

# **Sexual health behaviours of local and international students at a large Australian university**

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## **Background:**

International students make up a significant part of the student population at Australian universities. However, little is understood about Australian international students' sexual health (level of knowledge, practices, and source of information) and whether this differs from that of local students. This study aims to address these gaps in knowledge.

## **Methods:**

Students over 18 years at a major Australian university were invited to complete an online health and wellbeing survey between April and June 2019. The survey explored a range of health topics including sexual health. Students were asked about their sexual experience, inclusive of sexual activity and condom use, and their source of health information. Preliminary descriptive analysis has been conducted.

## **Results:**

Of the 56,375 students invited, 12,347 (22%) completed the survey. Of these, 33% were international students. Preliminary data analysis showed that in the past 12 months, international students were less likely to engage in sexual intercourse compared to local students (47% vs 64%,  $p < 0.001$ ), but they were more likely to 'always' use a condom during sex (54% vs 37%,  $p < 0.001$ ). However, greater proportions of local students sought health information from health professionals and health websites compared to international students (67% and 43% vs 24% and 29%,  $p < 0.001$  for each comparison).

## **Conclusion:**

The study on sexual health from the largest survey of Australian university students shows that international students may engage in safer sex practices; however, their access to professional sexual health information remains low. Understanding the differences between international and local students' sexual health behaviours will contribute to better support in sexual health and wellbeing in the university setting for both international and local students.

**Disclosure of Interest Statement:**

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