

“Wish I knew about this stuff when I was younger” - Contraception needs of clients at the Kirketon Road Centre (KRC), a targeted primary healthcare service in Kings Cross, Sydney.

Authors:

Cho L¹, Gilliver R¹, Molloy K¹, Ray A¹, Robinson P¹, Silins E^{1,2}, Read P^{1,3}

¹Kirketon Road Centre, ²National Drug and Alcohol Research Centre (UNSW Australia), ³The Kirby Institute (UNSW Australia)

Background:

Access to contraception is a universal reproductive right. KRC is a primary healthcare service for homeless and marginalised populations that provides reproductive services including contraception and early medical abortion. This study aimed to better understand contraception needs and identify opportunities to optimise services to vulnerable clients.

Methods:

A 20-item client survey was developed in consultation with a staff working group and consumers. Domains spanned contraception satisfaction, knowledge, use and access; acceptability of providers; use of emergency contraceptive pill, abortion and demographics. Any client with a uterus (regardless of gender identity) was invited to participate (October-December 2022).

Results:

There were 86 participants. Populations accessing KRC for sexual and reproductive health included Aboriginal people (13%), people who inject drugs (16%), have experienced incarceration (14%) and sex workers (43%). About 43% did not have Medicare. Awareness of contraception methods was highest for male condoms (94%) and the oral contraceptive pill (88%). Most (83%) people were happy with their current contraception. Use of the emergency contraceptive pill (73%) and experiences of abortion were common (39%). Over half (54%) of respondents had no preference for the type of health professional they discussed contraception with. The large proportion of sex workers who responded to the survey indicate ongoing issues around discrimination and stigma to a highly vulnerable population.

Conclusion:

It is important to understand the people accessing contraception services and identify gaps in care to ensure optimal access to contraception in a safe place. Nurses, midwives, peers and allied health workers are well placed to provide opportunistic delivery of contraceptive care and education to clients accessing primary healthcare services. KRC is developing improved staff training in reproductive health and increasing provision and access to contraception for clients. Offering options to people with potential for pregnancy, to empower choice and decision-making about their bodies is a priority.

Disclosure of Interest Statement:

PR has received research funding from Gilead Sciences, as well as institutional and individual honoraria from Gilead Sciences, Abbvie and MSD.