

**NATIONAL SURVEY OF ATTITUDES AND PERCEPTIONS OF
JAMAICANS TOWARDS SAME SEX RELATIONSHIPS**

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RESEARCH TEAM

IAN BOXILL

JOULENE MARTIN

ROY RUSSELL

LLOYD WALLER

TRACIAN MEIKLE

RASHALEE MITCHELL

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY, PSYCHOLOGY AND SOCIAL WORK

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report examines Jamaican views towards homosexuality and attempts to discover what are some possible determinants of attitudes towards homosexuality in the country. This study uses a mixed method approach driven largely by a nation poll of attitudes and perceptions. For the survey, a nationally representative sample of 1007 adults from 231 communities across Jamaica was interviewed between October and November 2010. The margin of error is approximately +/- 4%. The survey was supported by a qualitative study based on five focus groups conducted across the country between October 2010 and January 2011. Following is a summary of findings from the study.

1. It would appear that Jamaicans become aware of homosexuality at an early stage in their lives as the majority of the respondents (51%) indicated knowing about homosexuality at 14 years old and under.
2. Most Jamaicans (89%) believe that homosexuality is somewhat or very prevalent in Jamaica. Respondents also alluded to an association with this orientation and one's social class, as 66.8% felt that it was more prevalent among some social classes more than others. A significant 57.7% felt that it was most prevalent among the upper class, while 9% said it was most among the middle class and another 2% said it was most among the working class.
3. Most persons (51%) felt that homosexuality was to be found equally among males and females, however, 32% felt that it was more common among males and 11.2% stated that it was slightly more common among females.
4. With respect to the causes of homosexuality, opinions varied. Only 10% felt that persons are born as homosexuals, however 28.6% felt that it was due to environmental factors – social and cultural. The largest proportion felt that it was due to a combination of factors, suggesting the interaction of nature and nurture.
5. Most Jamaicans (56%) believe that it is not possible to be a homosexual and be religious at the same time. However, it should be noted that a significant minority (43%) does not share this view, which perhaps suggest that the public is somewhat conflicted on the issue of homosexuality and religiosity.

6. When asked if one can be homosexual and also be a Christian, only 30% agreed with the statement.
7. Most respondents agreed that society was more accepting of female homosexuality (67.1%) and that this was the case because women can do things men cannot do whilst suffering few negative consequences. Also, female homosexuality is rarely considered to be bad or wrong (13%).
8. Most respondents (85.2%) did not think that homosexuality among consenting adults should be made legal in Jamaica.
9. In relation to male homosexuality, 82.2% deemed it to be morally wrong as opposed to 3.6% who did not see it as a moral issue. 6.2% of those polled had no opinion on the matter. As for female homosexuality, the results were similar as 75.2% felt that homosexuality was morally wrong.
10. Two homophobia scales indicate that Jamaicans have strong negative views of homosexuality, thereby ranking high on these scales.
11. Negative views of homosexuality tended to be greatest among males, non-university educated persons, those who listened mostly to dancehall and reggae music and those in lower socio-economic groups.
12. In general, the most important finding from this study is that strong negative perceptions and attitudes towards homosexuality cut across all social classes, gender and social groups in Jamaica.