



Sexual health outcomes among Chinese-speaking international students in Australia

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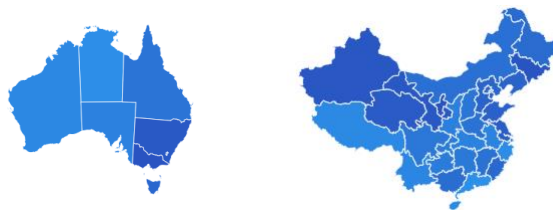
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Background

- July 2018: **~627,000** international students in Australia
- **30%** from mainland People's Republic of **China**
- Large contribution to Australia's economy
- **Challenges:** New social and educational environments, establishing new relationships, pressure to succeed



Background

Sex education gap haunts Australia's international students

- Concerns about unplanned pregnancies, sexual assaults and sexually transmissible infections (STIs) among international students
- Barriers to accessing sexual health services: new health systems, Medicare ineligible, lack of culturally-sensitive services
- Limited studies of sexual health among Chinese-speaking international students particularly in languages other than English



Methods

- Aim: Identify sex education levels, sexual behaviours, STI-related knowledge and STI testing rates among Chinese-speaking international students
- Online cross-sectional survey on REDCap
- Developed in English, translated to Chinese by bilingual researcher
- Participants: Chinese-speaking international students in Australia aged ≥ 16 years
- Recruitment March-May 2018 via We Chat

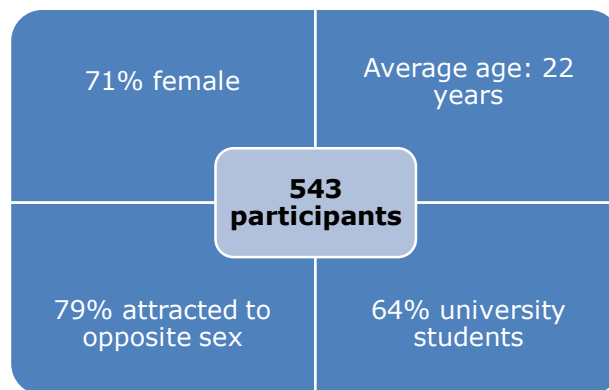


Outcome measures

- **Ever received sex education and topics covered**
- **Sexual behaviours (touching a partner's genitals, giving or receiving oral sex, vaginal intercourse or anal intercourse)**
 Ever experienced each behaviour
 Age first experienced each behaviour
 Contraception used at last sex
- **Ever been tested for any STI in Australia?**
- **Knowledge**
 6-item quiz (mean score)
 Statements – true, false, I don't know
- **Sources of information about sex and relationships**



Results: Socio-demographic characteristics



47% had been in Australia for less than one year

Results: Sex education

- 32% had **never** received sex education in school

| Topics covered | Sex education outside Australia (n=254) | Sex education within Australia (n=196) |
|----------------------|---|--|
| Reproduction/biology | 95% | 58% |
| HIV/AIDS | 76% | 71% |
| Contraception | 73% | 76% |
| Avoiding STIs | 59% | 73% |
| Sexual harassment | 41% | 60% |
| Consent | 28% | 71% |
| Proper condom use | 33% | 71% |

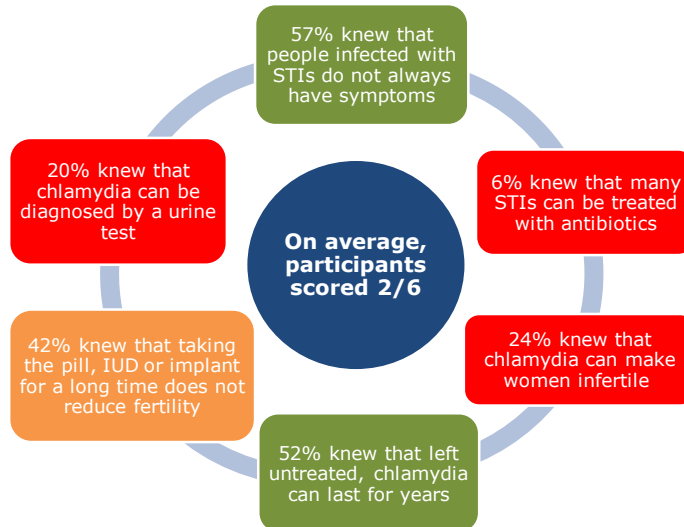
Note. Some participants reported receiving sex education in Australia and elsewhere so % don't add up to 100%

Results: Sexual behaviours and STI testing

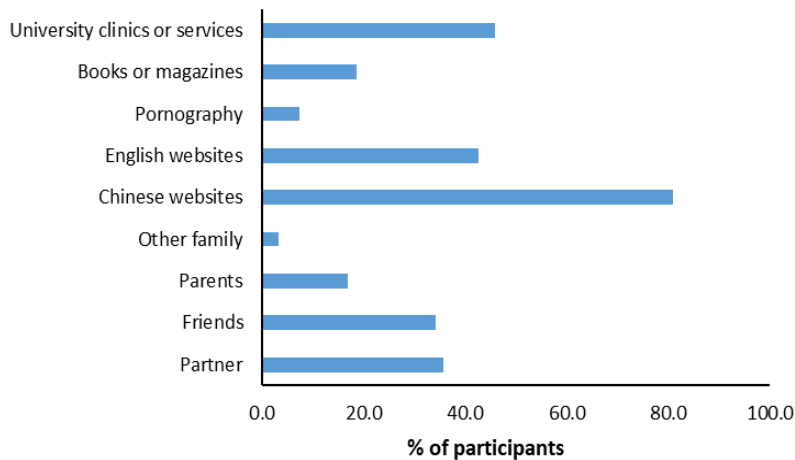
| Sexual behaviour | Ever done this behaviour n(%) | Average age at first experience (years) |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|---|
| Touching a partner's genitals | 298 (55.3) | 18.4 |
| Giving or receiving oral sex | 251 (46.6) | 18.9 |
| Vaginal intercourse | 235 (43.6) | 19.2 |
| Anal intercourse | 35 (6.5) | 19.5 |

- 22% had a romantic or sexual partner in Australia; of these, 68% had a partner of the same ethnicity/nationality
- At last sex, participants reported using: condoms (81%), withdrawal (24%), the pill (14%), morning after pill (7%). <1% used long acting reversible contraceptives
- Among participants who had ever had vaginal or anal intercourse, 11% reported having an STI test in Australia

Results: Sexual health knowledge (% correct)



Results: Sources of information about sex and relationships



Conclusion

- Almost a third had never received formal sex education
- High rates of condom use, low rates of using the pill and long-acting reversible contraceptives
- STI testing uncommon
- Sexual health knowledge limited
- Most used Chinese-language websites for information
- Evident gaps that need to be addressed to provide culturally sensitive information and support through relevant platforms



Acknowledgements

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