

The 2014 AVEN Community Census: Preliminary Findings

Report compiled by Mary Kame Ginoza, Tristan Miller, and other members of the AVEN Survey Team
November 1, 2014

About This Document:

The following document is an informal preview of selected findings from the 2014 AVEN Community Census. This document offers only an early glimpse at some of the raw data from the survey, which has not yet been analyzed for significance or confounding factors. As such, results are not final should be taken with caution. A more thorough final report will be released in the coming months, which will include the finalized analysis for these topics, as well as more topics not included here.

Also, a note on terminology: To avoid ambiguity, "Ace" or "Aces" will be used to refer to the aggregate Asexual + Demisexual + Grey-Asexual "Asexual Spectrum", while "Asexual" will be used to refer to those who identify specifically as "Asexual".

About the Census:

The AVEN Community Census is intended as an ongoing annual survey of major asexual communities. It includes a core set of basic demographic questions and rotating sets of topical questions, in order to obtain better information on the makeup of asexual communities, and to track any trends on those communities over time. The survey received a total of 14,210 responses (Aces =10,880 and Non-Aces=3,330), making this the largest known dataset on the subject of asexuality to date.

The survey represents a convenience sample recruited via snowballing sampling techniques. Announcements containing a link to the survey were posted on several major asexual websites (AVEN, The Asexual Agenda, etc.), as well as in asexuality-themed groups on various popular social networking sites (Facebook, Tumblr, Twitter, Reddit, Livejournal, etc.). Respondents were encouraged to share the link with any other asexual communities or individuals they knew. Although recruitment was focused on asexual spectrum respondents, non-ace respondents who encountered the survey were encouraged to take it as well, which provides the opportunity for some level of comparative data.

It is crucial to note that the asexual spectrum respondents do not represent asexual spectrum people in general, but rather, the people who have sufficient contact with the community in order to have found the survey. Furthermore, some ace communities are over- or under-represented because of differences in recruiting effectiveness. Lastly, the non-ace respondents do not represent the population as a whole, but rather, the kind of people who have contact with aces or ace communities.

About the Asexual Visibility and Education Network (AVEN):

The Asexual Visibility and Education Network was founded in 2001 with two distinct goals: creating public acceptance and discussion of asexuality, and facilitating the growth of an asexual community. Since that time we have grown to host the world's largest asexual community, serving as an informational resource for people who are asexual and questioning, their friends and families, academic researchers and the press. AVEN members throughout the world regularly engage in visibility projects including, but not limited to distributing informational pamphlets, leading workshops, arranging local meetups and speaking to interested press. The AVEN community centers around the web forum, which provides a safe space for asexual and questioning people and their partners, friends and families to discuss their experiences.

About the Survey Team:

The AVEN Survey Team is a group of volunteers under the supervision of the AVEN Project Team, who have worked to design and analyze the 2014 AVEN Community Census. You can contact the survey team at info@asexuality.org

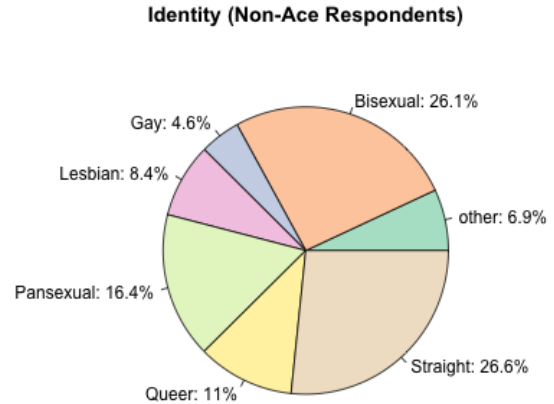
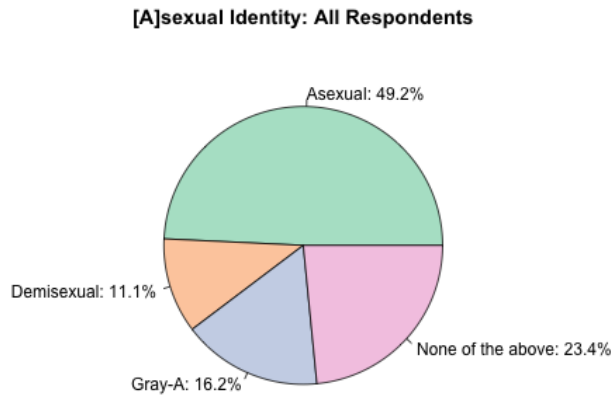
For updates on the progress of the final report and for more previews of preliminary data, subscribe to the AVEN Census Blog at <http://www.asexualcensus.wordpress.com>.

Section 1: General Survey Demographics

Unless otherwise specified, results in this section include all survey respondents - both aces and non-aces.

1.1 Sexual Orientation

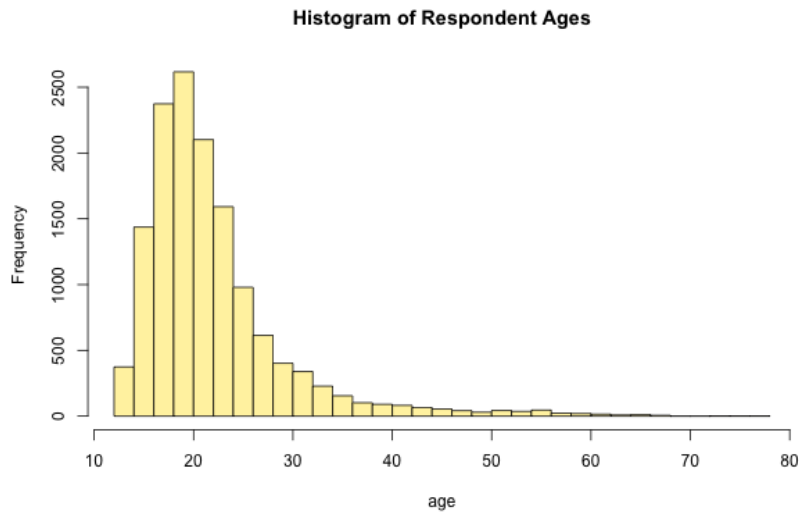
For the purposes of this survey, those who chose “Asexual”, “Grey-Asexual”, or “Demisexual” have been classed as “Aces”, while those who chose “None of the Above” were classed as “non-aces”. Those who chose “None of the Above” were given an additional set of sexual orientations and asked again to choose which they most identified with.



(Note: for breakdowns of romantic orientation, see the Asexual Identity section.)

1.2 Age

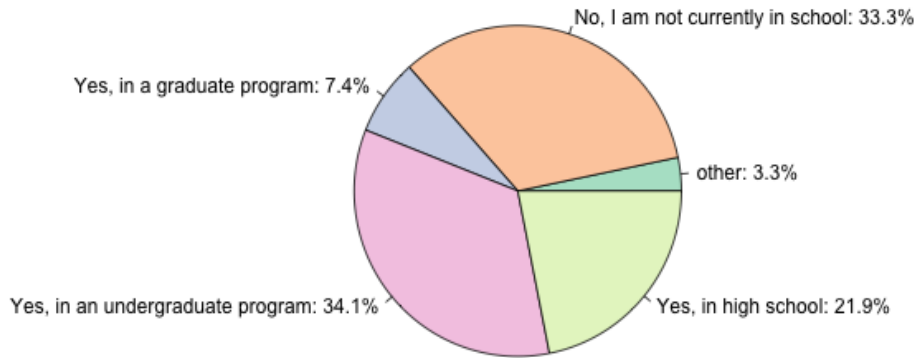
Respondents ranged in age from 13-77, with a median age of 21 and mean age of 22.45. (The survey was limited to respondents over age 13 for legal reasons).



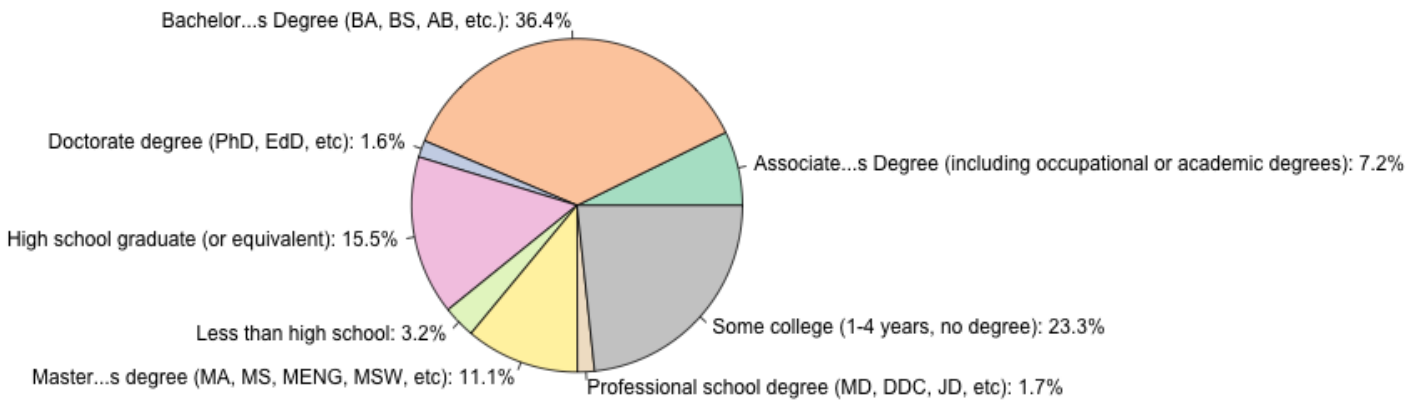
1.3 Education

Because of the relative young age of the respondents, a majority (66.9%) are still students, meaning that standard education measures were not practical. Because of this, two questions were asked: one asking for current overall level of education, and another asking for current student status. Below are two figures: the top figure presents student status data for all respondents, while the lower figure shows the level of education only for those respondents who indicated that they were no longer students.

Student Status - All

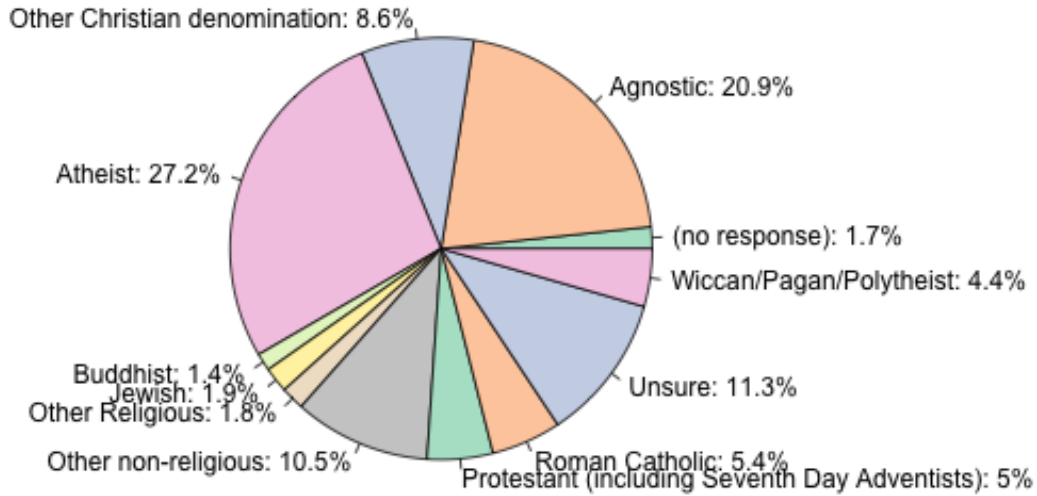


Level of Education - Nonstudents



1.4 Religion

Religious Preferences - All



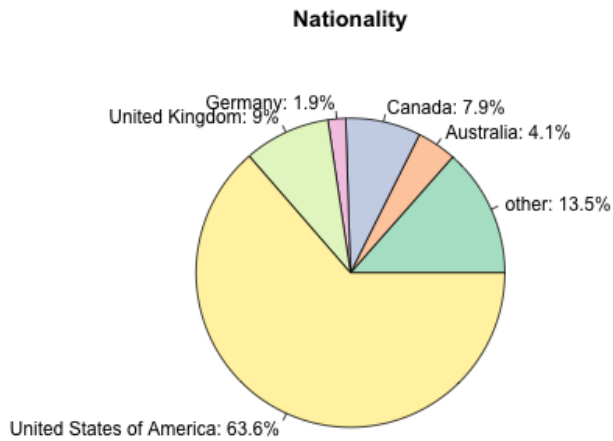
Note: due to an error with the survey design, an “Other Religious” option was not available. Because of this, “Unsure” and “(No Response)” may be overly inflated. Several categories with low level of responses have been merged when appropriate. “Other Religious” in the chart above represents those religions which constituted less than 1% of the sample and could not be merged into another relevant category.

Uncollapsed data for religion was as follows:

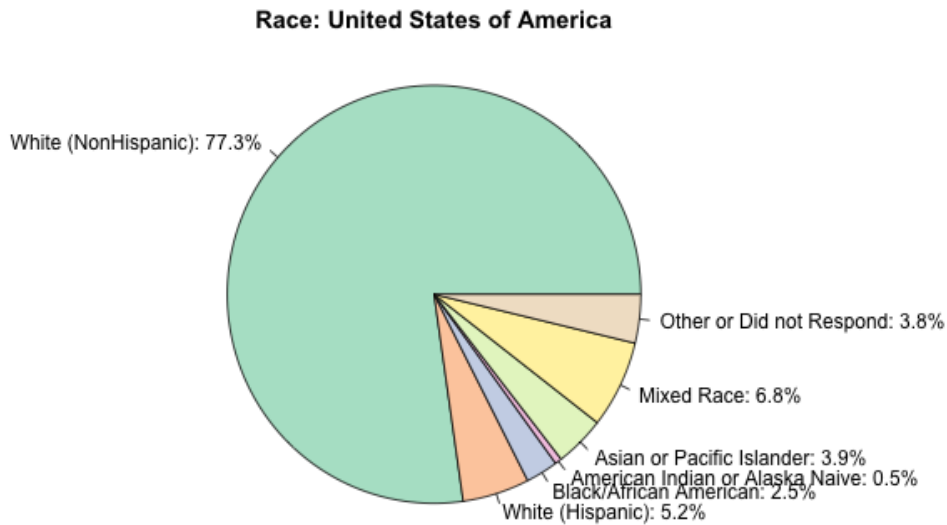
Atheist: 27.2%	Wiccan/Pagan/Polytheist: 4.4%
Agnostic: 20.9%	Mormon: 0.5%
Other non-religious: 10.5%	Jehovah's Witness: 0.1%
Reform Jewish: 1.3%	Orthodox Christian: 0.6%
Conservative Jewish: 0.5%	Anglican: 0.9%
Orthodox Jewish: 0.1%	Protestant (including Seventh Day Adventists): 5%
Hindu: 0.3%	Roman Catholic: 5.4%
Muslim: 0.5%	Other Christian denomination: 6.6%
Buddhist: 1.4%	Unsure: 11.3%
Pantheist or Panentheist: 1%	[No Response]: 1.7%

1.5 Nationality and Ethnicity

The survey received responses from over 90 different countries on 6 different continents, with the majority of respondents coming from the United States of America.



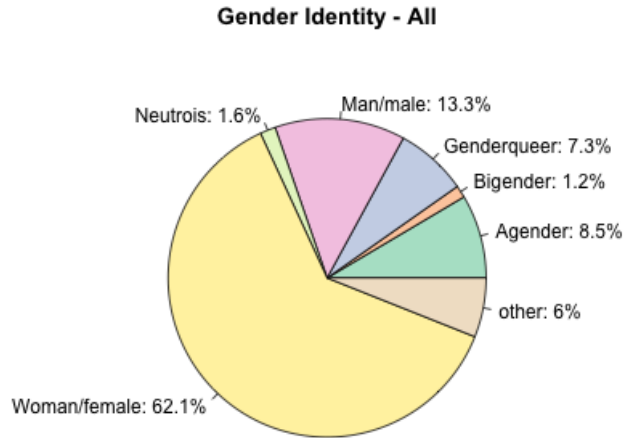
For questions about race, respondents were shown different question sets based on their reported citizenship. For countries with large expected responses, questions were based on the formatting from that country’s census; for unlisted countries participants were given a fill in. Included below is a preview of race/ethnicity data for the USA only.



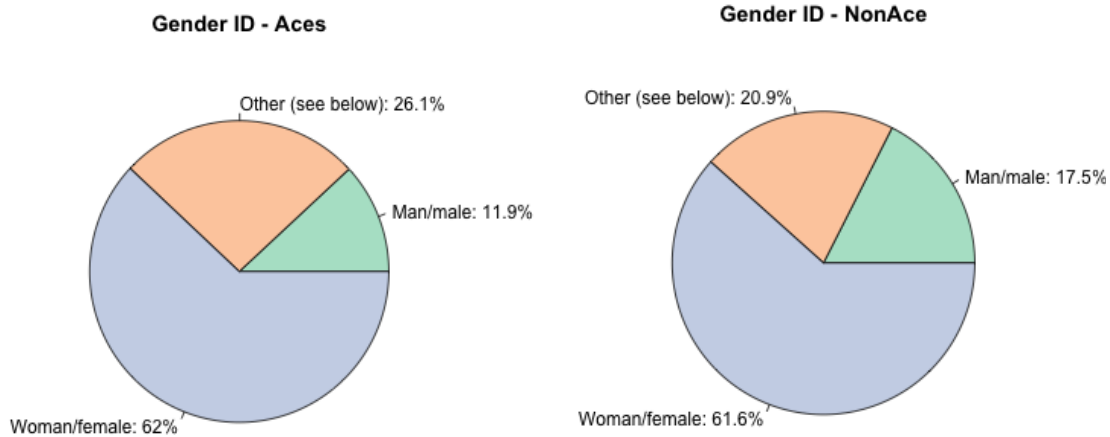
Note: for this graph, respondents were classified as “Mixed Race” if they checked at least two options; however respondents who checked multiple API (Asian and Pacific Islander) ethnicities but no non-API ethnicities have been included under API rather than mixed race for the purposes of this graph [API ethnicities have been consolidated due to low numbers]. Participants who only checked other or who did not answer the question have been temporarily grouped together. Hispanic/Non-Hispanic breakdowns were not provided for non-white groups due to their relatively smaller size. More detailed analysis of Race/Ethnicity from the survey data, including analysis of non-USA populations, will be released later.

1.6 Gender Identity

The findings on gender from this survey resemble earlier findings that asexual communities are largely female, with high numbers of nonbinary-identified individuals and low numbers of men.



However, both the ace and the non-ace responses from the survey show similar gender skews, which suggests that the gender skew exists not just among aces, but in the people around them. While the ace samples do still seem to have a higher number of nonbinary individuals and a lower number of men than the non-asexual respondents overall, the difference may not be as great as some previous findings have made it appear.



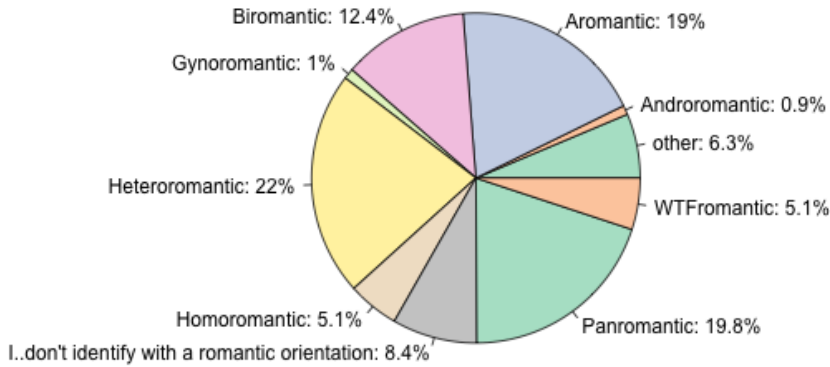
Another noteworthy finding was that while approximately 28.1% of respondents had current gender identities that did not align with their assigned sex at birth, only 11.1% stated that they identified as trans (with another 8.4% unsure of whether they considered themselves trans). Among individuals who currently identified as a non-binary gender, 31.4% considered themselves trans, 41.0% did not consider themselves trans, and 27.6% were unsure. This is an important cautionary finding for future research on asexual and nonbinary populations, as it makes it clear that asking about trans identity is not a equivalent to asking about both assigned sex at birth and current gender identity.

Section 2: Asexual Identities

Note: unless stated otherwise, all data in this section refers to ace respondents only (i.e. asexuals, grey-asexuals, and demisexuals), with responses from non-aces excluded.

2.1 Romantic Orientation

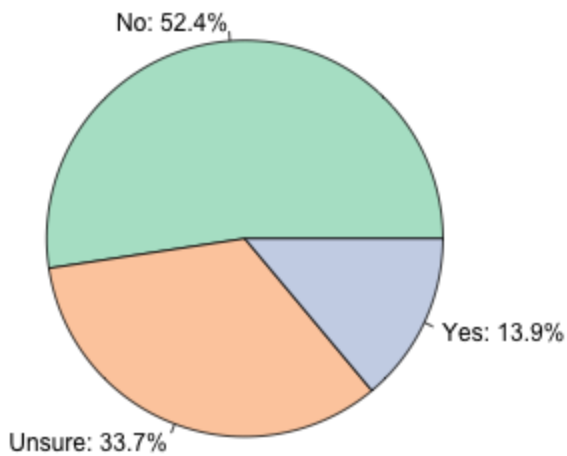
(The following data represents ace respondents only)



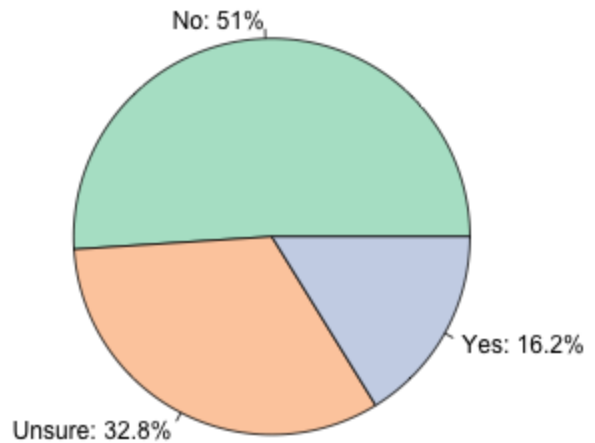
2.2 Grey-romanticism and Demiromanticism

Participants were asked in two questions whether they also identified as Grey-romantic or Demiromantic, with options of yes, no, or unsure. The high levels of “unsure” may indicate that many respondents are unfamiliar with the terms, which may affect results.

ID as Gray-Romantic

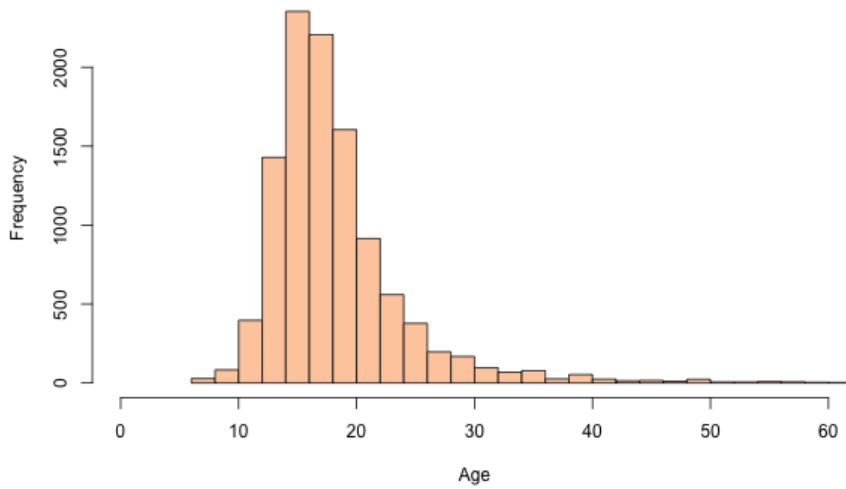


ID as Demiromantic



2.3 Age of first self-recognition

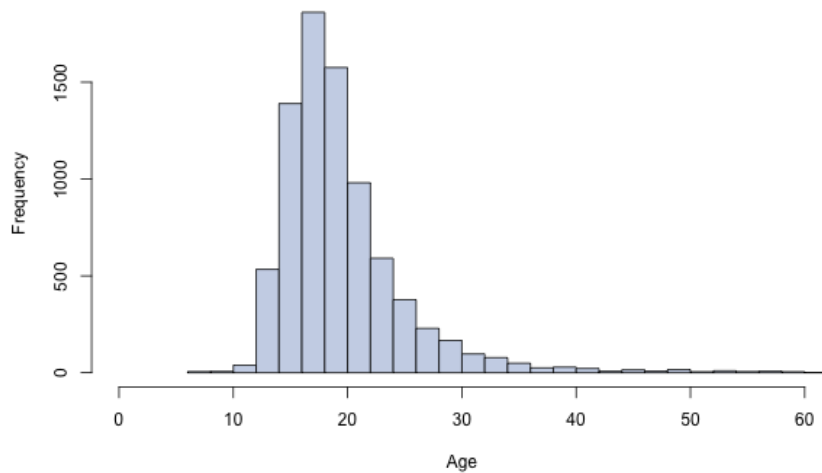
Ace respondents report first identifying to themselves as ace at a median age of 17, with a mean age of 18.7.



2.4 Age of first disclosure

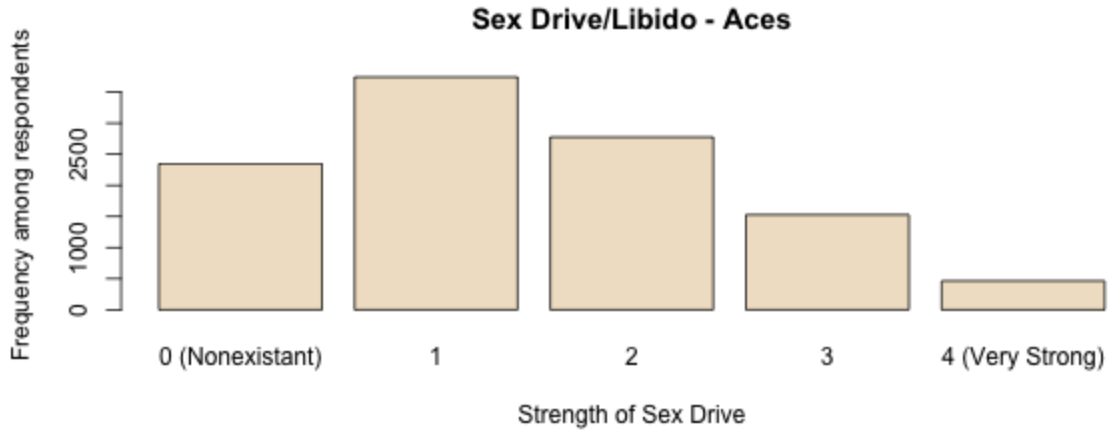
Only 74.9% of aces reported ever having disclosed their identity to another person, while 25.1% of ace respondents have never come out.

Among those who did report having come out, respondents first identified to another person as ace at a median age of 19, with a mean age of 20.1.



2.5 Sex Drive/ Libido

For the purposes of this survey, sex drive was defined as “the drive to engage in some kind of sexual gratification, whether through partnered sex or solo stimulation (e.g. masturbation).” Aces were asked to indicate how strong they considered their sex drive on a scale from 0 (nonexistent) to 4 (very strong). 21.6% of ace respondents indicated that they felt their sex drive was nonexistent.

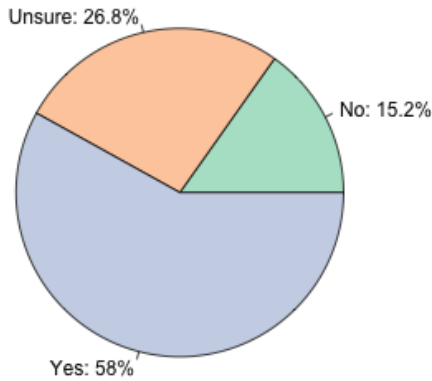


2.6 Attitudes About Asexuality

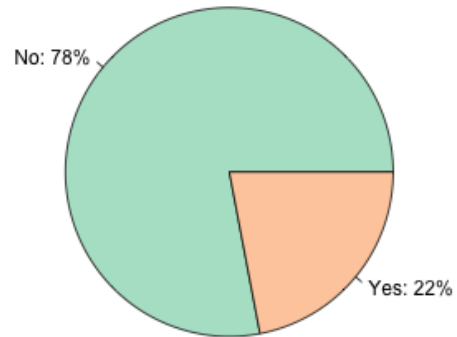
Ace respondents were also asked whether they considered themselves to have a sexuality, under whatever their personal definition of “sexuality” might be, and also whether they would change their orientation if they could.

A solid majority indicated that they do consider themselves to still have a sexuality, and an even stronger majority stated that they would not wish to change their orientation, even if they could.

Do you consider yourself to have a sexuality?



Would you change your orientation?

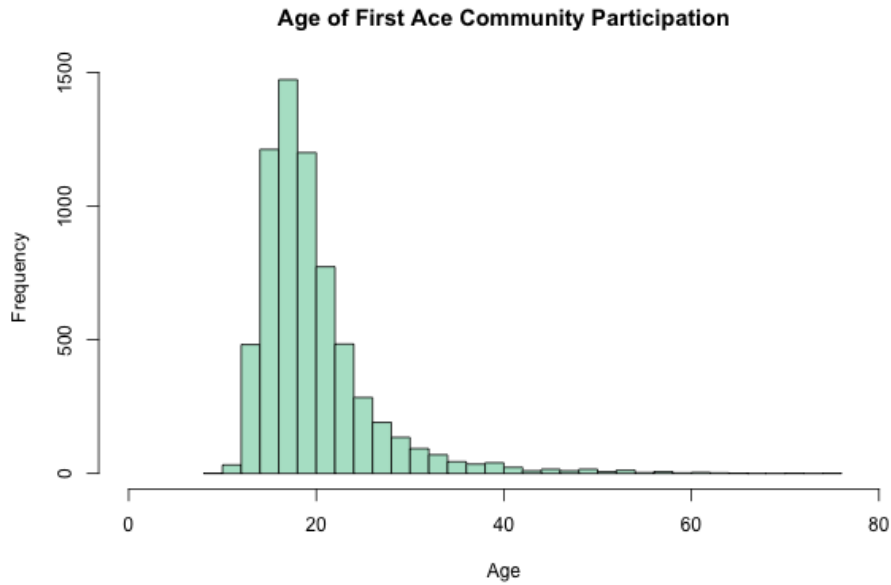


Section 3: Asexual Communities

Unless otherwise noted, all data in these sections is limited to respondents who identified as ace.

3.1 Age of first engagement with asexual communities

Approximately 34.2% of ace respondents report never having participated in an asexual community. For those who have, the median reported age of first participation was 19 and the mean age was 20.22.



3.2 Community first participated in

Excluding respondents who had never participated in an asexual community, the most common first ace community used was Tumblr, at 53.9%, followed by English-language AVEN at 28.3%.

Tumblr: 53.9%	Livejournal: 1.5%
AVEN (English): 28.3%	Alt-lang AVEN: 1.5%
Facebook: 4.6%	Meetup.com: 0.5%
Reddit: 3.9%	Twitter: 0.4%
Livejournal: 1.5%	YouTube: 0.3%
Offline asexual group: 1.6%	Other: 3.6%

3.3 Primary reason for participating in ace communities

For this question, respondents were asked to select the main reason that they participated in asexual communities. Those who reported not participating in asexual communities were excluded.

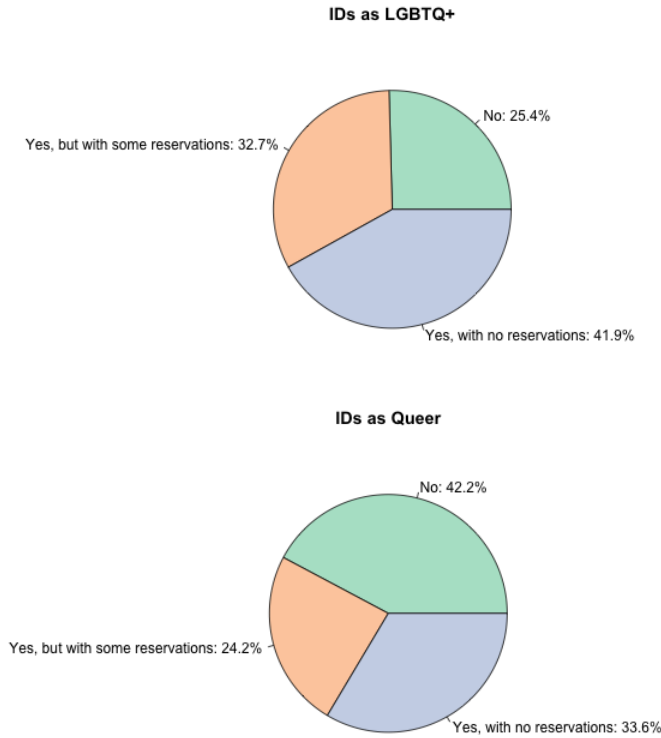
- To know more about myself: 37.8%
- To find people like myself: 27.5%
- To talk about asexuality: 17.7%
- To have general discussions: 8.9%
- To find friends or partners: 3.1%
- Other: 5.1%

Section 4: Asexuality and LGBTQ+ Communities

Unless otherwise noted, all data in these sections is limited to respondents who identified as ace.

4.1 Aces who ID as “LGBTQ+” and/or “Queer”

Whether aces identify as “queer”, or “lgbt” or not varies widely, but overall aces seem more hesitant to ID as “Queer” than “LGBTQ+”, perhaps due to the polarizing political history of the term “Queer”.



4.2 LGBTQ+ Identification by Romantic Orientation

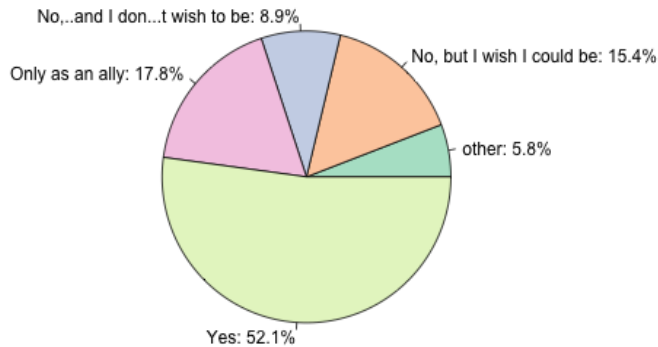
LGBTQ+ identification also varies quite widely by romantic orientation, with aces who experience same-sex romantic attraction much more likely to identify as LGBTQ+ without reservations.

	Yes, with no reservations	Yes, with some reservations	No
Homoromantic	69.2%	24.4%	6.3%
Panromantic	64.6%	28.9%	6.4%
Biromantic	50.0%	37.5%	12.3%
Aromantic	40.2%	34.3%	25.1%
Heteroromantic	13.3%	31.5%	54.9%
WTFromantic	46.4%	39.9%	13.5%
Does not identify with a romantic orientation	26.5%	35.0%	38.3%

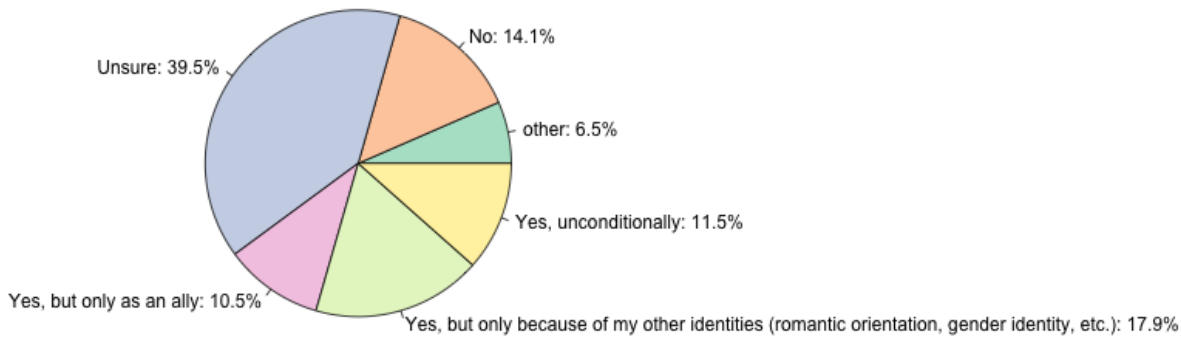
4.3 Part of or welcome in the LGBTQ+, Queer, or similar communities?

Despite the fact that a large portion of aces consider themselves to be LGBTQ+, only 11.4% actually feel unconditionally welcome in LGBTQ+ communities - while another 14% do not feel welcome at all. Also significant is the fact that while only about half of aces reported that they considered themselves currently a part of the LGBTQ+ community, the vast majority still believe that asexuality *should* be a part of the LGBTQ+ umbrella. All of these results strongly raise the possibility that unfriendly attitudes towards asexuals may lead many aces to shy away from associating with the LGBTQ+ umbrella.

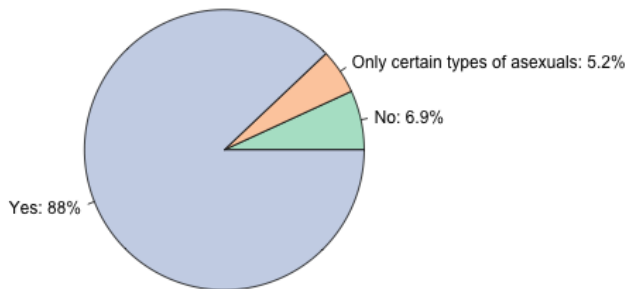
Do you consider yourself a part of the Queer/LGBTQ+ Community?



Do you feel welcome in the Queer/LGBTQ+ Community?



Should asexuality be part of the LGBTQ+ Umbrella?



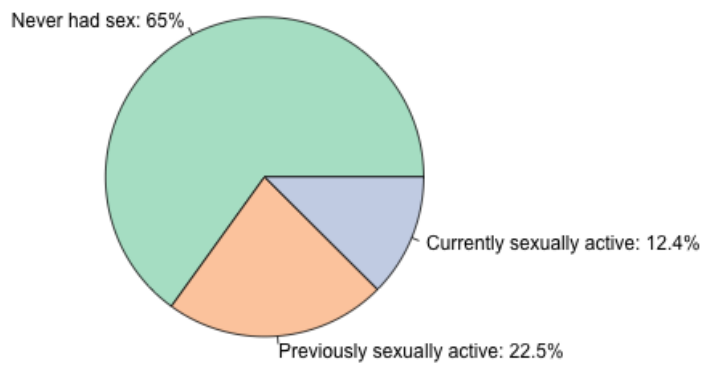
Section 5: Sexual Activity

Unless otherwise specified, the following section is limited to ace respondents who indicated that they had engaged in consensual sex. For purposes of the survey, “sexual activity” was operationally defined to refer only to partnered consensual sexual activity, but some respondents may have missed the operational definition or found it unclear. Also note that respondents may experience various degrees and kinds of coercion or pressure to engage in sex, and we left it up to respondents to decide whether these counted as consensual or not.

5.1 Sexually Active or Inactive

For aces in our sample, 65% had never engaged in sexual activity. Of the 35% that had, 12.4% identified themselves as currently sexually active, while the other 22.5% indicated that they were no longer sexually active at the present time.

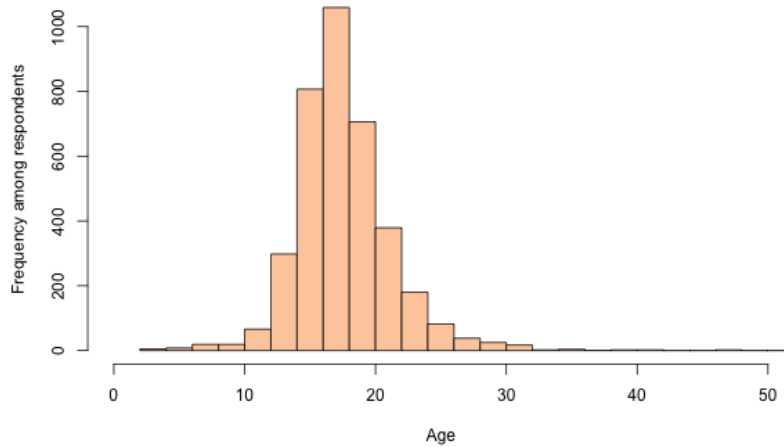
Sexually [In]Active - Aces



5.2 Age of first sexual activity

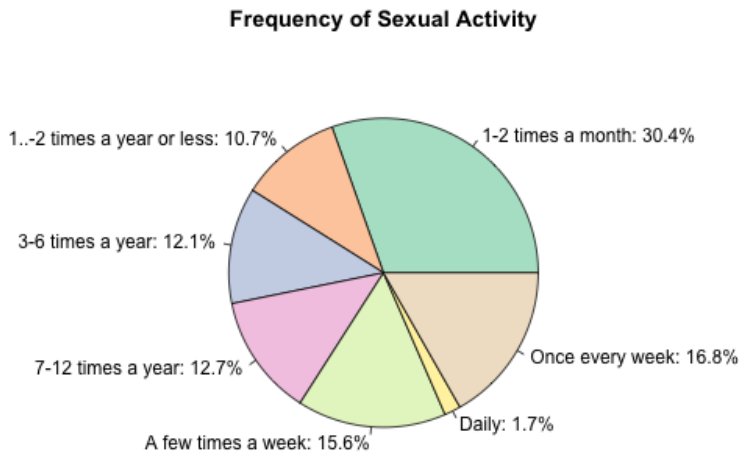
The median of age of first sexual activity was 18.00, and the mean age was 18.12.

Histogram of Age of First Sexual Activity - Aces



5.3 Frequency of sexual activity

The figure below shows the reported frequency of sexual activity for ace respondents who reported being currently sexually active.



5.4 Reasons for having sex

Respondents were given a list of options, and asked to check all that apply. Those who selected “Other” were given space to write in a response, and these will be analyzed in future reports. Presented below are the approximate percentages of aces who are, or have been sexually active who selected each of the following as a reason that influenced their decision to have sex.

- To please a partner: 75.5%
- Curiosity: 56.7%
- Social expectations: 40.8%
- I find it pleasurable: 36.1%
- To conceive a child: 3.8%
- Other: 8.7%

(Write-in and “Other” results have not yet been compiled)

Section 6: Sexual Inactivity

Unless otherwise specified, the following sections includes only responses from ace individuals who indicated either that they had never had sex, or that they were not currently sexually active.

6.1 Time since last sexual activity

Respondents who indicated that they had formerly been sexually active, but were not now were then asked how long it had been since they were last sexually active:

<1 year: 33.1%
1 - 5 years: 46.2%
5-10 years: 13.5%
10-15 years: 4.3%
15-20 years: 1.7%
20-25 years: 0.4%
25-30 years: 0.4%
30+ years: 0.4%"

6.2 Conditions for sexual [in]activity:

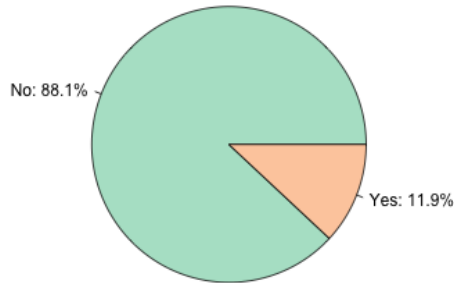
Until I feel like doing otherwise: 46.6%
Permanently: 17.6%
My sexual inactivity is not intentional: 12.1%
Until I am in an appropriate relationship: 9.3%
Undecided: 8.6%
Until marriage: 3%
Until another specific time in the future: 0.8%
Other: 19.3%

Many of the respondents don't seem to have a set length for how long they intend to be sexually inactive with 46.6% saying that they intend to be sexually inactive until they feel like doing otherwise, which could be at any point, if ever. Another 17.6% responded that their sexual inactivity is intended to be permanent. There were also another 12.1% who responded that their sexual inactivity isn't intentional for them, which could mean either that they would to be sexually active but have been unsuccessful, but could also be that they make no *deliberate* effort to be sexually inactive.

6.3 Identifying as Celibate

When aces who reported being sexually inactive were asked if they identified as “Celibate”, only 11.9% did, with the vast majority indicating that they do not identify with the term.

Do you identify as celibate?



6.4 Reasons for not identifying as Celibate

Those sexually inactive aces who indicated that they did not identify as celibate were asked to check all that applied from a list of reasons why they might not identify with that label:

- I think celibacy suggests deliberate effort in not having sex.: 70.8%
- I think 'celibacy' has strong religious connotations that don't fit me: 42.1%
- I'm not currently sexually active, but open to it, so I don't think celibate would fit me: 32.7%
- I don't think a person can be both asexual and celibate: 6.11%
- (Write-in and "Other" results have not yet been compiled)

6.5 Other terms for sexual inactivity

Respondents were next given a list of common alternatives to “celibate”, and asked which label they would most likely identify with for their sexual inactivity:

- I don't use any labels related to my sexual inactivity": 41.7%
- Not Sexually Active / Sexually inactive: 26.3%
- Non-sexual: 20.6%
- Abstinent: 3.1%
- Antisexual: 2.9%
- Celibate: 2.1%
- Other: 3.4%"

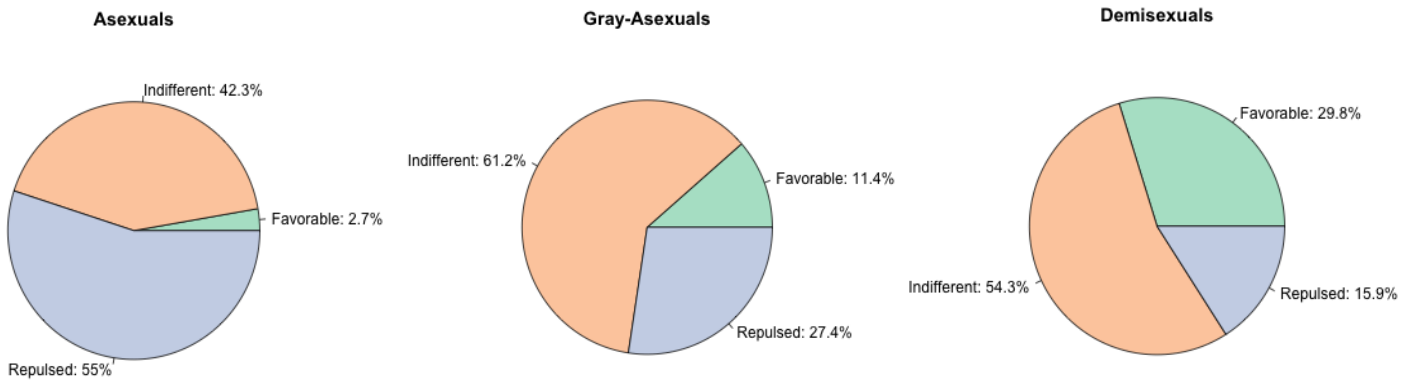
Only 2.1% actually prefer “celibate” over the other labels, as compared to the previous 11.9% total who identify as celibate, indicating that even people who identify as celibate do not use it as a primary identity. Among those who used labels for their sexual inactivity, “Not Sexually Active/Sexually Inactive” and “Nonsexual” seem to be the general favorites

Section 7: Personal Attitudes

Unless otherwise specified, all results refer only to asexual respondents.

7.1 Personal attitude towards sex

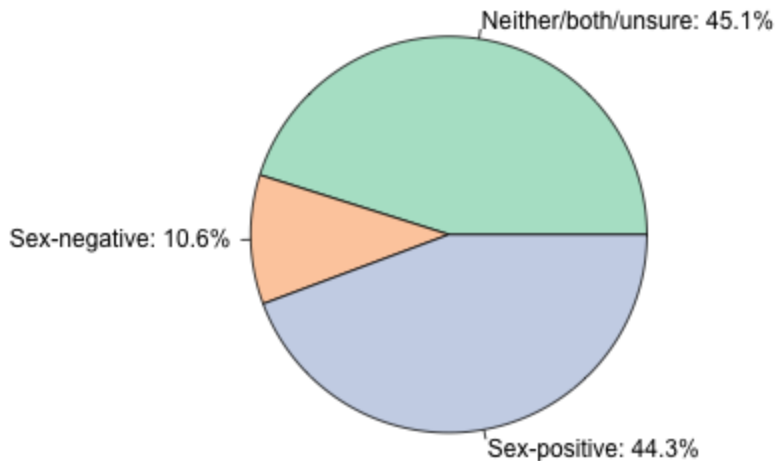
Respondents were asked to rate how they feel towards the idea of themselves engaging in sexual activity, picking from the labels of “repulsed”, “indifferent”, and “favorable”. Responses varied greatly based on sexual orientation, so individuals of each ace orientation are presented separately.



7.2 Sex-Positivity

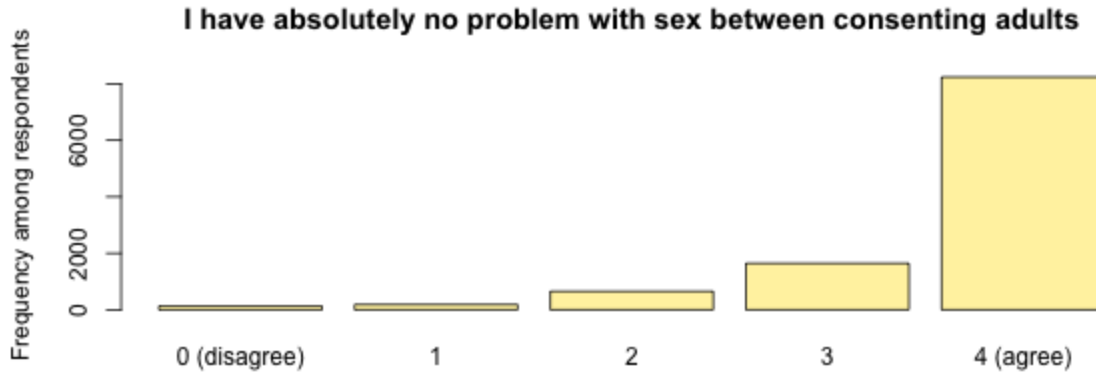
Respondents were asked if they consider themselves “sex-positive”, “sex-negative”, or neither/both in regards to their attitude towards sex in general. This question only was about identification with these terms.

Sex-Positive or Sex-Negative?



7.3 Sex Between Consenting Adults

Respondents were asked to rate on a scale of 0(disagree) through 4(agree) how much they agreed or disagreed with the statement “I have absolutely no problem with sex between consenting adults”.



7.4 Sex in Society

Respondents were asked to rate on a scale of 0(disagree) through 4(agree) how much they agreed or disagreed with the statement “Our society has too much sex in it, and it would be better if it were diminished.”



You've reached the end of the report!

Don't despair - there's still a lot of potential questions left that we haven't talked about yet, which means there's a lot more data to come! To this end, we've set up the AVEN Census Blog - a central resource for posting further analysis and hosting discussions about this year's census and any future surveys. While the final census results report will likely not be completed for a couple months, in the interim we'll be posting lots of previews as well as several shorter bits of independent analysis on various topics covered by the survey.

You can find the AVEN Census Blog at <http://www.asexualcensus.wordpress.com>.