

21st Century Sex Education Program

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Background/Purpose:

There is an increase in STI/BBV in many remote indigenous communities including Cherbourg. This program aims to identify barriers to treatment, increase capacity and reduce the burden of disease. The @1st Century Sex program targets 15- to 29-year-olds. With an individualistic approach we explore topics such as sexual health, reproductive health, hygiene, menstrual health, and other women's issues. As part of our service, we can link in with counselling services, healthy for life, and many other allied health services. We also offer a free 12-month subscription to OMGyes and offer specialised education regarding STI/BBV education including prevention and treatment.

Approach:

- The 21st Century Sex Education Program is the first of its kind. It has been designed to provide young women with accurate, honest information about sex, intimacy and respect on a one-to-one basis
- The purpose of the program is to engage young women in safe, supportive conversations about their sexual health and openly address any problems they may face
- A measure of the program's success will be a reduction in the number of sexual infections by decreasing stigma around sexually transmitted infections (STI's)
- The program will include social and emotional wellbeing, personal hygiene, consent, women's rights, sexual rights, healthy relationships, period care, and other topics regarding women's bodies

Outcomes/Impact:

As a result of the program, many girls have taken a greater interest in their health. They have come to the CRAICCHS clinic for their 715s, contraception, treatment for STI's, dental and optical care.

The girls are more knowledgeable in regard to their sexual health and are showing an eagerness to learn more. This is evidenced by the increasing number of girls participating in the program

Innovation and Significance:

The participants of the program become advocates for their peers and an incentive program is about to be introduced where each young person who has their 715 and/or STI/BBV testing brings a friend in who gets tested, they can receive credit for their phone, or some other incentive of their choosing. This will be offered either 6 monthly, or 12 monthly so as to get young people into the habit of getting tested early and often.

Also, our contact tracing involves a great deal of support and follow up after treatment has been completed. This builds close relationships between sexual health workers and their clients and lowers shame and guilt. When clients feel close to their workers, they are more inclined to speak freely and turn up for appointments.

Both of the above innovations have significant impacts on lowering STI/BBV, increasing treatment and lowering teen pregnancies by building strong relationships between clinic workers, health workers and the community they serve. These innovations also normalise health care through incentives and strong relationships.

Disclosure of Interest Statement.

We also recognise the need for transparency of disclosure of potential conflicts of interest.