Sexual Behaviors Among Gay, Bisexual, and Men who Have Sex with Men (GBMSM) Infected with MPXV in California

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BACKGROUND

- In August 2022, a state-of-emergency (SOE) was declared in California due to the global mpox outbreak. During the SOE, gay, bisexual, and other men who have sex with men (GBMSM) adopted mpox prevention strategies, which likely contributed to the reduction in the number of mpox infections from the initial peak in late summer 2022.
- We used California mpox surveillance data to describe sexual behaviors among people infected with mpox before, during, and after the SOE.

METHODS

- Information related to STI prevention behaviors were elicited from California residents with mpox who identified as GBMSM during routine public health interviews from May 2022 through July 2024.
- Time periods were defined as pre-SOE (May 12 – July 31, 2022), during SOE (August 1, 2022 – January 31, 2023) and post-SOE (February 1 – July 31, 2024).
- Characteristics were compared using bivariate and multivariate logistic regression.
- When a specific characteristic was unknown, that individual was excluded from that specific sub-analysis.
- Adjusted odds ratios were adjusted for HIV diagnosis and whether someone had received any doses of JYNNEOS or not.

RESULTS

- Of the 4,918 GBMSM infected with MPXV from May 2022-July 2024, 1,669 (33.9%) occurred pre-SOE, 2,511 (51.1%) occurred during the SOE, and 738 (15.0%) occurred post-SOE.

RESULTS (cont.)

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Figure 1. Proportion of Sexual Behaviors Reported by GBSM with Mpox Pre-, During-, and Post-State of Emergency, May 2022-July 2024

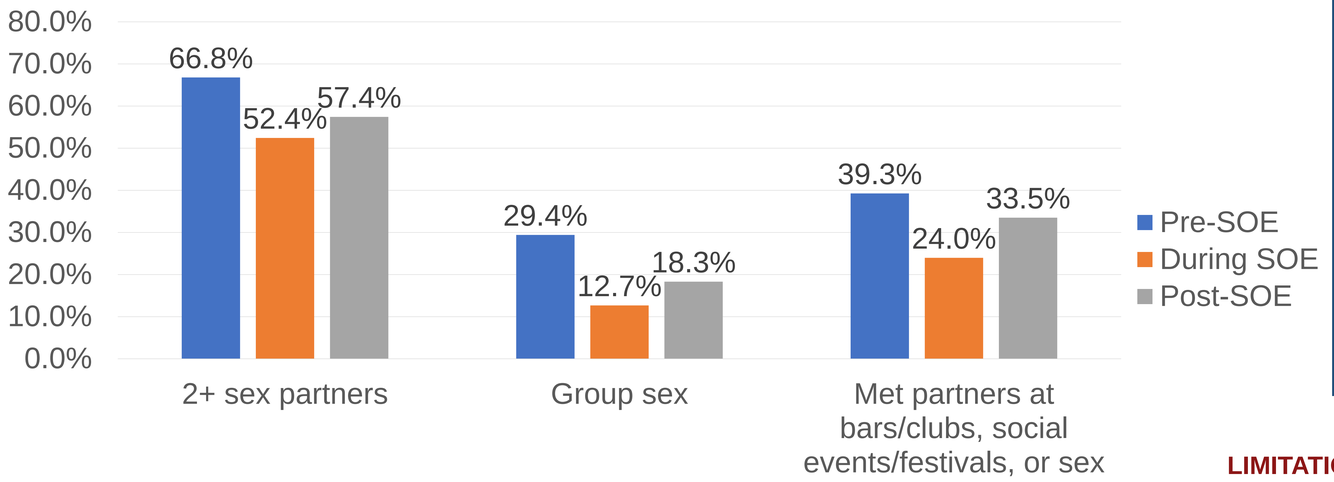


Table 1. Odds Ratios and 95% Confidence Intervals Comparing Sexual Behaviors Reported by GBMSM with Mpox during the State of Emergency to Pre- and Post-, May 2022-July 2024

Outcome	Time period	OR (95% CI)	aOR (95% CI)
Number of sex partners (ref=1)	Pre-SOE	1.82 (1.55, 2.14)	1.97 (1.68, 2.32)
	During SOE	1.0	1.0
	Post-SOE	1.22 (1.01, 1.49)	0.93 (0.75, 1.15)
Group Sex (ref=No)	Pre-SOE	2.87 (2.39, 3.45)	3.10 (2.57, 3.76)
	During SOE	1.0	1.0
	Post-SOE	1.54 (1.20, 1.98)	1.19 (0.90, 1.55)
Met partners at bars/clubs, social events/festivals, or sex clubs/parties (ref=No)	Pre-SOE	2.05 (1.75, 2.40)	2.13 (1.81, 2.50)
	During SOE	1.0	1.0
	Post-SOE	1.60 (1.30, 1.96)	1.36 (1.09, 1.68)

When controlling for HIV diagnosis and JYNNEOS vaccination, the odds of having two or more sex partners, engaging in group sex, and meeting partners at events/festivals or sex clubs/parties were **significantly higher pre-SOE compared to during the SOE.**

LIMITATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

- Our data were limited to mpox cases; these trends may not represent the behaviors of all GBMSM at risk for mpox
- All three sexual behaviors during the SOE differed significantly from behaviors pre-SOE, and where partners met also differed post-SOE compared to during the SOE.
- All three behaviors were reported most frequently by GBMSM pre-SOE and the least frequently during the SOE. While behaviors increased post-SOE, they still did not return to pre-SOE levels during the study period.
- The ongoing circulation of mpox in California, coupled with use of fewer mpox avoidance strategies, suggest that **mpox will pose an ongoing risk to Californians and underscores the need to ensure accessible stigma-free prevention and care in the at-risk population**.

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