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BC's SmartSexResource website: Who's using it and what are they looking for?



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Background

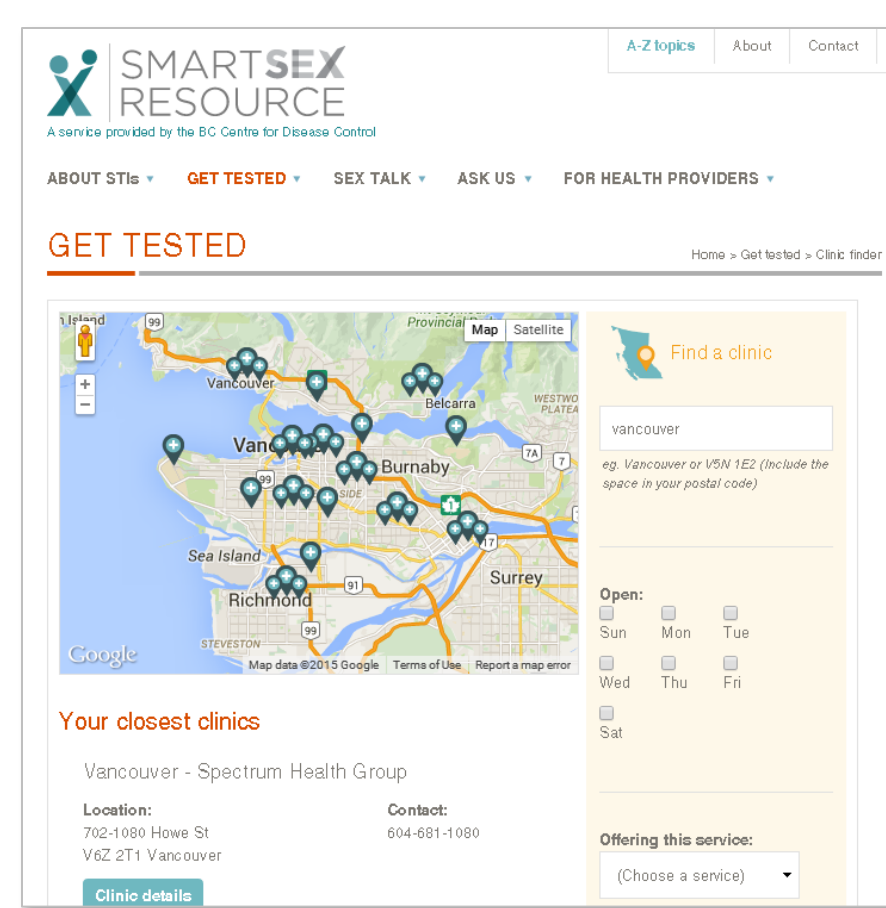
SmartSexResource.com is the British Columbia Centre for Disease Control's (BCCDC) provincial sexual health website. It is one component of the BC Online Sexual Health Services Program at BCCDC, which uses online technology to deliver innovative sexual health interventions to British Columbians.

Launched in 2012, SmartSexResource is a comprehensive health information site with three key objectives:

1. Increase knowledge through improved access to local and relevant sexual health information for BC residents, health providers and agencies working in sexual health;
2. Improve sexual health equity through use of web-based sexual health services;
3. Increase satisfaction with sexual health services and improve the experience of visitors to the website.

Website Features

SmartSexResource offers a number of interactive features and downloadable resources for both the general public and health care providers, including:



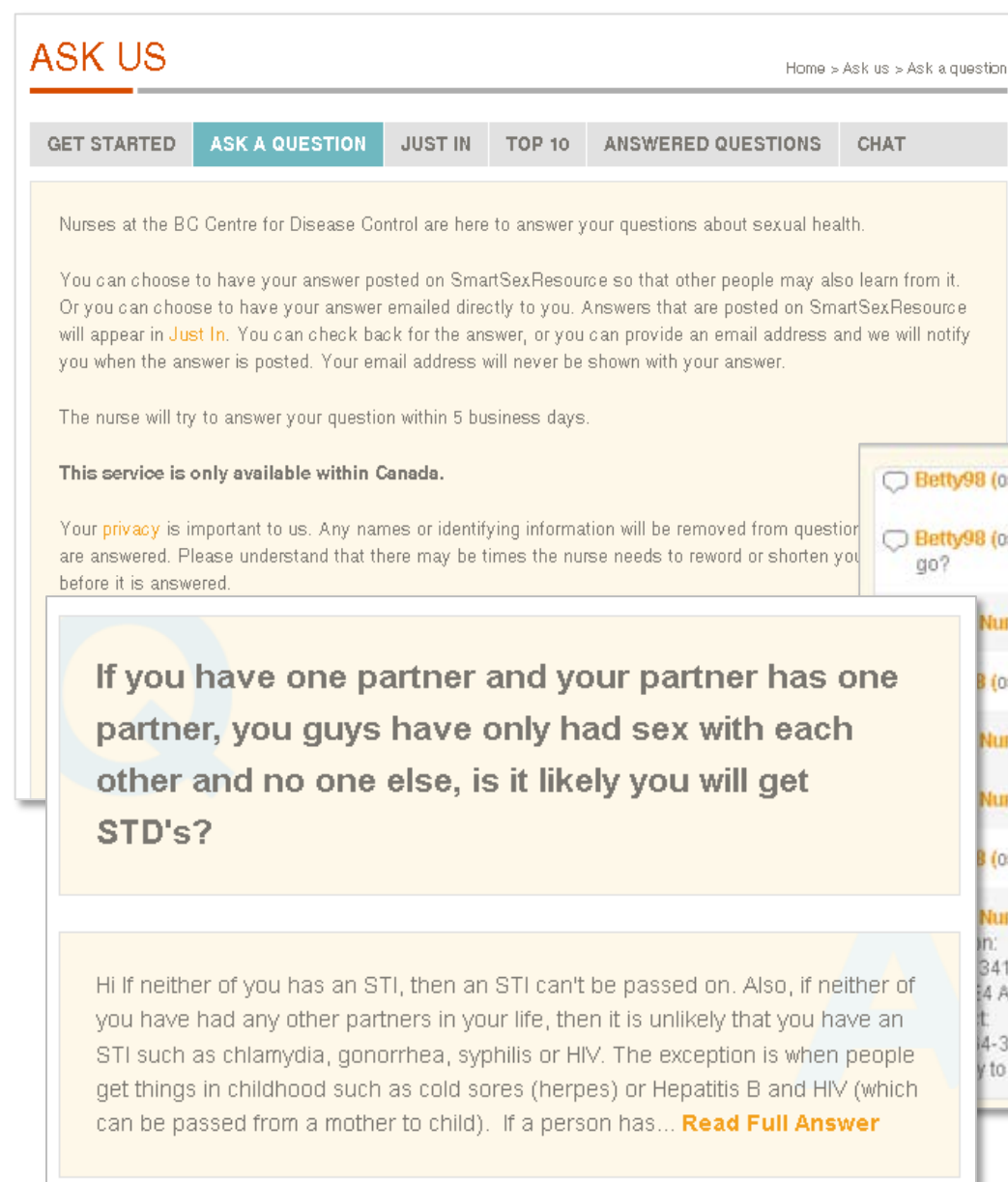
Sexual health services & clinic finder

Search by:
• location
• day
• services

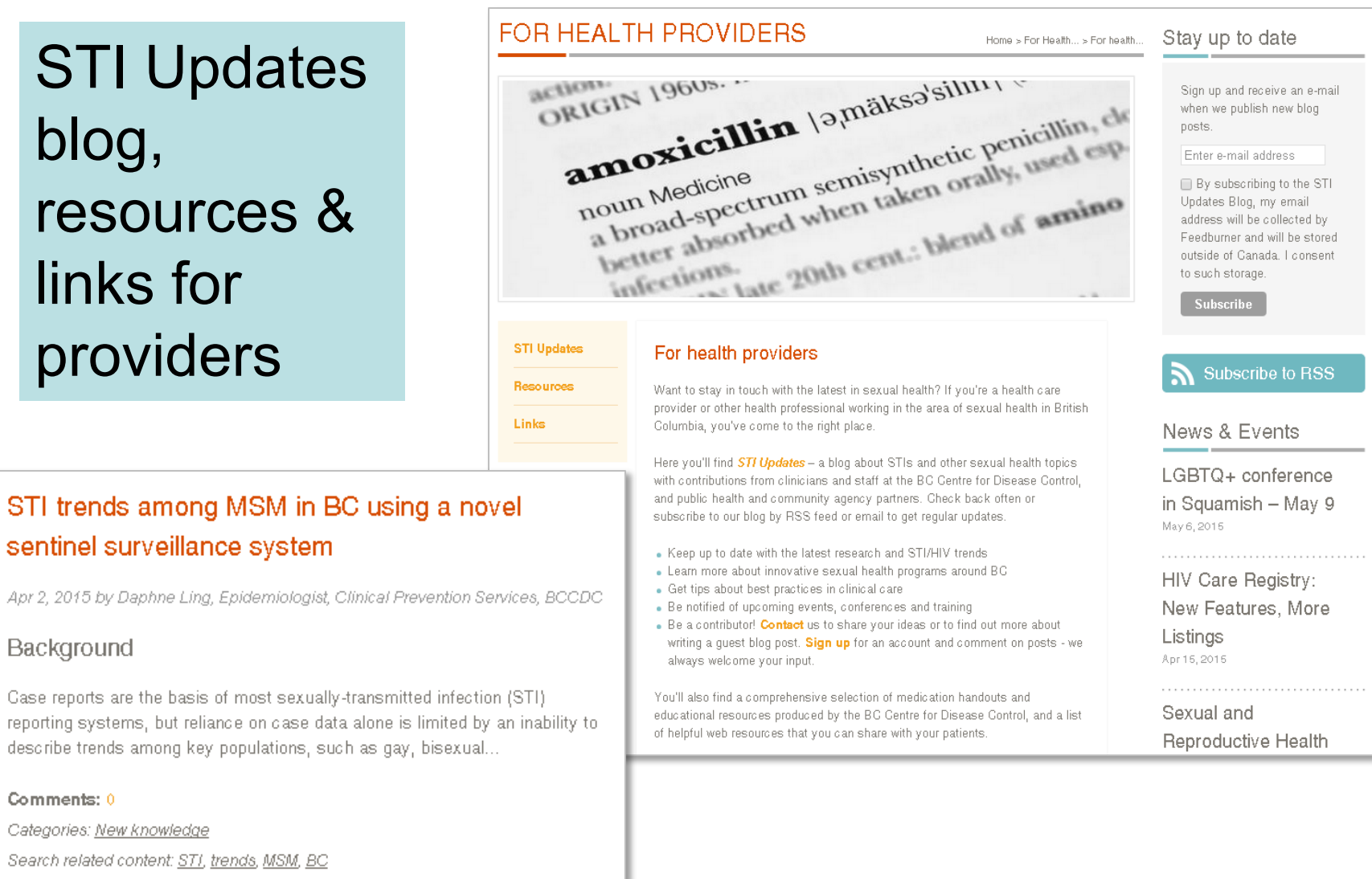
VAGINAL OR ANAL SEX

Risk and STI comparison charts, STI handouts & brochures

Kind of sex you're having	Chance of infection being passed to you, if your partner has the infection at that site			
	Not passed (or possible only in theory)	Not commonly passed	Can be passed	Easily passed
Vaginal sex - without a condom (penis in vagina)				Common: HIV, Chlamydia, Herpes, HPV, Syphilis
Vaginal sex - with a condom (penis in vagina)		Common: Chlamydia, HPV, Herpes, Syphilis	HPV, Herpes, Syphilis	Common: HIV, Chlamydia, Herpes, HPV, Syphilis
Anal sex - without a condom (penis in rectum)				Common: HIV, Chlamydia, Herpes, HPV, Syphilis
Anal sex - with a condom (penis in rectum)		Common: Chlamydia, HPV, Herpes, Syphilis	HPV, Herpes, Syphilis	Common: HIV, Chlamydia, Herpes, HPV, Syphilis



Q&A and live chat with a BCCDC sexual health nurse



Baseline Evaluation

A baseline evaluation of SmartSexResource was conducted after its first two years in operation. **The goal of the evaluation was to determine if the program is meeting its three objectives.**

We examined web metrics data collected by Piwik (open-source analytics software) and extracted for 2013 and 2014. Excel was used to summarize and graphically present the data. Program objectives were explored through questions like:

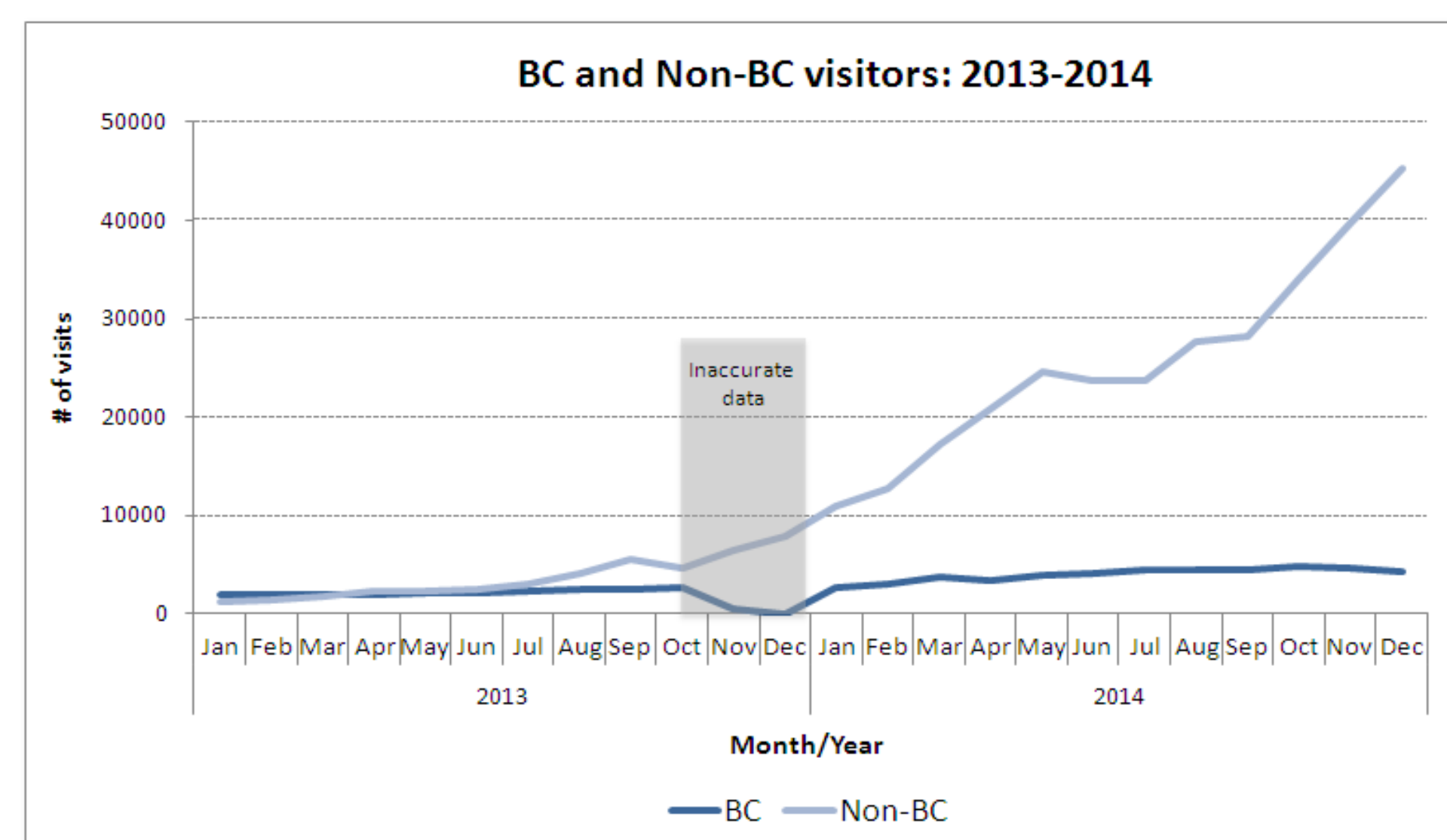
- How is SmartSexResource used by BC visitors? How does this differ from usage by non-BC visitors?
- Do BC visitors look for local resources?
- Is SmartSexResource accessed by rural and urban BC visitors?
- Are BC visitors "loyal"? Do returning visitors use the website differently than new visitors?

Evaluation Outcomes

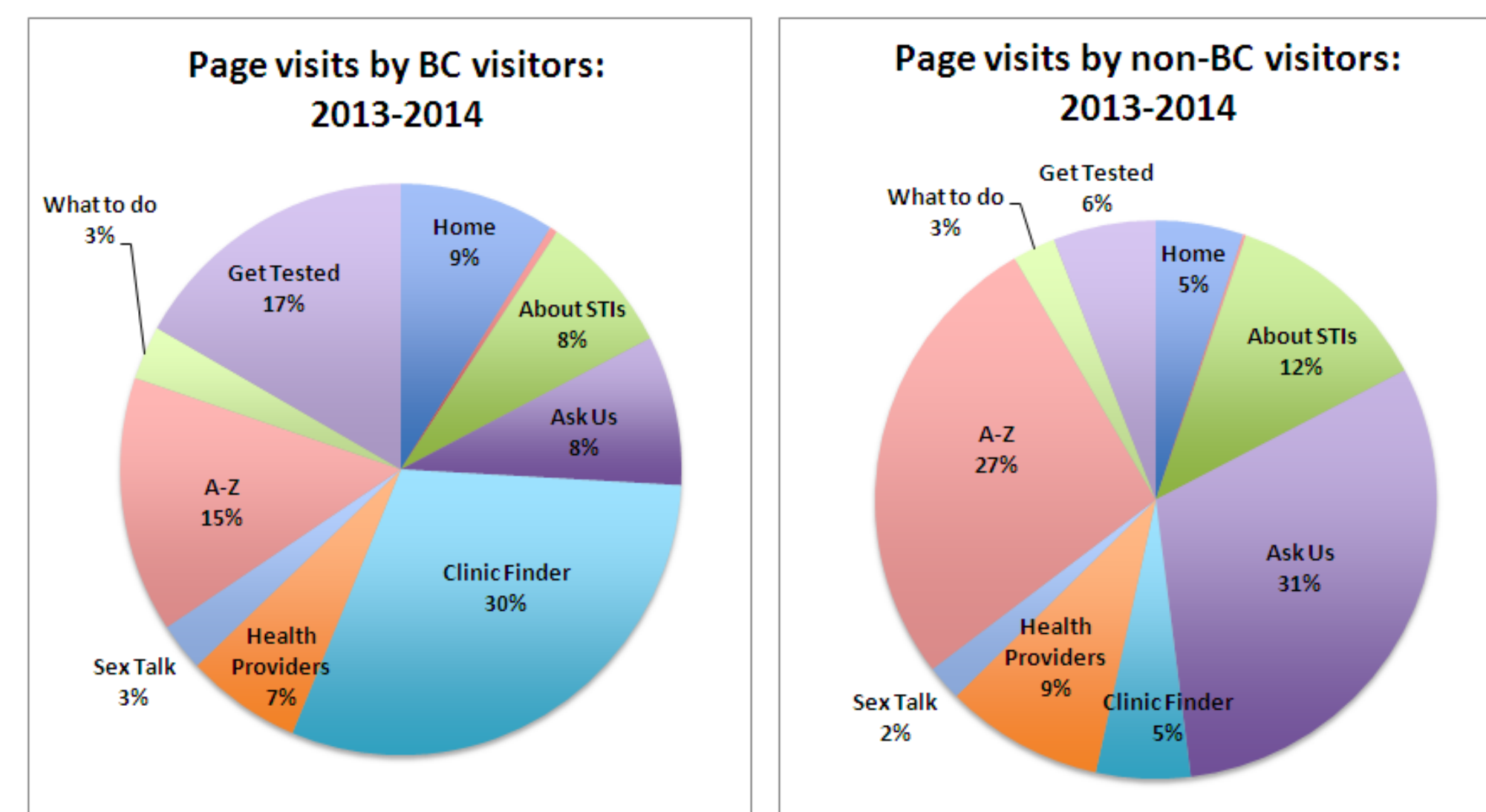
Objective 1: Increase sexual health knowledge

Website traffic increased greatly in 2014, though it was largely international (USA, UK, Australia, India). Visitor traffic from BC increased only slightly during the same time period.

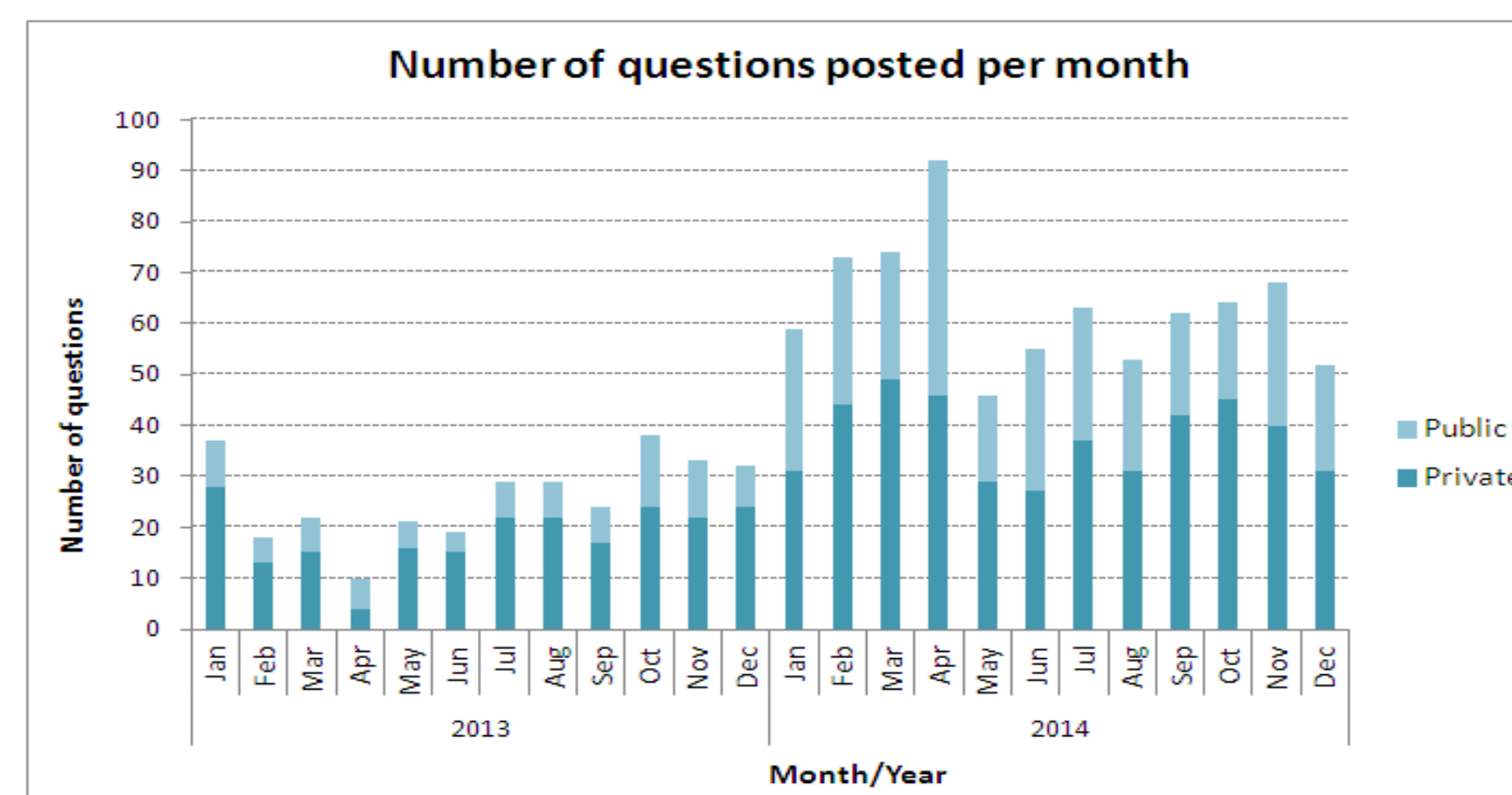
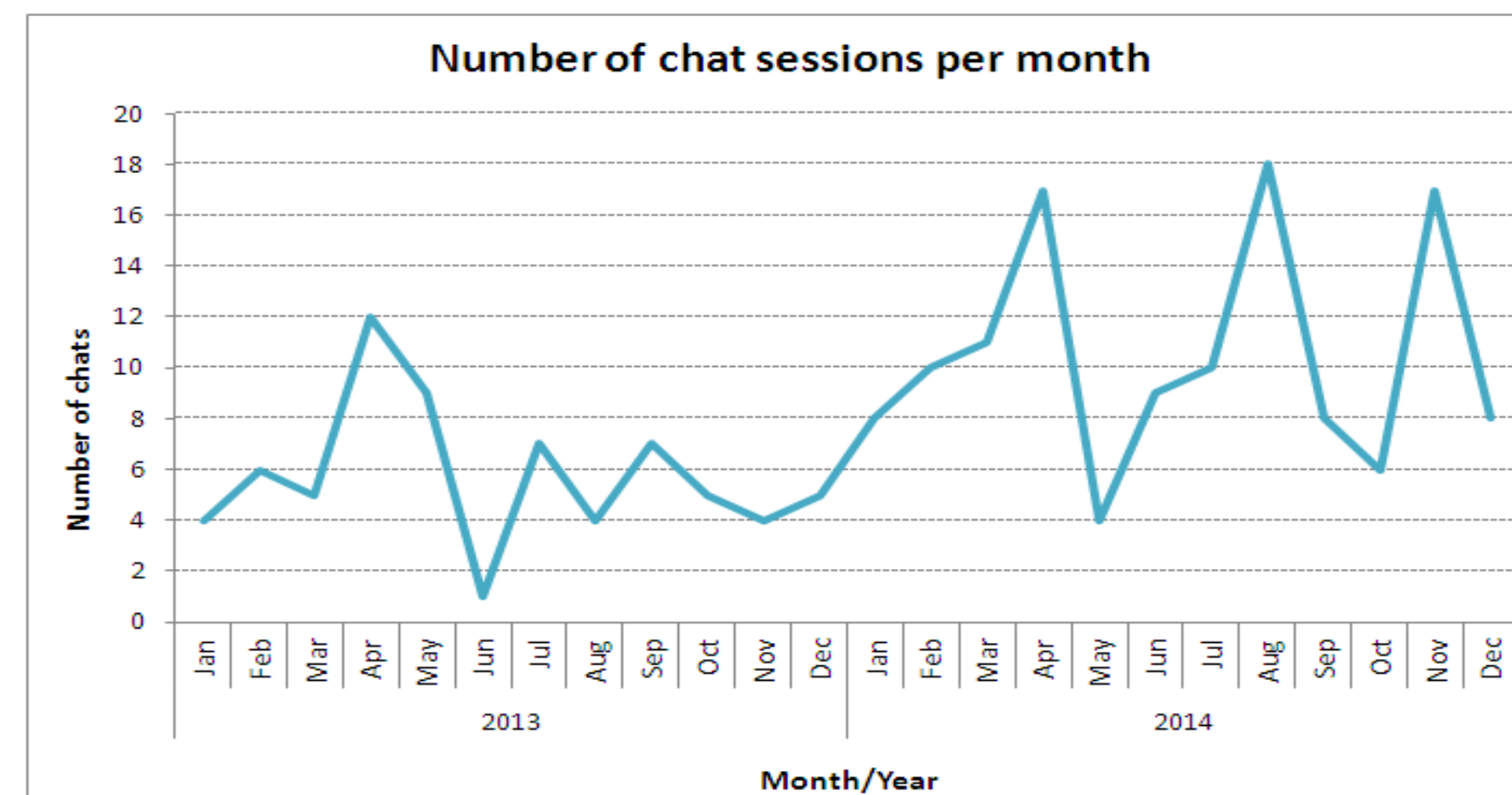
* **Inaccurate data** = lost data due to server issues



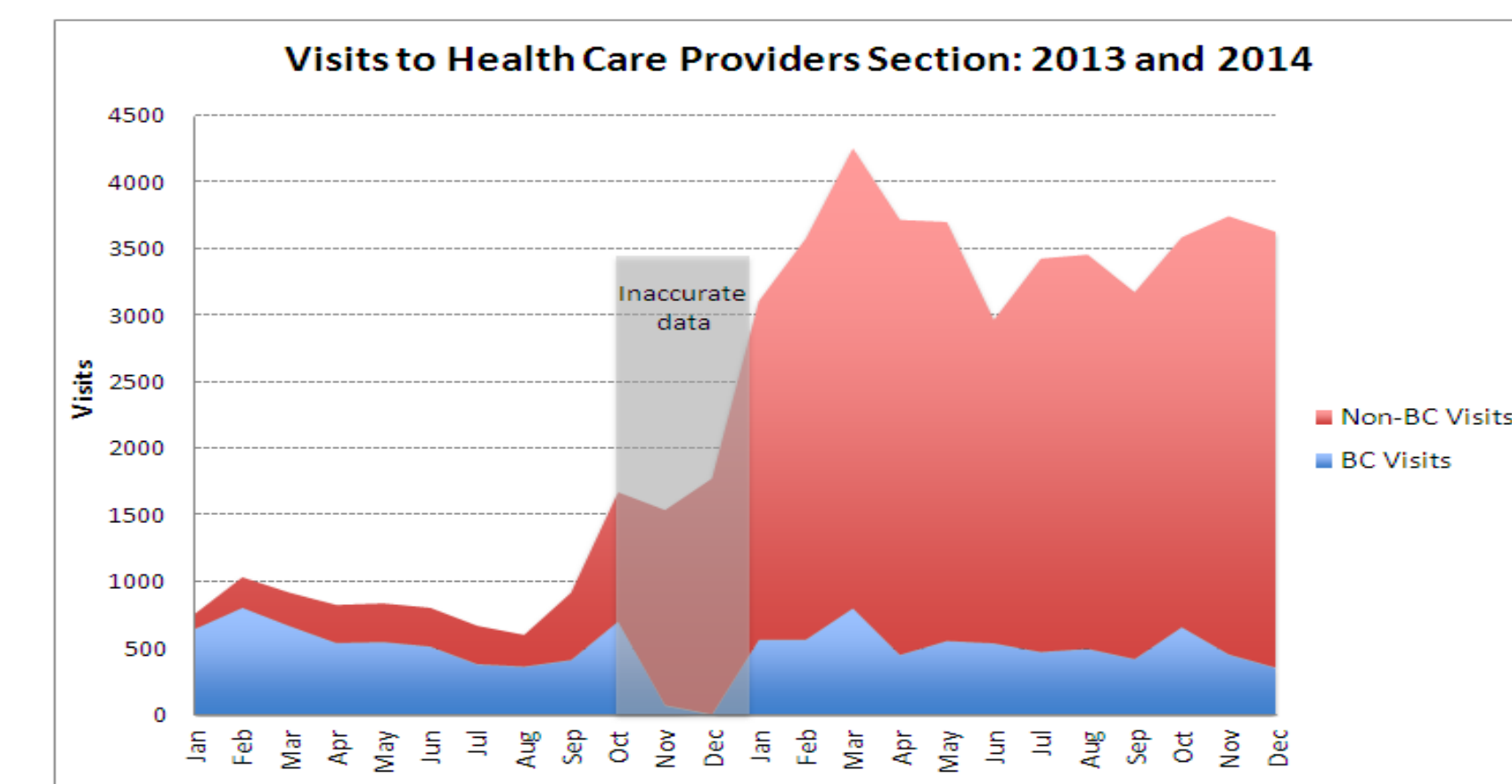
BC visitors utilize SmartSexResource differently than non-BC visitors. The Clinic Finder is the section most commonly accessed by BC visitors (30%), indicating that the site is used to find local information. Alternatively, the Ask Us feature, which allows users to get answers by email (private) or posted online (public), is more commonly accessed by non-BC visitors (31% vs 8% BC).



Visitors continue to access the live chat feature, though there is no clear pattern of usage. The number of submitted questions more than doubled in 2014, likely due to the increase in international traffic. The nearly 2:1 ratio of privately vs. publicly-asked questions indicates the importance of having both options available.

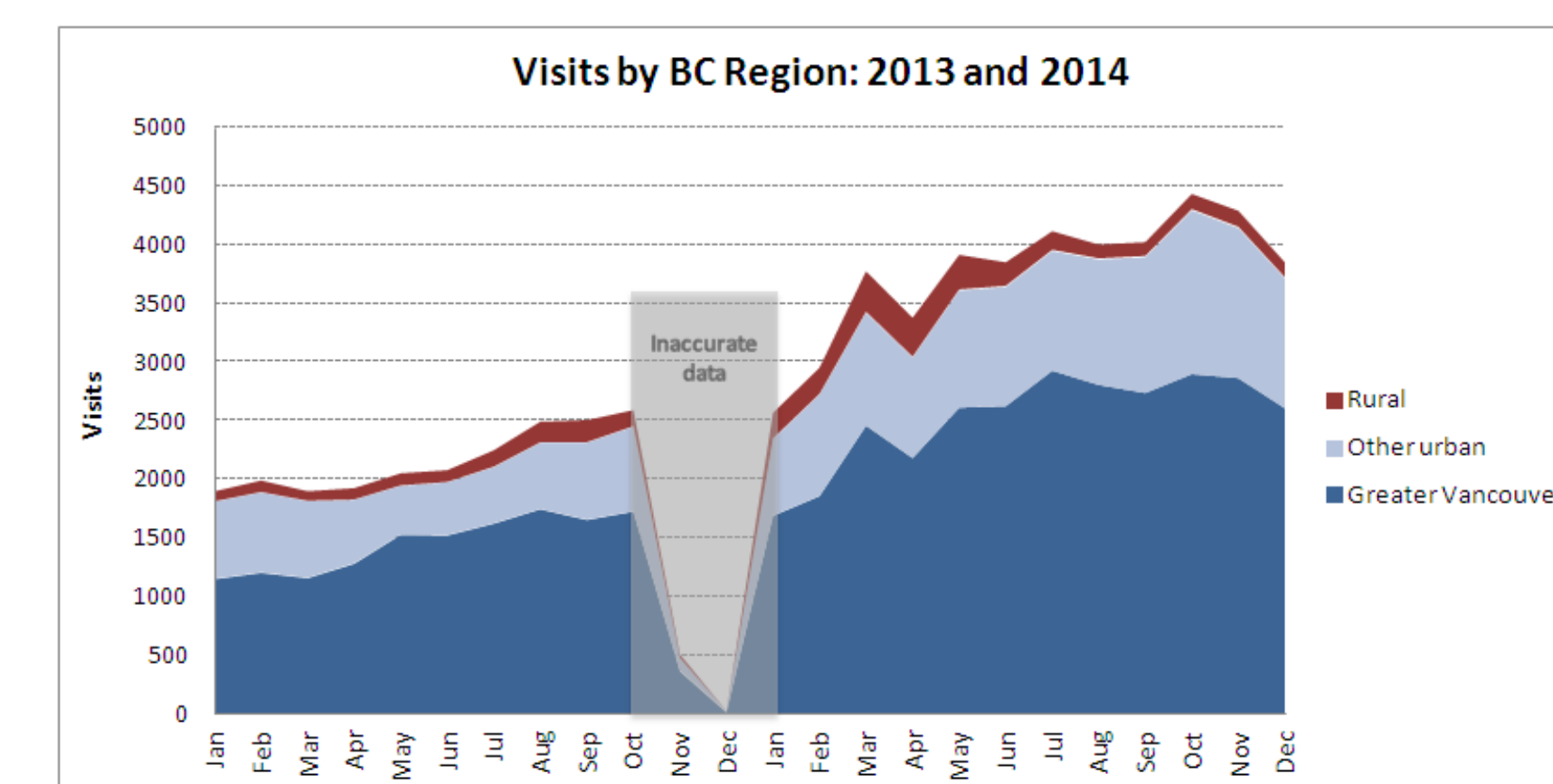


Visits to the Health Provider section have declined among BC visitors over time, which may indicate a low awareness of the website in provider community. The steep increase in traffic by non-BC visitors is almost entirely due to a blog post on HIV testing and window periods, which was posted in August 2013 and continues to receive high traffic to-date. (<http://smartsexresource.com/health-providers/blog/201308/understanding-window-periods-hiv-tests>)



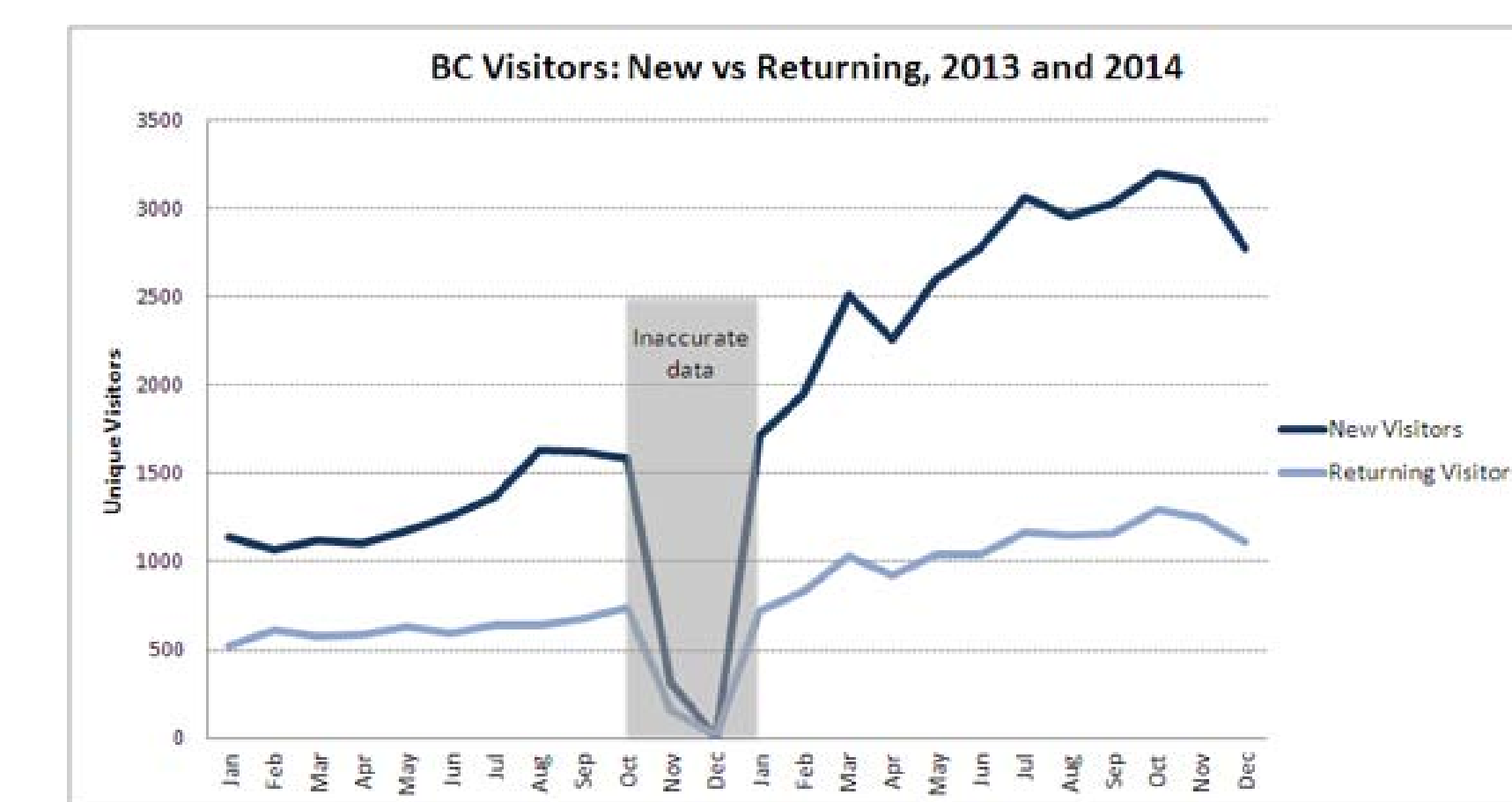
Objective 2: Improve health equity

We used rural vs. urban BC traffic as a proxy for equity in access to sexual health care information. A disproportionate amount of BC visitors are coming from urban locations (95%).



Objective 3: Improve visitor satisfaction

There has been a continuous increase in both new and returning BC visitors over time. Returning visitors also spend consistently more time on the website.



Recommendations

Our evaluation outcomes suggest areas where SmartSexResource is meeting its objectives, and areas for improvement:

- Actively promote SmartSexResource in British Columbia, especially in rural areas and to health care providers.
- Better engage with BC health care providers; conduct a needs-assessment to identify ways in which the site may better support their clinical practice.
- Rethink areas of site that receive little traffic – repurpose to support more content on topics of interest (e.g., risks of STI transmission).

