The third National Survey of Sexual Attitudes and Lifestyles (Natsal) was long awaited and finally hit the British press just before World AIDS Day 2013. You can access a fascinating range of data in six open access Lancet papers, accessible through www.natsal.ac.uk. The sexual health research and clinical communities are however only too well aware of the complex pitfalls we face in this particularly sensitive field of behavioural research. So we are delighted to publish perhaps the most important papers by the Natsal team—an account of their methods Phelps et al, a exploration of how bias in Natsal has changed over the three decennial surveys Prah et al and a fascinating editorial by Mercer, Wellings and Johnson, describing its development and origins in earlier surveys. Many clinicians, as well as researchers, use questionnaires and surveys in their working lives. This suite of papers, along with the growing archive of past and present Natsal questions, provides an immense resource for those who need to find valid ways of measuring the sexual behaviour of populations. Gone are the days when everyone designed his or her behaviour of populations. Gone are the present Natsal questions, provides an interesting theme this month. The trans-diagnosis. A rather different approach to HIV testing is proposed in a Spanish paper, where Fernández-Balbuena and colleagues report the results of a street testing initiative aimed at reaching individuals who had never tested.

“Point of care” tests remain a topic of interest, though I find it hard to resist the temptation to point out that Gram stains, dark ground microscopy and wet mounts for Trichomonas vaginalis are point of care tests (POCT). It is indisputable that the new generation of POCT have a different role, and our readers will find Turner et al’s exploration of POCT for gonorrhoea and chlamydia instructive.

An editorial by Alec Miners reflects on these interesting questions. This issue also presents important papers on behavioural risk in men who have sex with men (MSM), the epidemiology and prevention of STI and HIV in Africa, Do please share your thoughts at @sti_bmj,via the website or consider proposing a blog to our blogmaster via leslieginlewes@yahoo.co.uk.

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REFERENCES