

Plain Language Statement

Sexual Health Unit
Melbourne School of Population and Global Health



Project: Sexual and Reproductive Health during COVID-19

Professor Jane Hocking (Responsible Researcher)

Email: sexualhealth-research@unimelb.edu.au

Co-researchers: Dr Jacqueline Coombe, Dr Fabian Kong, Prof Meredith Temple-Smith, Dr Jane Goller, Dr Hennie Williams, Mr Andrew Lau, Ms Helen Bittleston, Ms Louise Bouchier, Prof Jane Tomnay, Dr Sue Malta, Ms Alaina Vaisey.

Introduction

Thank you for your interest in participating in this research project. The following few pages will provide you with further information about the project, so that you can decide if you would like to take part in this research.

Please take the time to read this information carefully. You may ask questions about anything you don't understand or want to know more about.

Your participation is voluntary. If you don't wish to take part, you don't have to. If you begin participating, you can also stop at any time.

What is this research about?

The current global pandemic of COVID-19 (coronavirus) is rapidly changing the lives of all Australians. This survey aims to investigate the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the sexual and reproductive health of people living in Australia.

What will I be asked to do?

Should you agree to participate you will be asked to complete an online survey that will take approximately 30 minutes to complete. The survey will ask questions about you (for example, your age and gender identity), your sexual health and practices (for example, your use of dating apps, frequency of sex, number of sexual partners), your reproductive health and practices (for example, your contraceptive use, pregnancy intentions), your drug use (including illegal drug use) and your access to essential goods and services (for example, being able to get your prescription for contraception, being able to buy condoms or sanitary items in the supermarket).

We will be asking people to complete this survey every 4 to 8 weeks so that we can track trends in people's sexual and reproductive health over time during the pandemic. So, if you see the survey advertised again and it has been 4 weeks since you last

completed it, please complete it again. To help us identify you if you complete multiple surveys over time, we ask you to create a code that we can use. This code is made up of:

- i) The name of your first pet (e.g. Penny or Fluff or Scruffy)
- ii) The name of your first street where you lived (e.g. Horwitz or Elva or High).

[Studies have shown](#) that this type of code works very well in tracing people's survey responses over time (and will minimise you providing any personally identifying information online). If you've never had a pet, or you can't remember the name of the first street you lived, just make something up that you will remember for next time.

We will also ask you for your email address if you wish to be contacted about participating in future surveys. You do not have to provide us with your email address if you don't want to. You will be asked if you would like to be contacted about participating in future research related to this research (for example, a telephone interview about the impact of COVID-19 on your sexual and reproductive health). If you consent to being contacted about future research, you are under no obligation to participate if you do not want to.

What are the possible benefits?

There are unlikely to be any direct benefits for you. Data collected in this study will be used to inform relevant stakeholders and policy makers regarding trends and changes in sexual practices during this time, which may indirectly benefit participants via increased health promotion or other changes made because of the survey findings.

What are the possible risks?

There are minimal risks to participating, however you may feel discomfort or embarrassment at some of the survey questions. Participation in this study is voluntary, and you can skip any questions you do not want to answer or exit the survey at any time.

If you require more information or support, you can contact:

For COVID-19 (coronavirus) specific information:

National Coronavirus Hotline: 1800 020 080

For mental health support:

Lifeline: 13 11 14

Beyond Blue: 1300 22 4636

For sexual assault, domestic or family violence and abuse support:

1800Respect: 1800 737 732

For general health advice, including contraception, pregnancy and abortion:

Healthdirect helpline: 1800 022 222

Pregnancy, Birth and Baby: 1800 882 436

Marie Stopes Australia: 1300 207 382

Perinatal Anxiety and Depression Australia (PANDA) National Helpline:
1300 726 306

Alcohol and Drug Support

Alcohol and Drug Foundation: [1300 85 85 84](tel:1300858584)

You can also contact your local GP, or your local Family Planning Clinic or Sexual Health Service.

Do I have to take part?

No. Participation is completely voluntary. You are able to withdraw from the study until data analysis has started.

Will I hear about the results of this project?

A summary of our findings will be available on our website for participants. We will also publish results in academic journals and present them at national and international conferences. We may also publish our findings in the media.

What will happen to information about me?

You will never be personally identified in any results published from this study. Any personally identifiable information collected in the survey (for example, your email address) will be removed from the dataset and stored separately from your survey responses. The survey data will be stored securely on a server at the University of Melbourne for the duration of the project, and for a period of five years after the final publication, as per University of Melbourne guidelines.

Where can I get further information?

If you would like more information about the project, please contact the research team at: sexualhealth-research@unimelb.edu.au

Who can I contact if I have any concerns about the project?

This research project has been approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee of The University of Melbourne. If you have any concerns or complaints about the conduct of this research project, which you do not wish to discuss with the research team, you should contact the Manager, Human Research Ethics, Research Ethics and Integrity, University of Melbourne, VIC 3010. Tel: +61 3 8344 2073 or Email: HumanEthics-complaints@unimelb.edu.au. All complaints will be treated confidentially. In any correspondence please provide the name of the research team or the name or ethics ID number of the research project.