Jeff,

At 11:51 2011.10.01, you wrote:

*I looked at the Dr Gary Wood article you refer to which is littered with typos.*

        Although I'm frequently annoyed by poor spelling, grammar, punctuation, and clarity, [often in published books which have clearly not been proof-read], I fear we must accept that nowadays they are increasingly prevalent.  :-(

*You could not ask such complicated questions in a mass survey*

        The ONS report recognises [Box 1, page 6] that sexual attraction, behaviour, and identity are three distinct variables, but then asserts, presumptuously:  "One’s sexual orientation can be derived from any of the above".

        The report states that, although legislation refers to *orientation*, the survey has attempted to assess *identity*.  Yet the statistic most relevant to blood donation is *behaviour*:  specifically, "unsafe sex".  [The predominant form of this is generally believed to be anal sex without a condom  --with a partner who is not known to be uninfected by HIV, or other sexually-transmissible infections--  but the ONS seems blissfully unaware of such considerations.]

        The basic tenet of those who oppose the blanket ban on blood donations by MSM, [a larger group than men who readily identify as gay], is that donor eligibility should be determined by the behaviour of individual donors:  *not* by membership of a diverse group with widely-ranging behaviours.  However, this is an "aside" from the more-general question of the multidimensional distribution of sexualities throughout the general population.

        I suggest that, at some point, multidimensional surveys to assess components of attraction, behaviour, and identity will be required:  though, for the foreseeable future, probably *not* as compulsory part of a national census. ;-)

*But why do so many critics of the ONS survey seem to start from a position of wanting the gay population to be higher?*

        [1]      Having been assured for half a century, [independently of Kinsey], that "we" constitute at least 5% of the population:  and, in recent decades, maybe 10%?

        [2]      Another symptom of the "size queen" psychology? ;-)

*At the end of the day, our response to the results of statistical surveys depends on what we want to see and what we want out of them. My outlook is that exaggeration or dishonesty is wrong but worse it will come back to bite you.*

        Agreed.

*Hence my personal observation that the gay percentage of the population is nothing like the much bruited 10% leads me to accepting surveys that largely confirm my view. Such results are thus well received, but not uncritically. ONS as I said convinced me for a squad of reasons and even if it was out by 100% it would not leave the UK's LGB population over 3%.*

        But, as many others have said, the manner in which surveys are conducted can influence the outcome significantly.  Part of this is how "out" respondents are in the community being surveyed.  Never having been to Ireland, I'm inclined to suspect that, compared with London, Ireland currently has a higher proportion of men who are not out to others, or even to themselves:  although I hope this is already improving amongst younger cohorts.

*BTW the ONS survey correction you mention cuts the gay male UK population back by .1% to .9% with the lesbian rate remaining at .5%. The religion survey you mention seems to mirror the ONS results with its 1.5% GLB figure.*

        The results of the religion survey are also heavily disputed, and in conflict with results of other recent surveys.  Surveys on both topics are frequently affected by problems of self-awareness; of vague, ambiguous, or simplistic questions; of wanting to please, or not wanting to offend; of trying to read too much into the responses; etc..  --  Humans are [allegedly] social animals:  and questionnaires administered by humans can be afflicted by heavy conditioning to social conformity.

*I hope the debate can continue.*

        I imagine it will be running for years to come!

                 John.John

I looked at the Dr Gary Wood article you refer to which is littered with typos. He makes a case for finding fault with the ONS survey but does not seem to recognise that it dealt with an enormous number of respondents and what it may lose in precision is heavily outweighed by size.

Dr Wood writes, "It’s important to remember that the Kinsey Team in the 1940s put the gay and bisexual figure as high as 37%. Of course the sampling has been criticised over the years. It probably did lead to an overestimation". Yet he still endorses its questioning and sampling.

You could not ask such complicated questions in a mass survey while Kinsey's selection of interviewees was far from random - basically he questioned gay men to whom he was introduced or was told were willing. I think that explains the mammoth difference in the gay male population between Kinsey's 37% and the 1% in the ONS survey. That the Kinsey survey was done 60 years before that of the ONS is also remarkable.

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But why do so many critics of the ONS survey seem to start from a position of wanting the gay population to be higher?

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At the end of the day, our response to the results of statistical surveys depends on what we want to see and what we want out of them. My outlook is that exaggeration or dishonesty is wrong but worse it will come back to bite you. Hence my personal observation that the gay percentage of the population is nothing like the much bruited 10% leads me to accepting surveys that largely confirm my views. Such results are thus well received, but not uncritically. ONS as I said convinced me for a squad of reasons and even if it was out by 100% it would not leave the UK's LGB population over 3%.

The number of people entering civil partnership to that date c. 100,000 was remarkably closely confirmed by the ONS survey.

BTW the ONS survey correction you mention cuts the gay male UK population back by .1% to .9% with the lesbian rate remaining at .5%. The religion survey you mention seems to mirror the ONS results with its 1.5% GLB figure.

I hope the debate can continue as much depends on it.

Regards

Jeff

Date: Thu, 29 Sep 2011 23:37:14 +0100
To: jeffreydudgeon@hotmail.com
From: johnq@phonecoop.coop
CC: euro-queer@groups.queernet.org
Subject: [euro-queer] Re: Legal action on blood ban needed

Jeff,

At 10:52 2011.09.29, you wrote:

*I am relying on observation over decades, and, most recently, the government's ONS report which I found very convincing. [Office of National Statistics '****Measuring Sexual Identity: An Evaluation Report****, September 2010.']*

        Googling for this returned first a critique of the survey's methodology,

* <http://psycentral.wordpress.com/2010/09/24/sexual-identity-figures-flawed-psychology/>
* **Measuring Sexual Identity: Fundamentally Flawed, Practically Worthless, Irresponsible or Dangerous?**; Dr. Gary Wood

and only then a corrected version of the report, dated 31 March 2011, with "a review of the weighting classes":

* [www.ons.gov.uk/ons/guide-method/measuring-equality/equality/sexual-identity-project/measuring-sexual-identity--an-evaluation-report.pdf](http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/guide-method/measuring-equality/equality/sexual-identity-project/measuring-sexual-identity--an-evaluation-report.pdf)

         Coincidentally, an article in Wednesday's *Daily Telegraph* with statistics on declining religious belief finds a higher prevalence of LGB folk [1.5%], concluding thus.  --

[www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/8794336/ONS-A-quarter-of-Britons-have-no-religion-at-all.html](http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/8794336/ONS-A-quarter-of-Britons-have-no-religion-at-all.html)        **ONS: A quarter of Britons have 'no religion at all'**        *Tim Ross, Religious Affairs Editor / 28 Sep 2011*...

The results found that **1.5% of adults aged 16 and over identified themselves as “gay, lesbian or bisexual”**, a small rise from 2010. However, more than 4% refused to answer the question or answered “don’t know”, while 0.4% described their sexuality as “other”.

London had the highest percentage of people who said they were gay, lesbian or bisexual – 3% - while the east of England and east Midlands had the lowest, at 1%.

The under-25s were the most likely, and those aged over 50 least likely, to describe themselves as anything other than heterosexual.

        The ONS report *Measuring Sexual Identity: An Evaluation Report* states [p.21].  --

* *In April 2009 to March 2010, people (aged 16 and over)* ***who identified themselves as gay or lesbian tended to be educated to a higher level*** *than those who identified as either heterosexual or bisexual*
* ***38.4 per cent of gay/lesbian respondents were educated to degree level or higher****, compared with 23.8 per cent of Bisexual respondents and* ***21.6 per cent of heterosexual respondents***

While it might be cozier to believe that being LGBT is a more-intelligent lifestyle-choice than being straight, I feel a more likely explanation is that, in our still homophobic society, we're more likely to be "out" [if only to folk administering questionnaires] when we have undergone higher education.

*I can't easily find regional UK rates per head of population but my point stands - there will be a much lower rate per head overall of gays donating blood in NI (if the ban was lifted) who have been exposed to HIV. Therefore the risk is that much smaller.* ***I doubt if this angle will be taken up much in NI for all sorts of reasons however.***

        I agree with the sentiment in your final sentence.

From: jeffreydudgeon@hotmail.com
To: johnq@phonecoop.coop; euro-queer@groups.queernet.org
Date: Thu, 29 Sep 2011 09:52:15 +0000
Subject: [euro-queer] Legal action on blood ban needed

John

I am relying on observation over decades, and, most recently, the government's ONS report which I found very convincing. [Office of National Statistics 'Measuring Sexual Identity: An Evaluation Report, September 2010.']

Part of the reason for the low (.9% - lowest in UK) gay rate in Northern Ireland and the highest in London (2.2%) is of course emigration. I was very impressed with a (confirming) statistic I saw a while back from an AIDS-related survey that found 90% of gay men in London were not born there.

The NI figure for heterosexuals in the ONS survey was almost the lowest in the UK because, I assume, of the region having also the highest refusal to answer the question rate not because of rampant asexuality here.

As to HIV rates in NI they were 79 new diagnoses in 2010 for a population of 1.8m and the HPA experts say 'Northern Ireland has relatively low numbers of new HIV diagnoses compared to other areas.' <http://www.hpa.org.uk/web/HPAwebFile/HPAweb_C/1237970256421>

I can't easily find regional UK rates per head of population but my point stands - there will be a much lower rate per head overall of gays donating blood in NI (if the ban was lifted) who have been exposed to HIV. Therefore the risk is that much smaller. I doubt if this angle will be taken up much in NI for all sorts of reasons however.

Jeff

Date: Wed, 28 Sep 2011 00:01:54 +0100

To: jeffreydudgeon@hotmail.com
From: johnq@phonecoop.coop
Subject: Re: [euro-queer] Legal action on blood ban needed

Hi Jeff,

At 11:56 2011.09.26, you wrote:

*... As there are* ***proportionately fewer gay men*** *in Northern Ireland ...*

        On the basis of what evidence?

        Gay men in general?  Or out gay men?  Or "MSM"?

        Five years ago, after several months of badgering, I learned the basis for the UK Govt's highly dubious "estimate" of 6% in the UK:  see below.  I've never heard any suggestion that prevalence varies throughout the UK.  However, I can well believe that the proportion of OUT gay men DOES vary.

                 Regards,

                          John.

***Date: Mon, 14 Aug 2006 18:50:37 +0100****To: gaycampaigns@yahoogroups.com
From: John Hunt <jghunt@intonet.co.uk>****Subject: That "6%" figure for the UK's LGB[T] population***
        After attempting since March to obtain an official explanation of this figure, I have now heard from the OFT, which quoted it in January.  This is an extract from their reply.  --

*Having contacted Stonewall, they informed me (incorrectly as it happens) that the statistics were produced by HM Treasury ahead of the Civil Partnership Bill.  In fact, the figures in relation to Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual demographics came from DTI's Regulatory Impact Assessment of the Civil Partnership Act* [*www.dti.gov.uk/files/file23829.pdf*](http://www.dti.gov.uk/files/file23829.pdf)*see page 13.   You will see that the statistics are derived from various independent studies and these are referenced so that the reader may look them up.*

        Footnote 14 on page 13, states. --

***There is very little reliable data about the size of the LGB population.*** *This figure is based on the findings in a number of different studies. The National Survey of Sexual Attitudes and Lifestyles (NATSAL 2000) of 16-44 year olds, found that* ***5.4% of men and 4.9% of women*** *had ever had a samesex partner compared to just 2.6% of both genders who had had recent experience in Johnson et al, Sexual behaviour in Britain: Partnerships, Practices and HIV Risk Behaviours, The Lancet,Volume 358, Number 9296, Dec 1, 2001, pp 1835-42.* ***About 5% of those questioned in exit polls identified themselves as ‘gay’*** *in US Voter News Service exit polls 1996 and 2000. Plug, E and Berkhout, P (2001) found that* ***about 5% of their Dutch sample*** *had gay, lesbian or bisexual sexual preferences in Effects of Sexual Preferences on Earnings in the Netherlands.* ***About 6% of a national sample of Americans identified as gay or lesbian in Yankelovich Monitor Research (1994).*** *Laumann et al found the incidence of homosexual desire was* ***just over 7% of both men and women*** *in the USA. Janus and Janus (1993) found that* ***9% of men and 5% of women*** *identified as gay or lesbian. Some studies have found higher estimates, such as Kinsey (1948) and Sell et al (1995), whilst others using estimates of cohabiting same-sex couples have found much lower estimates, for example the Labour Force Survey finds just 0.2% of UK households consist of same-sex couples.*

        So the "6%" has been picked out of a 1994 study in America,
        in preference to other figures from other studies
        -- and while the UK Gov.t resolutely refuses
        to include any relevant questions in the Census.

         [Admittedly, it would take some time before census responses
        to such a question could be considered a fair reflection.]

        But the "6%" is not based on any UK studies at all.