks to all our clients and to the many men on the scene who passed on their good wishes.

Mick Quinlan

Co-ordinator

Medical Procedures

The doctors see all new clients and those returning for treatment and re screening. In 2003 the average number of STI screenings was 35 per Wednesday clinic.

Counselling

The counsellors see all new clients and those for HIV testing plus they provide ongoing support for men diagnosed with HIV.

Nursing Procedures

In 2003 there was real increase of 16% in nurse contacts.

Table 4 - N	urses Contact	s 2003
Years	2002	2003
Numbers	2499	2535

There was 5607 nursing procedures (blood tests, vaccines and treatment) an increase of 14%. The Syphilis blood test accounted for most procedures, followed by HIV (All new clients have a syphilis test and most opt in for a HIV test), followed by Hepatitis vaccinations, and anti-hbs (the blood test after completion). Injections are for the treatment for gonohorrea introduced late in 2003.

Table 5 - Nursing Procedures				
	2002 (100 clinics)	2003 (88 clinics)	Real % Increase	
HIV	1 119	1210	+27%	
HA	779	692	-	
НВ	753	665	-	
HC*	106	164	+100%	
Syphilis	I 403	1353	+7%	
AHB	418	504	+50%	
VAC	996	968	+10%	
Injections		П	+100%	
Totals	5 574	5607	+14%	

^{*}The re introduction of Hepatitis C tests for all attendees account for the 100% increase.

Syphilis Testing

In 2003 there was I 353 tests (7% increase) at the clinic, bringing to 4 199 the number of syphilis tests since January 2001. Of these, I 889(45%) were first-time attendees to the clinic. Since 2001 GMHP diagnosed a significant proportion of the reported syphilis cases in the Eastern Region. In December 2003 the GMHP team carried out the On-site Syphilis testing of 251gay and bisexual men in Pubs/Clubs and Saunas (a report on this "POST" will be released in 2004). I 149 men have been tested on site since 2001. These along with the GMHP clinical figure gives a total number of 5 348 syphilis tests in three years. The rate of syphilis positive diagnoses declined during 2003 but GMHP continues to promote awareness to combat compliancy.

Conclusion to this Section

There was a total of 18 350 client visits to 588 clinics in the seven years January 1997 to December 2003 with 3 470 individual men registering in that time.

Overall the GMHP clinic has reached the capacity at which a quality service can be provided. As it is the only gay health clinic, men travel from around Ireland to access services. Demand for this service continues to outstrip capacity.

The significant numbers of men attending is due to such things as, ongoing outreach promotion campaigns and word of mouth on the clinic's safe environment and the friendly approach by staff.

Adequate staffing numbers, the working environment, attitudes and dedication at the clinic determine the quality of service provision. It is our intention to continue this approach and provide access to sexual health screenings for our population base.

Outreach 2003

GMHP has two fulltime outreach workers. Apart from outreach on the scene, contact can be made by telephone, email or by drop-in to Outhouse. They provide support and information to men on issues such as sexual health, STI screenings, discrimination, isolation and relationship problems. They are also involved in community development, working closely with many groups, providing training workshops, advice and referrals.

In 2003 many workshops were provided to various community groups, agencies, to health board staff and university courses on addiction or social studies. A workshop was provided during the first conference on male prostitution in Sweden "Hidden Stories".

New in 2003 were the eleven one-off workshops for gay and bisexual men under the headings, Summer Living and Winter Warmers with topics on sexual health, safer sex, physical and emotional health. Advertised widely, they were a resounding success.

Four Personal Development and Assertiveness Courses were held, bringing to thirteen the number since they began in November 2000. Over 250 men have participated during this time.

The GMHP staff and mini-bus along with the "Johnny" safer sex team led the Dublin Pride Parade 2003 through the streets of Dublin.

The Outreach team carried out on-site syphilis testing of 251 men in gay pubs/clubs and saunas.

The Outreach team directly supported and advocated for immigrant gay and bisexual men, providing support around sexual health, discrimination and isolation. The team liased and provided information on GMHP to relevant service providers, such as; the Reception and Integration Centre, the Health Screening Centres, the Unaccompanied Minors Team, Access Ireland and other agencies.

GMHP Outreach workers continue close partnership work with;

- BeLonGTo youth project
- · Focus Ireland
- Gay Health Network
- Irish Network Male Prostitution
- Johnny (gay peer group).
- Outhouse management and the support groups using the community centre
- Positive Voices

Conclusion to this section

A vital function of the GMHP's work is though outreach and community development. GMHP continues to highlight sexual health awareness, HIV prevention and education with both the men on the scene and those not on the usual scene, men using saunas, the public sites, male sex workers. This requires a full quota of outreach workers and partnership with Johnny and others to adequately reach this at risk population.

Counselling 2003

The counselling service continues to prove popular and in great demand. Clients are referred for counselling from various agencies and outreach, as well as by self-referral. There is a waiting list for this service.

78 different people were seen in 2003, including 21 continuing from 2002. Of these 78, five were from the waiting list. At least 14 of the men receiving counselling also participated in the Personal Development and Assertiveness Courses.

In 2003 more men aged 40 and older received counselling compared to previous years.

Table 6 - Age Range of Men in Counselling						
Year	<19	20-29	30-39	40-49	50>	
2003	3%	22%	40%	22%	13%	
2002	4%	24%	46%	11%	15%	
2001	-	34%	40%	14%	12%	

Issues identified tend to be interrelated, and were similar to previous years, the most common being; depression, addictions, co-dependence, issues with parents, and relational difficulties. A little less common were survivors of sexual abuse, HIV+, internalised homophobia, married and gay or bisexual, and Adult Children of Alcoholics. Other issues included anxiety, physically abusive relationships, coming out, assault, institutional survivors, psychiatric issues, eating disorder, adoption, body dysmorphic disorder, borderline personality disorder, cross dressing, suicidal, and transgender issues.

The number of counselling sessions per client varied; 56 clients received one or two sessions, 10 clients received up to twenty sessions and 11 people up to forty-six sessions

Conclusion to this section

Counselling is one of the most sought after services provided by GMHP. Outcomes demonstrate that designated services contribute to the overall emotional and psychological well being of those who attend. It also contributes to improvements in addressing risky sexual health, drug or alcohol practices. Ideally, GMHP needs two counsellors to adequately respond to the demonstrated demand and reduce the waiting list for gay and bisexual men.



Mr Martin Gallagher launches "Viva La Diferencia"

Co-ordination

In the role of front line manager, the co-ordinator was involved in co-ordinating a wide variety of activities including:

- Production of planning & development reports
- Budgetary control and estimates
- Multidisciplinary team meetings
- · Promotion of GMHP services though frontline work with clients and agencies
- Providing counselling, training and outreach
- Direct supervision of the outreach team
- Reporting to and advising the executive management East Coast Area Health Board in respect of the project's work
- Development of a full detailed GMHP Service Plan 2004.

Apart from co-ordination and counselling at clinics in 2003 the co-ordinator was involved in presentations, representation and direct work with various groups such as;

- "Hidden Stories" Conference on Male Prostitution in Sweden
- "CHAPS" 6th conference in Leicester on condoms
- The ERHA Sexual Health Strategy Services Working Group
- The National AIDS Strategy Committee (NASC)
- The NASC Sub-committee HIV Prevention & Education.
- KAB, The National Knowledge Attitudes and Behaviour Steering Committee
- Vital Statistics 2003 (The All Ireland Internet Survey)
- Gay Health Network
- Irish Network Male Prostitution
- European Network Males In Prostitution
- KINDA Project (from EU Daphne Project)
- HIV Services Network
- Health Promotion for Homeless Committee (ERHA and Homeless Agency)
- Best Health For Children Steering Committee (ECAHB)
- Social Studies Course, Trinity College
- Addiction Studies Course, Trinity College

Conclusion to this section

Overall the role of the co-ordinator is important in the promotion of GMHP as a community service and also in encouraging active partnerships with groups such as Belongto, GHN, Outhouse, Positive Voices and other relevant groups. The role also includes development of initiatives in research, design and advertisements on sexual health aimed at gay and bisexual men.

Development of a distinct service with budget control and resources will allow GMHP to continue a quality service provision in any new health board structure.

GMHP Highlights 2003

"Viva La Diferencia

"It was my first conference and the amount of information and presentations was overwhelming and causes further action to be taken in how to accommodate further issues of sexual well being" one of the comments from the very successful GMHP organised 1st All Ireland Gay Health Forum held in June 2003. The two-day forum, launched by Mr Martin Gallagher CEO ECAHB, explored the varied profiles of gay, bisexual men and other men who have sex with men, particularly social class, ethnicity and culture, the types of intervention methods both needed and practiced in HIV prevention and sexual health awareness with these groups. Presented also was the "Vital Statistics Ireland- findings from the all-Ireland gay sex survey 2000" for use as a framework for HIV prevention and sexual health work and strategies aimed at gay and bisexual men. Presentations from GHFI are available at www.gaymenshealthproject.ie.

Vital Statistics 2003

GMHP, The Rainbow Project and Sigma carried out a gay sex survey on the internet during summer 2003. The results to be published in 2004 and 2005 highlight the popular use of the Internet. 968 men living in Ireland responding to the comprehensive questionnaire. It is intended to carry out a similar survey in 2004

Pride to Pride 2002

The launch of the "Pride to Pride Calendar" celebrating the 10th Year anniversary was very popular and the historical graphics have now been formulated into a booklet also available on the GMHP website.

Web Developments

www.gaymenshealthproject.ie the website hosted by the ERHA acts as a reference point for GMHP services, reports and links. The GHN website contains sexual health information at www.gayhealthnetwork.ie



Delegates attending "Viva La Diferencia"

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES FOR 2004/2005

The GMHP service plan 2004 has a more detailed account and is available on request.

Basically GMHP aims to:

- Continue to raise awareness on HIV, Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs), Alcohol and Drug Use, Safer Sex Practices, Welfare, and General Medical and Psychological Health, through GMHP clinical services, outreach, research, reports, publications, training, advertising and promotion
- To provide a reference centre for agencies and students on gay health issues and on males involved in prostitution.
- To promote networking including community and agency partnerships.

The increasing demands on services and the need for ongoing sexual health promotion needs to be addressed, in the meantime in 2004 GMHP will:

- Consolidate and deliver a Quality Service
- Implement a strategy for delivery of GMHP services within any new Health Structure
- Hold a clear defined budget and work to this
- Continue service evaluation, publish reports, research papers and other documents
- Develop the implementation of a management/coordinator information system
- Distribute safer sex packs (condoms and lubricant)
- Produce and distribute publications and advertisements
- Provide further personal development, assertiveness and healthy living courses
- Provide two sets of community workshops in summer and winter
- Continue training with community groups, agencies and others
- Continue networking and involvement in relevant meetings;
- Coordinate and promote the GMHP and the Health Board's philosophies through participation in: the National AIDS Strategy Committee, Homeless Health Promotion Committee, National KAB Survey Steering Committee, ERHA Sexual Health Strategy Working Committees and others.
- Continue involvement in Networks: Gay Health, Male Prostitution, HIV Services, Migrant Health (JOIN), and other relevant forums.
- Organise and hold the 2nd All Ireland Gay Health Forum
- Further develop the website
- Continue community research and produce reports relevant sexual health issues for gay and bisexual men.

Overall in 2004 and beyond continue GMHP participation in development and increased access to Sexual Health Services for gay, bisexual men and other men who have sex with men.

GMHP Clinical Services,

19 Haddington Road, Dublin 4.T + 353 | 6602189 E gmhpclinic@eircom.net

The Clinical services are for all gay, bisexual men and other men who have sex with men. They are free, friendly and confidential. Full details of procedures are available on request or on www.gaymenshealthproject.ie.

Wednesdays 6.00pm to 7.30pm.

Drop-In & Return Appointments.

Full STI Screening and blood tests (HIV, Syphilis, Hepatitis), results, treatments and vaccines. All men attending for the first time or men with symptoms are advised to attend on Wednesdays.

Tuesdays 6.30pm to 7.45pm.

Return Appointments and Drop-In.

Results, Genital Wart Treatment, Hepatitis Vaccines and Blood Tests only. Men for the second or third hepatitis vaccine attend this evening and do not need an appointment. Return clients can avail of the syphilis and HIV Blood tests. First-time clients can have blood tests, but they receive a return appointment for the following Wednesday fortnight for results and an STI screen.

The Doctors provide the medical service screenings, treatment, advice and support, and also referrals if necessary for further treatment or other medical investigations.

Nurses provide blood testing and vaccinations and further advice and support where necessary. They also encourage clients to attend for completion of the Hepatitis vaccines.

Counselling at the clinic is an important aspect of the service especially in relation to the men who are at risk. All first time clients and those retesting for HIV meet with a counsellor. The counsellors provide, pre-HIV test counselling, sexual risk assessment and clarification of services for the client.

A Health Adviser (HA) in sexual health, advises and supports those with an STI infection (other than HIV). The HA clarifies information and encourages the client to have their sexual contact/s attend for screenings.

The General Assistants have the important task of meeting and greeting the clients. They also provide services to the medical staff, collecting specimens for the laboratory, directing clients to the various staff.

An outreach worker meets and greets clients in the waiting room. They hold informal chats, provide information on sexual health and other community services, reassure and offer procedural information to newcomers to the Clinic.

The medical clerical officers provide the very important back-up to the clinical services. Registration of clients, keeping charts and filling the hundreds of results each week, are among the many tasks they perform.

GMHP Outreach Services

Outhouse Community Centre, 105 Capel Street, Dublin 1.T +353 1 873 4952 E gmhpoutreach@eircom.net

Outreach is an important aspect of GMHP service delivery, and has a peer element necessary for a successful project. It is also important in reaching those marginalised within the community, i.e. men who have sex with men and who do not identify as gay or bisexual, male sex workers, homeless, drug or alcohol problems, sauna users, and those not on the social scene. Support and advice is provided to men on issues from sexual health screenings to isolation and relationship problems. Contact can be made by telephone, email or by calling in.

The outreach team can provide training and facilitation in respect of the following:

- Homophobia/Bi-phobia and Heterosexism
- Safer SexComing-out
- HIV/AIDS
- Sexually Transmitted Infections
- Creating positive environments for working with gay and bisexual men
- Creating positiveMale prostitution

The workshops are for groups, agencies, organisation or disciplines in contact with gay or bisexual men. Workshops are participative in style combining the dissemination of factual information; facilitated small group sessions on attitudes towards the subject matter, and skill-building work where relevant.

Networking and liaison with local, national and international groups and agencies.

Outreach workers support the following through administration or facilitation:

- Johnny (gay peer action group)
- The Personal Development Courses for gay and bisexual men
- Gay Health Network
- Irish Network Males in Prostitution

Visibility on the commercial gay scene continues to play an important part of the work of the Outreach team. GMHP distribute (with Johnny) up to 50,000 safer sex packs (2 condoms and 2 lubricant) to gay and bisexual men. Racks in the venues advertising the project and containing up-to-date information on sexual health are restocked on a regular basis.

GMHP Counselling Services,

Outhouse Community Centre, E gmhpcounsellor@eircom.net

The counselling service at Outhouse is free, friendly and confidential. It is very busy this means there is a waiting time for services. All individuals requesting counselling are seen first for an assessment to determine when and what type of involvement is needed. In some cases persons are referred to other counsellors or services. Overall clients receive counselling/psychotherapy over a number of sessions. The service, primarily for gay and bisexual men is also available to lesbian and transgender persons. Generally clients are seen at Outhouse, and on certain days at Baggot St Hospital. People have attended with issues such as, risky sex practices, low self esteem, depression, psychiatric issues, co-dependence, substance abuse, HIV+, ACOA, sexual abuse survivor and relationship issues coming out, bisexual/married, transgendered, sexuality confusion.

Co-ordination

19 Haddington Road, Dublin 4 T +353 I 660 2189 E mick.quinlan@erha.ie or gmhp I @eircom.net

As front line manager, planning and development, producing reports, budgetary control and estimates. Holding multidisciplinary team meetings, training and team building, administration and smooth running of the project. Promotion of GMHP services, direct supervision of the outreach team and frontline work with clients and agencies providing counselling, training. The co-ordinator reports directly to and acts as an adviser Senior Executive Management.

List of GMHP Reports/Papers

including other Reports where GMHP involvement

Sexual Behaviour of Gay and Bisexual Men EHB Area (1992).

GMHP Report 1992-1996(1997) Males in Prostitution (1997)

Hepatitis B and Gay and Bisexual Men (1999)

GMHP Annual Report 1998 (1999)

Male Prostitution Survey, What is the Best Approach? (1999).

European Resource Directory (Agencies for Males in Prostitution) (ENMP 1999)

National AIDS Strategy Report (DOHC 2000)

Proposals for the Review of STI Services in ERHA (ERHA 2000) HIV Testing Policy and Procedures, Country Report for Ireland (2000)

GMHP Annual Report 1999 (2000)

GMHP Annual Report 2000(2001)

Epi-insight -syphilis outbreak reports (www.ndsc.ie 2001)

Such A Taboo - analysis of service needs for males in prostitution (INMP/ECAHB 2001)

GMHP Annual Report 2001 (2002)

Report on the Personal Development Courses for gay and bisexual men (2002)

Vital Statistics Ireland-findings from the all-Ireland gay sex survey 2000 (GHN 2002) Interventions for a syphilis outbreak ERHA (epi-insight newsletter NDSC 2002)

Scoping Study Report for KAB (DOHC 2003)

Poster Report Syphilis On Site in Dublin (NDSC 2003)

GMHP Annual Report 2002(GMHP 2003)

Some of these are available on the GMHP and GHN websites in PDF format.

GMHP Staff

as at June 2004 (4 Fulltime, 4 Part-time and 16 Sessional)

Project Co-ordinator Mick Quinlan (CQSW), Senior Outreach/Counsellor

Counsellors
Niamh Banks, Therese Hicks, Leoni Masterson, Mary Sexton, Shelia Lyons
Doctors
Shay Keating, Nuala Kilcoyne, Rosie Malot, Graine Courtney, Louise Pomoroy

Medical ID ConsultantCeppie MerryGeneral AssistantsMichael McGrane, Shay Ward

Health Advisors | Jacinta Mosely

Nurses Linda Latham, Christine Kinsella, Geraldine Power

Outreach Workers David Carroll, Ronan Watters

Receptionists Christopher Booth, Rosaleen Ryan, Karen Whelan, Rachel Costello

Lab Technicians

Websites:

www.gaymenshealthproject.ie www.gayhealthnetwork.ie www.johnny.ie www.gcn.ie www.outhouse.ie www.erha.ie www.doh.ie www.ndsc.ie

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