

Xtra!

GAY HEALTH

Vancouver summit >9

BDSM LOSES

Tribunal sides with cop >14

DAVIE ST CHANGES

New gay managers >15

VANCOUVER'S GAY & LESBIAN NEWS

#451 DEC 2, 2010

FREE

22,000 AUDITED CIRCULATION



1 in

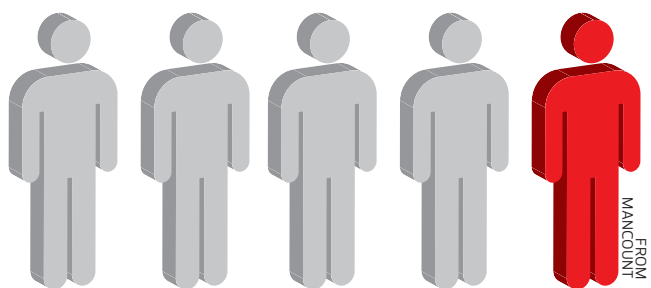
**GAY GUYS IN VANCOUVER
DON'T KNOW THEY'RE HIV+**

>12

40

1 in 40 GAY VANCOUVER

UNAWARE THEY'RE HIV-POSITIVE: ManCount



18.1% 1 in 5 gay men in Vancouver are HIV-positive

Every second day in BC, another gay man is diagnosed with HIV. 150-190 new cases, year after year over the last decade.

FROM MANCOUNT

'We think it's what's driving the epidemic,' researcher says

Nathaniel Christopher

ONE IN 40 GAY MEN IN VANCOUVER ARE HIV-positive but don't know it, according to a new report released on Nov 26.

The ManCount report also confirms earlier estimates that one in five gay men in Vancouver are HIV-positive overall.

"That's a number you can visualize in a gay bar," says Dr Terry Trussler, who helped prepare the report.

"If there are 100 guys in a gay bar, at least two of them won't know they are HIV-positive," he says.

"That still means that one in five are HIV-positive," he adds. "It just means that in a group of 40, one of them is positive but doesn't know."

ManCount is not the first to survey gay men's health in Vancouver. The Community Based Research Centre's Sex Now surveys asked men who have sex with men to disclose their HIV status on anonymous questionnaires between 2002 and 2008. The results parallel ManCount's findings: 16 percent of respondents know they're HIV-positive.

But ManCount took the extra, unprecedented

step of asking respondents for a blood sample as well. The results: 18.1 percent of the study's 1,139 respondents were HIV-positive.

That means 2.5 percent of the men surveyed are positive but don't know it.

This is an enormous concern, says Trussler. "We think it's what's driving the epidemic."

"We did an analysis in the survey, and we're pretty sure that these guys think they are negative — and are serosorting with other negative guys on the false assumption that they think they are negative," says Dr Rick Marchand, who also worked on the study.

In other words, guys are hooking up based on a mistaken belief that they're both HIV-negative, and choosing to use or not use condoms accordingly, the researchers explain.

And the guys who don't know they're positive are likely to be newly infected and therefore more likely to transmit the virus. "We know that the fresh infections in the first months or so are very infectious to other people," says Trussler. "There's a lot more virus; there's a huge viral load, so the chances of infecting somebody who has not protected themselves is very high."

Unaware they're positive, not on treatment and

Sony Ericsson Vivaz Pro



\$0*



NEW

- HD video capture and playback
- Built-in Wi-Fi and GPS
- Multimedia player and FM radio
- 5.1 MP camera
- 3.2" touch screen
- 2 GB MicroSD included
- Faster downloads – up to 10.2 Mbps



David Hewitson

With 3 years agreement
\$274.99 No term

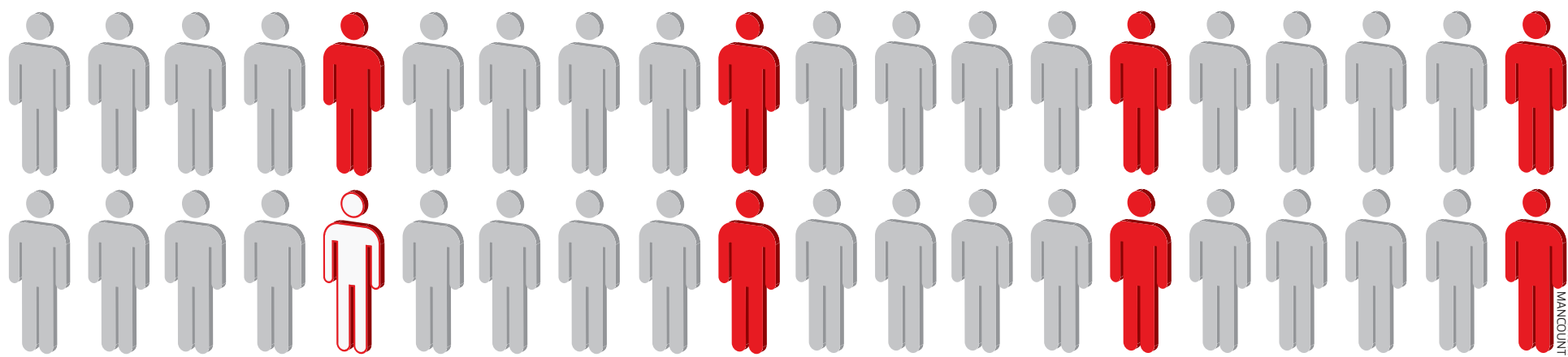
Location: 920 Davie St. Vancouver

TEL: 604-684-5981

Come visit our professional consultant today:



* Available only at Cellmart Communications. A one-time Activation Fee of up to \$35 (varies by province) also applies. Where applicable, additional airtime, data, long distance, roaming, options and taxes are extra and billed monthly. Early cancellation fees apply. The ECF is the greater of (i) \$100 or (ii) \$20 per month remaining in the service agreement, to a maximum of \$400 (plus applicable taxes), and applies for each line in the plan that is terminated. In connection with your wireless data service, a Data Early Cancellation Fee (DECF) also applies if, for any reason, your service is terminated prior to the end of your plan's commitment term (Data Term). The DECF is the greater of (i) \$25 or (ii) \$5 per month remaining in the Data Term, to maximum of \$100 (plus applicable taxes), and applies in addition to the ECF for termination of your service agreement. If you subscribe to a plan combining both voice and data services, both the ECF and the DECF apply. TM Rogers and related names & logos are trademarks used under license from Rogers Communications Inc. or an affiliate. ©2010.



FROM MANCOUNT

ER MEN

serosorting as if they're negative — "It's creating a continuing infection of new men," Trussler says.

According to ManCount, between 150 and 190 gay men in Vancouver are newly diagnosed with HIV each year.

Add these cases to a fairly fixed population size and the percentage of HIV-positive men in Vancouver's gay male community continues to increase every year, Trussler says.

"The whole nature of being in a closed situation where one in five men are infected increases the chances that others will be infected," he says.

Dr Mark Gilbert, a physician epidemiologist in the sexually transmitted infections/HIV division of the BC Centre for Disease Control, says the study emphasizes the need for gay men to know their serostatus.

"When you think about these men who think they are negative but are positive, it gets you thinking: how do you know that you're negative?"

"I think it's important for people to get tested, to be aware of their own status," says Gilbert, who also worked on the study. "Making decisions about other people's status means knowing what your own status is and what the other person's status is as well."

Marchand agrees that regular testing is essential.

Gay men need to know their status, he says. If they're going to serosort as a prevention measure, they need to get tested more often.

Wayne Robert, executive director of the

Health Initiative for Men, says the 2.5 percent result may not be as dire as it seems.

"Half of the 2.5 percent were in between tests," he points out. "They were regular testers, routinely tested, so if they were getting tested every year they hadn't come up to their regular test yet. They would have eventually been caught. So you're looking at about one in 80 who are unaware they were infected and not regularly tested."

The report shows that HIV rates among gay men in Vancouver are dramatically higher than the overall population. A 2006 report, *HIV/AIDS in Vancouver, British Columbia: A Growing Epidemic*, estimated that approximately 1.21 percent of people in Vancouver are HIV-positive.

Robert wants to launch an information campaign urging people to be more aware of their HIV status. He plans to target younger gay men in particular, who, according to ManCount, are less likely to get tested.

"One of the things that happens when we have these kind of surveys is that we are able to make stronger cases to government for intervention and programs that address this," Robert says. "This survey represented the coming together of a number of agencies, including Vancouver Coastal Health and the BC Centre for Disease Control. Now those groups are going to be able to get together and determine what steps to take, based on the hard information from these studies."

To read the full report go to Mancount.ca

Top 3 reasons for not testing

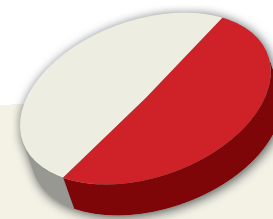
Perceived low risk 59%

Consistently safe 32%

Haven't got around to it 30%

FROM MANCOUNT

51%



had been tested for HIV in the last year

FROM MANCOUNT

ManCount approached 3,324 men in Vancouver's gay bars, events, businesses and bathhouses; 1,139 completed the survey and provided a blood sample.

CLOSED FOR RENOVATIONS Dec 12-26
to make your 20,000 sq. ft. shopping experience with us even better!
HELP US MOVE LESS!

Come early for BEST selection and **SAVE** on one-of-a-kind accessories, wall art, lighting, florals sourced from around the world. Something special for that someone special.

OUR 2ND LOCATION - GINGER JAR CASUAL LIVING LOCATED ON MARINE DRIVE AT PHILIP - IS STILL OPEN TO SERVE YOU!

GINGER JAR
furniture



1420 Fell Ave, North Vancouver
604.988.7328 • www.gingerjarfurniture.com
Mon - Sat 10-6,
Sun 12 - 6

TRENT
DESIGN

Enter to Win
a Hair care Gift Basket!
see studio for details

Cut/Colour **\$75.00**
Cut/Hilites **\$100.00**

Valid til December 20 2010. Bring this ad with you

• Appointment Recommended •

Tel: 604-685-7647
783 Beatty Street
Vancouver, BC V6B 2M4
TRENTSTUDIO@SHAW.CA