

# APPLYING YOUTH SEXUAL HEALTH SEGMENTATION RESEARCH TO IMPROVE THE DESIGN AND DELIVERY OF SEXUAL HEALTH PROGRAMS TO HIGH-RISK YOUNG PEOPLE

JANSSEN M<sup>1</sup>, MURRAY C<sup>1</sup>, BOURNE C<sup>1, 2</sup>.

<sup>1</sup>NSW STI Programs Unit, NSW Health, Sydney, Australia; <sup>2</sup>Kirby Institute, UNSW, Sydney, Australia

[Marty.Janssen@health.nsw.gov.au](mailto:Marty.Janssen@health.nsw.gov.au)

**Background:** Understanding the values, attitudes and behaviours of high-risk groups of young people is key to the successful design and delivery of sexual health social marketing programs.

**Approach:** New South Wales (NSW) STI health promotion programs include a website and digital communications program *Play Safe* and a Music Festival Project to improve social norms for STI testing and condom use. NSW Health undertook segmentation research identifying 2 high-risk groups of young people according to values, attitudes and behaviours. *Experienced Sex Positives* (23%), and *Dominant Risk-Takers* (13%) have high numbers of casual and regular partners, but differing attitudes towards sex, relationships, and protective behaviours like condom use and STI testing. A tool was developed to stratify young people into segments to focus test project strategies and evaluate project reach.

**Outcomes:** The Play Safe website was upgraded in response to testing with the 2 high-risk groups, including imagery that resonates with the audience, and an older peer-to-peer tone of voice. Similarly the high-risk segments helped develop the Festivals Project strategies involving a VIP area with glitter bar, clean toilets and phone charging stations in exchange for a urine chlamydia test. 2650 young people registered for the project over 4 festivals in 2017/18, 83% of participants from these 2 segments.

**Innovation and significance:** Sexual health segmentation research has shown success in identifying high-risk groups for STI prevention programs. Recruiting from these segments to assist in the design and delivery of sexual health programs is likely to increase these program's quality, engagement, reach and impact.

## Disclosure of Interest Statement

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