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Australian Adolescent sexual health information-seeking types

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17 November 2020

2020 Joint Australasian HIV & AIDS and Sexual Health Conferences: VIRTUAL

Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge the Traditional Owners of country throughout Australia and recognise their continuing connection to land, waters and culture. We pay our respects to their Elders past, present and emerging.



*The authors have
no conflicts of
interest to report.*



Background

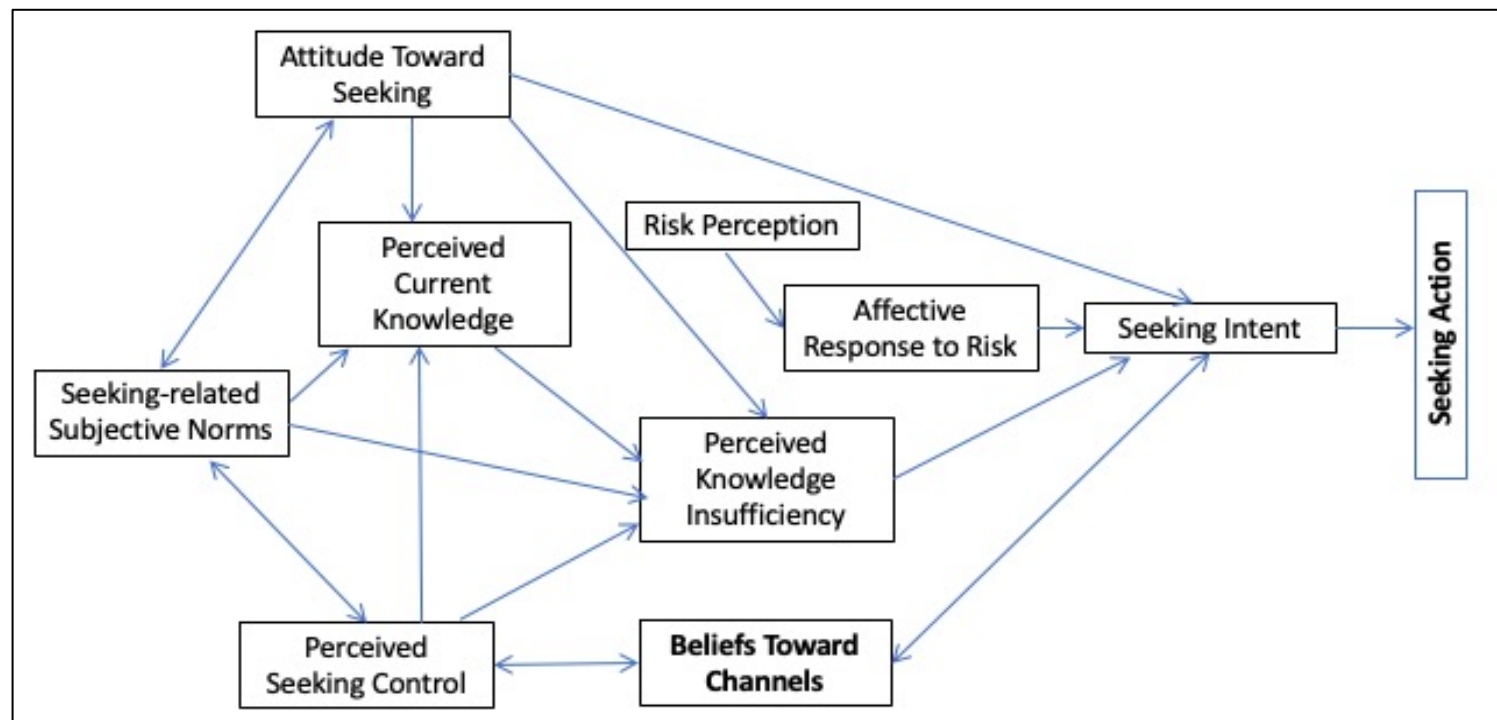
- **40-50% of 15-19 year-olds have had sex (1,2)**
 - 25% did not use a condom during their first sexual experience (1,3)
 - Over 50% did not use a condom during their last sexual experience (1)
- **Young people are disproportionately affected by sexual health issues (4)**
 - Accounting for 73% of chlamydia notifications and 53% of gonorrhoea notifications
 - Rates which have continued to rise over the last 10 years

Background

- Seeking sexual health information is related to increased condom use and reduction of STIs
- **School-based comprehensive sexuality education**
 - Some evidence that school programs reduce HIV risk (5)
 - Inconsistent and insufficient quality, quantity and relevance (6)
- **Informal sources (peers, community organisations)**
 - The Internet is one of the main sources of sexual health information (3)
- Little is known about predictive factors that predispose young people to seek out information

Planned Risk Information Seeking Model (PRISM)

Adapted from Kahlor (7) and Jiang and Ha (8)



Aims

- To identify and characterise types of sexual health information seeking adolescents
- To examine the relationship between these latent types and sexual health outcomes

Sixth National Survey of Secondary Students and Sexual Health, 2018

- **6,929** 14 to 18 year-olds in Australia: convenience sample
- Questions included:
 - Use of information sources
 - 51 STI knowledge questions
 - Sexual behaviours and protective factors
- Latent class analysis (LCA), a powerful 'person-centred' tool used to identify clusters of latent characteristics
- Multinomial logistic regression to examine relationships

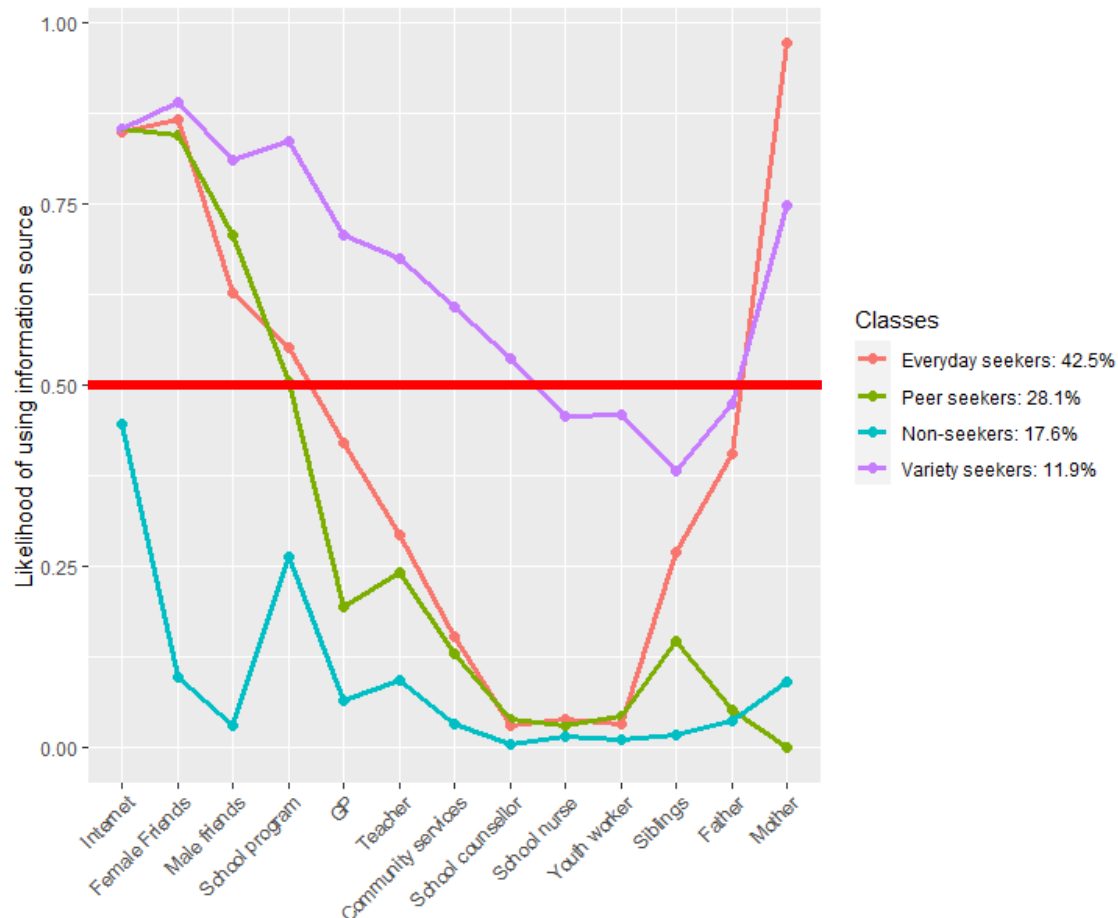


Results

4 distinct classes

By examining classes that endorsed 50% or more of items (above the red line) we were able to categorise these classes as:

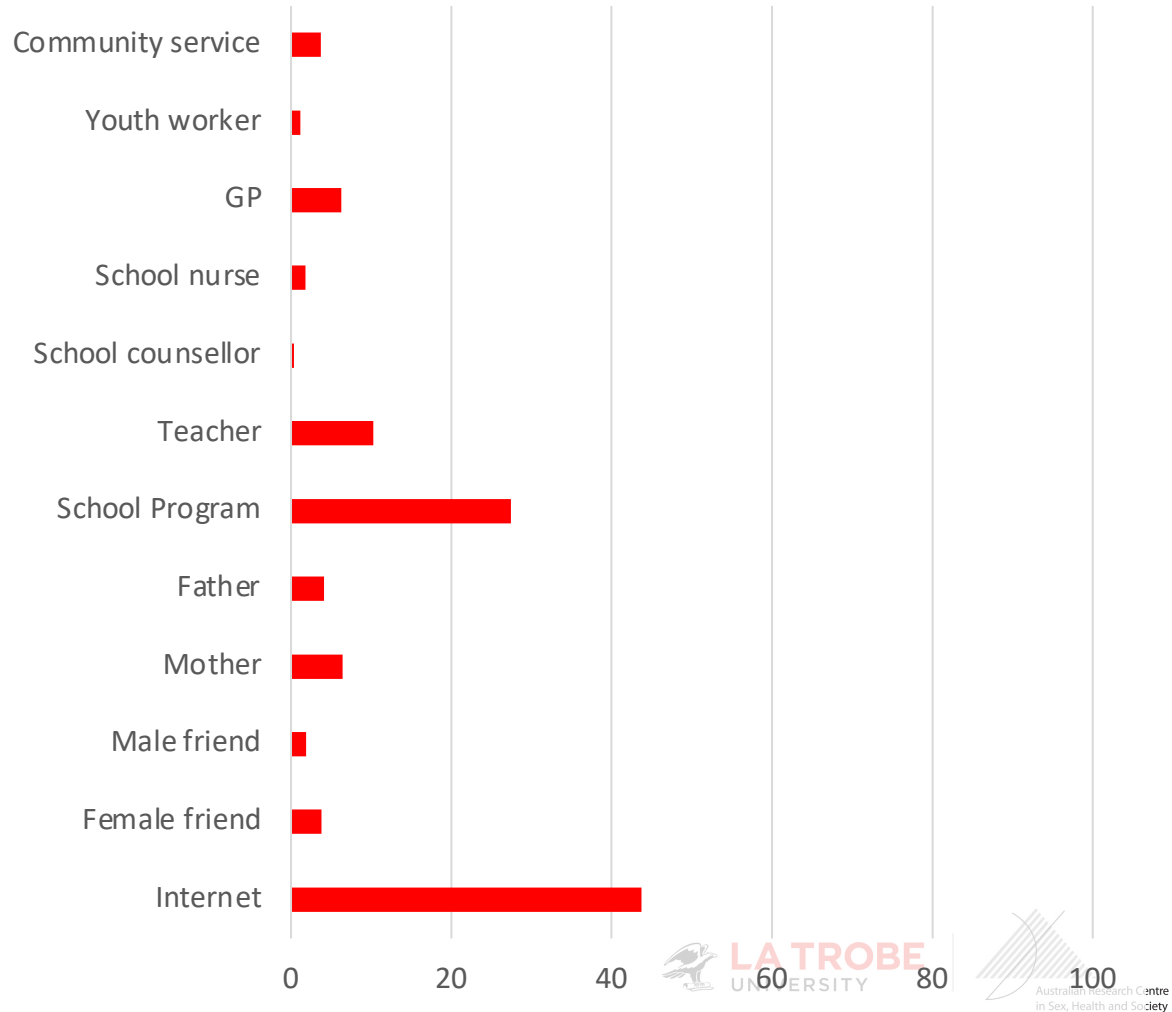
- 'Non-seekers'
- 'Peer seekers'
- 'Everyday seekers'
- 'Variety seekers'



‘Non-seekers’ (17.6%)

- Tended to not to use any sources of sexual health information.
- More likely than peer, everyday and variety seeker to:
 - Be male
 - Be younger
 - Have lower sexual health knowledge
 - Not yet have had sex.
- They, or their partner, were also less likely to have been using a contraceptive pill at last sexual event.

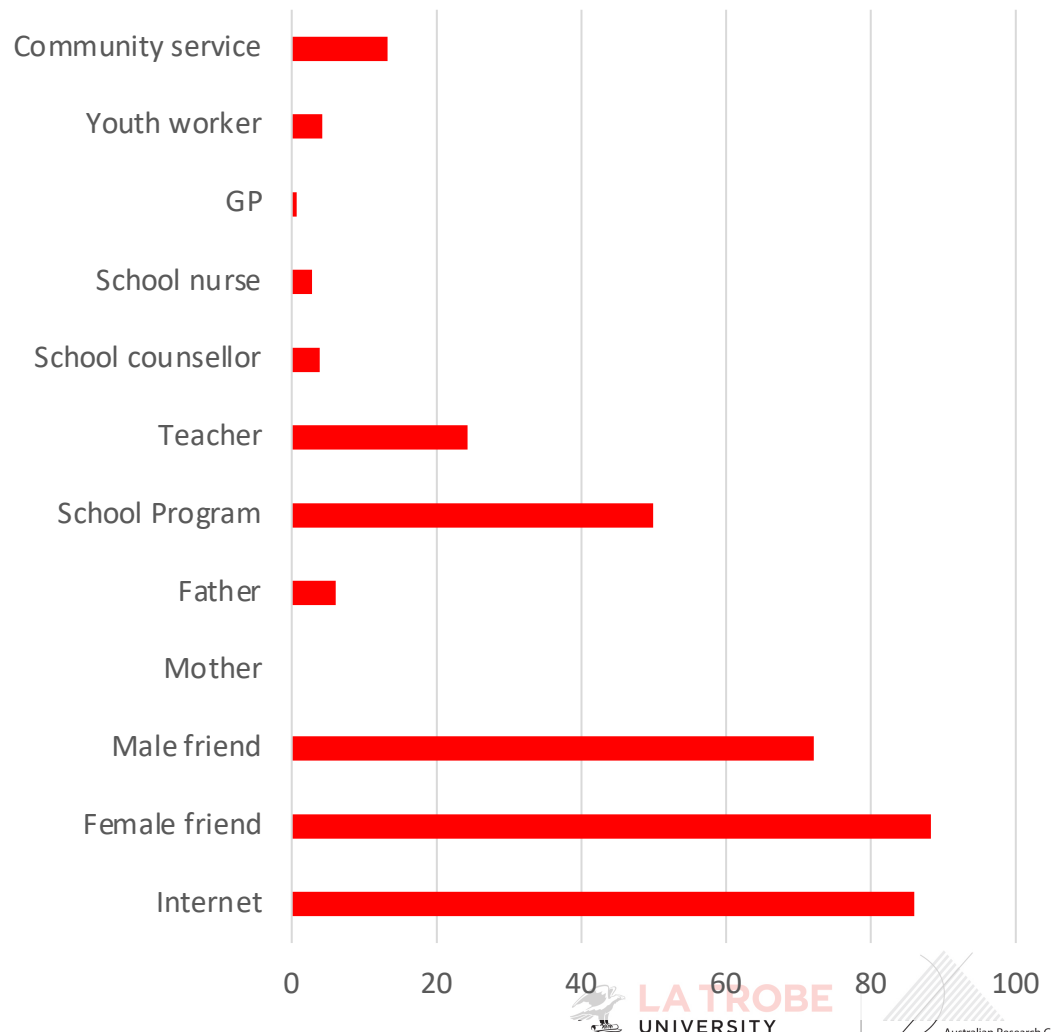
Conditional probabilities for information sources



‘Peer seekers’ (28.1%)

- Classified as ...
- More likely than ‘non-seekers’ to:
 - Be female
 - Slightly older
 - Attend Catholic schools
- The odds of having medium, but not high, sexual health knowledge for Peers seekers was 1.31 times higher than Non-seekers.
- Peer seekers were 2.71 times more likely to have ever had sex but no more likely than Non-seekers to have used a condom or contraceptive pill.

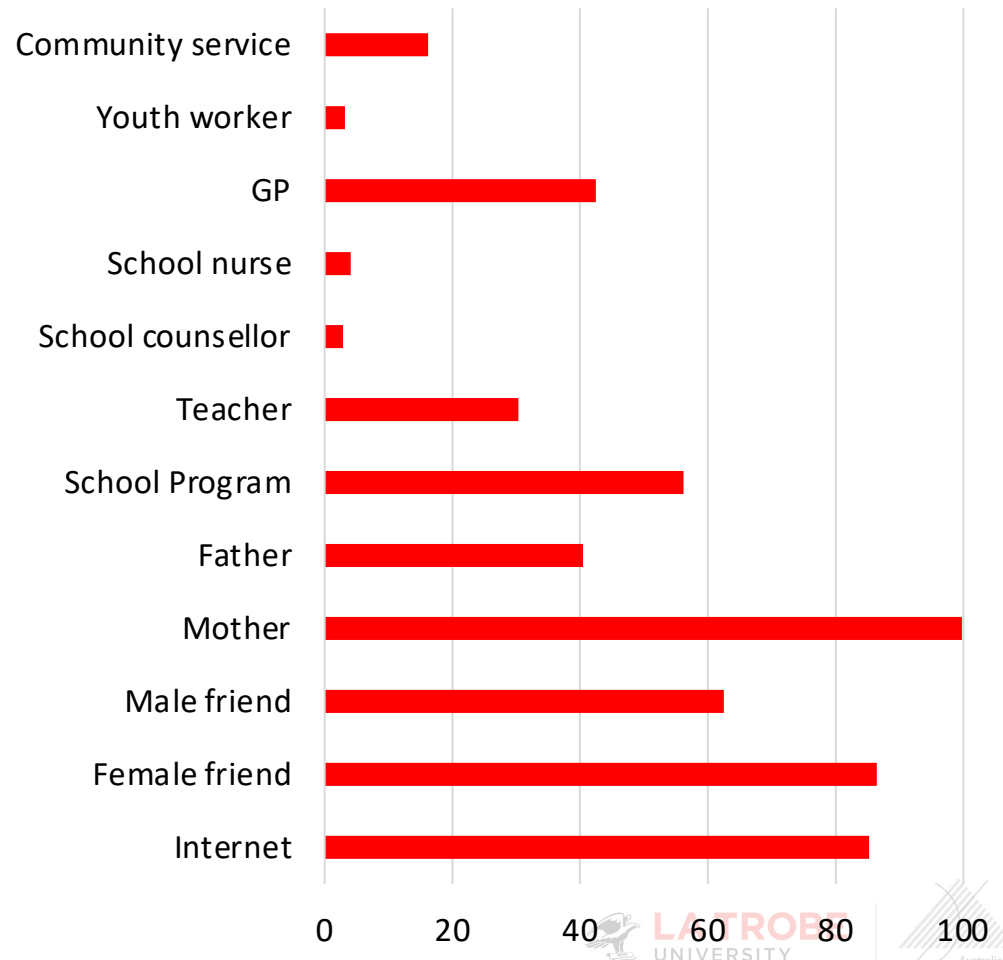
Conditional probabilities for information sources



‘Everyday seekers’ (42.5%)

- More likely than ‘non-seekers’ to:
 - Be female
 - Attend a Catholic school
- Compared to non-seekers, everyday seekers:
 - Higher odds of having medium (OR = 1.45) or high (or = 1.93) compared to non-seekers.
 - 2.59 times more likely to have ever had sex
 - 1.76 times more likely to have used a contraceptive pill
 - No more likely than Non-seekers to have used a condom.

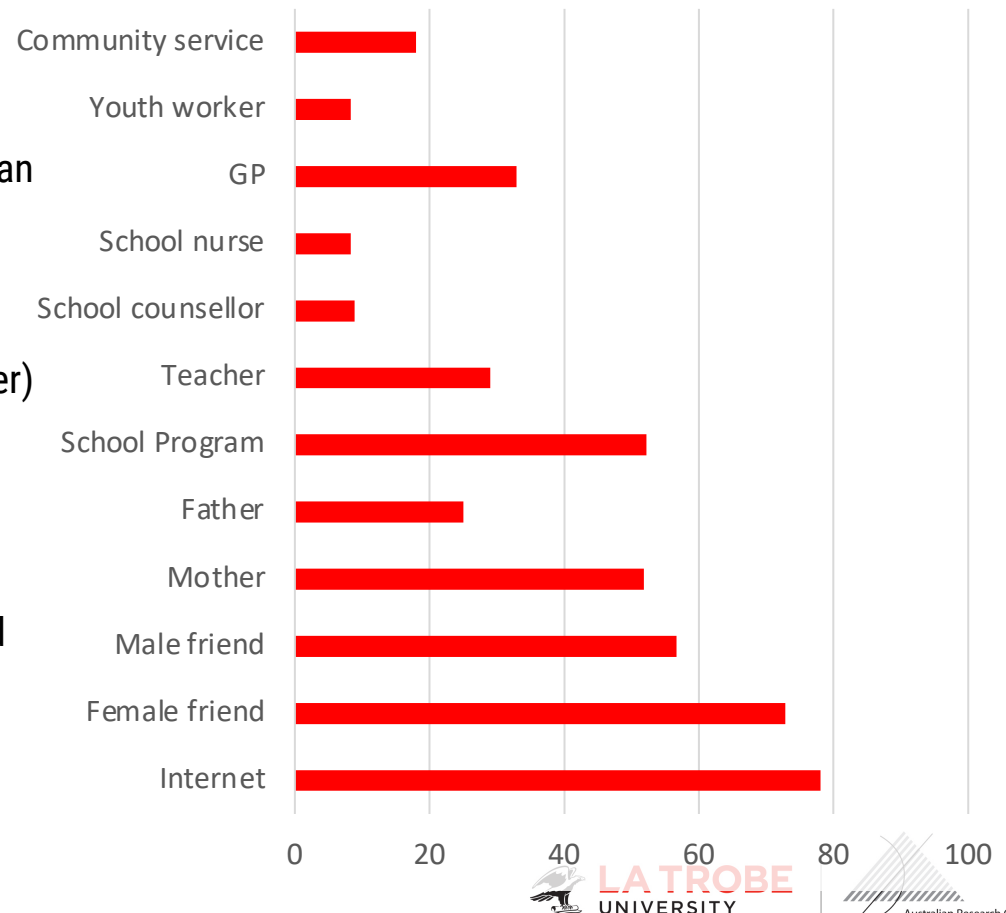
Conditional probabilities for information sources



‘Variety’ seekers (11.9%)

- Compared to non-seekers:
 - Less likely to be male
 - 1.7 times more likely to be from non-urban areas
 - 2.19 times more likely to self-identify with an Indigenous background (Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander)
 - Higher odds of having medium (OR = 1.91) or high (OR = 2.76) sexual health knowledge
 - 4.78 times more likely to have ever had sex
 - 1.58 times more likely to have used a contraceptive pill
 - No more likely to have used a condom.

Conditional probabilities for information sources



Discussion

- Distinct types of information seekers based on sources ever used
 - Vary by sociodemographics: Female and sexually active students more likely to seek info
 - Increased seeking practices correlated to better knowledge and protective practices
- May illuminate new mediators (gender, sexual activity) of seeking intent and action (PRISM)
- Sexual health practitioners may need to develop new ways to promote seeking sexual health information specifically for male and not yet sexually active students to improve intent, action and the related outcomes

Acknowledgements

- The authors wish to thank our participants and the numerous sexual health professionals who provided consultation and feedback on the survey for their invaluable contributions to the study.
- We would like to thank our colleagues at Deakin University and Indiana University for all their contributions to this study.
- We would like to acknowledge the financial support of the Commonwealth Department of Health

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Thank you

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