

Invitation to Participate in a Research Project
Project Information Statement (Plain Language Statement)

Welcome to "Know your options" – the Contraceptives Experiences Project
An investigation of contraceptive practices, knowledge, attitudes and decision making of adults across the lifespan

Thank you for visiting our web site. By participating in this research, you are making a valuable contribution. We, the researchers, appreciate your input, and thank you for sharing your experiences and thoughts.

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If you are aged 18 years or older, you are invited to participate in this research project. This information section describes the project in straightforward language, or 'plain English'. Please read this section carefully and be confident that you understand its contents before deciding whether to participate. If you have any questions about the project, please contact one of the investigators. Following the instructions at the bottom of this page will enable you to access the survey.

Who is involved in this research project?

Alicia Mitic is conducting research examining contraceptive knowledge, attitudes, and decision making, as part of her doctoral thesis, in the School of Health Sciences at RMIT University, Melbourne, Australia. This research is being conducted under the supervision of Dr David Smith, and has received the approval of the RMIT Human Research Ethics Committee.

What is the project about? Why is it being conducted? What are the benefits associated with participation? Why me?

The project examines the nature of individuals' decision making regarding contraceptive options, taking into account their knowledge and attitudes toward currently available options. Although your participation will not result in any immediate, direct benefit to you, it is important to gain an understanding of the process in which individuals make contraceptive decisions and various things that may influence these decisions in order to ensure that health professionals provide contraceptive consumers with more helpful service provision and contraceptive options tailored to their specific needs. Such knowledge will also enable the development of educational programs designed to enhance the community's knowledge and attitudes toward safer sex options, with the aim of reducing the level of unsafe sex and unwanted pregnancies. This research project aims to understand the contraceptive experiences of individuals, both men and woman from a wide range of backgrounds and walks of life. If you are currently using contraceptives, have used them in the past or have chosen not to use contraceptive methods, and are willing to give between 30 minutes to 60 minutes of your time, to complete this survey (in private), you will be making a valuable contribution to research examining the perspectives of contraceptive users and non-users as well as enhancing efforts to prevent the spread of sexually transmitted infections and the incidence of unwanted pregnancies.

If I agree to participate, what will I be required to do?

If you agree to participate, you will be asked to complete an online survey consisting of eight sections. Most of the questions are answered by merely clicking on a button. Sometimes you are asked for additional information, depending on your response, but long answers are not required.

What is the nature of the questionnaire and what are the risks associated with participation?

The questionnaire is divided into 8 sections as follows:

Demographic information (age, gender, education, income etc);

*Sexual Activities;

*Contraceptive history;

*Attitudes toward contraceptive options;

*Knowledge of contraceptive options;

*Sources of knowledge,

*Attitudes toward abortion;

*Communication about safer sex issues;

*Health and Wellbeing;

*Support services, information, and referral details for you to keep.

Many of the questions in the Contraceptives Experiences Survey are very personal and focus on sensitive issues relating to sexual behaviours. These questions are presented in a direct manner. You are welcome to examine all of the survey materials before making your decision as to whether you will participate. If you feel distressed upon participation in the project, you are encouraged to make contact with relevant agencies to obtain assistance. You are able to access a range of confidential services (including 24 hour counselling, and other telephone, personal, and online services) via the contact details provided in the first and last section of the survey.

How long will it take me to complete?

This is a long questionnaire, as there are many important things we would like to ask you. The time it takes to complete will vary depending on your relationship and contraceptive history. Not all sections will apply to you. If they do not apply, the survey will automatically skip you to a section that is relevant to you. If you have many skips, you will progress relatively quickly through the questionnaire and might expect to complete the questionnaire in as little as 30 minutes. However, if most sections apply to you, it will take considerably longer.

What will happen to the information I provide?

To preserve your anonymity, we ask you NOT to place your name, or any identifying information anywhere on the survey. Your contact details have not been obtained, nor will they be, at any point. Thus, none of the information you provide can in any way be linked back to you. Upon submission, your responses will be entered electronically into a group database, from which only group data will be reported or published. This database is password protected and managed within the guidelines applicable to the secure storage of all electronic data within RMIT University. Only the primary and supervising investigators will have access to this grouped data. In accordance with Human Research Ethics Committee guidelines, group data will be securely retained for a minimum of five years after publication, and then destroyed. Research data will be collated and analysed in a student report, and research findings may be disseminated in edited publications, through conference presentations or media release, and utilised in the development of educational or prevention-based programs. Only group data will be used for research purposes and in any future research publication. Individual responses will not be reported at any point. You are welcome to view the results of the research, which will be available in March 2010 (please contact the researchers directly for a summary of results). Because of the nature of the data collection, we are not able to obtain written informed consent from you. Instead, we assume that you have given consent by your voluntary access of this website, and your completion and submission of the survey.

What are my rights as a participant?

You have the right to withdraw your participation at any time, without prejudice, and the right to have any questions answered at any time. If you choose to discontinue the survey, simply stop filling in your answers, click on the EXIT THIS SURVEY link on the top right-hand corner of the screen. Note that no responses can be seen until the SUBMIT button has been clicked at the end of the survey. Once a button has been clicked, your responses have been submitted into the database, your information cannot be identified, and therefore cannot be withdrawn.

What if some sections don't apply to me? How will I know which sections to complete?

Please START EVERY SECTION , then follow the instructions for each questions. There is an inbuilt skip function within this survey which will skip questions that are not relevant to you. Alternatively, for some questions the option is given to indicate 'not applicable' if the question is not relevant to you. By reading all instructions carefully, you will know what to do. Often you will be asked a YES/NO question, and then you will be instructed to proceed or the survey will skip to the next relevant question for you, depending on whether you ticked yes or no.

How do I get started?

You can access the Contraceptive Experiences Survey by clicking on the NEXT button below which will direct you to the questionnaire.

If you would like to provide feedback about the survey, you can do so by emailing the researchers directly. If you have an ethical issue or complaint about the survey, you can contact the Secretary, RMIT Human Research Ethics Committee, University Secretariat, RMIT, GPO Box 2476V, Melbourne, 3001. The telephone number is (03) 9925 1745. Details of the complaints procedure are available from the above address.



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