

Gay information Cork  
7/8 St. Augustine St.  
Cork.

7 July 1995

Dear Gay Health Network

our attention has been drawn to the proposed questionnaire which is to be circulated by the Network to STD Clinic users and providers. Members of Gay Information Cork have expressed concern at a number of aspects in the questionnaire.

Firstly, some of the questions ask respondents to deliver normative judgements on the perceived service given at a clinic. There can be limited value in asking an individual whether specific levels of medical knowledge was displayed by the providers, if that person did not have the necessary knowledge themselves. At worst it is insulting to even suggest that professionals providing the services are so incompetent.

Secondly, there is an inherent bias in the questionnaire suggesting that the answers are to be used to criticise the service in some areas, though we do not suggest the services are beyond criticism. Our fear is that this will serve to jeopardise some of the very good professional relationships between the community and the clinic services.

It is not possible to compare like with like, as all clinics are staffed and resourced by a specific Board. Invariably the workers in the frontline service of clinics, work as best they can with the resources provided. Some have little or no control over what is done, signposting etc. if this survey is to be used as a weapon in the arsenal to lobby for effective health services, it should be aimed at individuals who can effect change, not alienate service providers.

No meaningful conclusions can be made from such a few general questions. If there is any response from clinics it is likely to be of little value or negative. No indication is given as to how a representative sample of clients using clinics can be targeted. There is a body of opinion that such ill-conceived mini-surveys show groups with little else to do but count, while other valuable pressing work is neglected. While we share concerns that not every clinic is established and administered as a comprehensive confidential service, it is up to each of us to work in a constructive manner to effect changes for the best possible service. We hope you share this view. That is why we regard the survey questionnaire, in its present form, as wholly inappropriate and likely to be misconstrued.

Finally, congratulations on the Hot, Horny and Healthy booklet. It is vital that such national liaison continue. GHN can be proud of many achievements.

yours sincerely,

Dominic Whyte (Secretary)

