

Sigma's 29th International Nursing Research Congress

Multifaceted Plan Supporting Sexual Health in Young Adults at University

Zachary C. Byfield, MPhil (Health)

Leah East, PhD

School of Health, University of New England, Armidale, NSW, Australia

Purpose:

Young adults at university have a number of risk factors for sexual injury (Kirby Institute, 2017; World Health Organization, 2016; World Health Organization, 2017). Due to the stigma that still presents regarding the issues of sexual health these young adults are in a vulnerable position (East, Jackson, O'Brien, & Peters, 2012). The purpose of this project was to develop and implement strategies to promote the formation of positive connections among young adults attending university and a component of a wider health promotion approach aimed at supporting the overall health of university students. The approach is based on addressing two main components of positive connections being 1) healthy relationship; and 2) healthy sexual identity.

Methods:

The two issues were address using a multidisciplinary and multifaceted approach.

Healthy relationships: addressing issues raised by the Australian Human Rights Commission (2017) Change the Course Report as well as ongoing health promotion strategies aimed at developing the concept of consent amongst the student population.

Healthy sexual identity: as well as an increased health promotion plan aiming at decreasing stigma and raising awareness a number of strategies have been implemented to promote sexual health such as: increased frequency of STI screening to be in line with national recommendations, promotion of Post exposure Prophylaxis (PEP) and Pre-exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP) services for targeted individuals, and investigation into self-management of urine testing for Gonorrhea and Chlamydia (World Health Organization, 2016).

Conclusion:

Healthy relationships and sexual identity is an essential component of the healthy young adult (Bungay, Handlovsky, Phillips, & Prescott, 2017). Despite this, sexual health remains a topic of some stigma for individuals and even healthcare professionals. Effective promotion of health relationships and sexual identity requires a multifaceted approach (Bungay, Masaro, & Gilbert, 2014). Adequately supporting these components in the formative years of a young adult's development will have positive associations for the individual throughout their lifespan.

Evaluation

Following completed implementation of these strategies a study will commence aimed at evaluation of the processes and further development. The research study will evaluate the two components of the health promotion intervention through a mixed methods study considering the quantitative data of incidence and prevalence of STIs within the population over a three year period and qualitative data of follow up interviews to investigate understanding and experiences following the implementation process.

Title:

Multifaceted Plan Supporting Sexual Health in Young Adults at University

Keywords:

primary healthcare, sexual health and young adult

References:

Australian Department of Health. (2017). *Australian national notifiable diseases database*. Retrieved from: <http://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/cda-about.htm>

Australian Human Rights Commission. (2017). *Change the Course: National Report on Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment at Australian Universities*. Retrieved from: https://www.humanrights.gov.au/sites/default/files/document/publication/AHRC_2017_ChangeTheCourse_UniversityReport.pdf

East, L., Jackson, D., O'Brien, L., & Peters, K. (2012). Stigma and stereotypes: Women and sexually transmitted infections. *Collegian* 19, 15-21.

World Health Organization. (2016). *Global strategy for the prevention and control of sexually transmitted infections: 2006-2021*. Geneva: Author.

World Health Organization (2017). *Global incidence and prevalence of selected curable sexually transmitted infections*. Geneva: Author

Bungay, V., Handlovsky, I., Phillips, J. C. & Prescott, C. (2017). A scoping review of the literature on nursing practices with persons seeking care for sexually transmitted infections. *Journal of Clinical Nursing*, 26(1/2), 33-48. doi: 10.1111/jocn.13561

Bungay, V., Masaro, C. L., & Gilbert, M. (2014). Examining the scope of public health nursing practice in sexually transmitted infection prevention and management: what do nurses do?. *Journal of Clinical Nursing*, 23(21/22), 3274-3285.

Kirby Institute. (2017). *HIV, viral hepatitis and sexually transmissible infections in Australia: annual surveillance report*. UNSW Sydney.

Abstract Summary:

A multifaceted primary healthcare intervention in partnership between university and healthcare system to promote and support healthy relationships in young adults at university and away from home.

Content Outline:**Introduction**

Commencing university is a time of change for the young adult, balancing new responsibilities and new relationships. Despite being at increased risk of sexual injury, the sexual health of young adults remains a topic surrounded by stigma. This presentation will focus on a project aimed at supporting the healthy relationships and sexual identity of young adults at university.

Background**Population Demographics**

1. High risk of STIs in regional and rural (Australian Department of Health, 2017; Kirby Institute, 2017).

2. High risk of STIs in young adults (Australian Department of Health, 2017; Kirby Institute, 2017).

Comment on recently published Change the Course report by Australian Human Rights Commission (2017).

1. Lack of representation of all genders
2. Lack of identification of risk of STI transmission

Plan

1. Supporting healthy relationships

a) Identification of healthy relationships as an essential component of the healthy student.

b) Recommendations from Change the Course report by Australian Human Rights Commission (2017) and actions taken.

1. Supporting healthy sexual identity

a) Sexual health and STI screening.

b) Sexual health promotion.

Evaluation Process

1. Evaluation of healthy relationships
2. Evaluation of health sexual identity

Conclusion

Young adults at university are at high risk of sexual injury which remains a topic of some stigma. A multifaceted and multidisciplinary primary healthcare program has the potential to support the young adult in their development during a period of their life that sees significant change.

First Primary Presenting Author
Primary Presenting Author
Zachary C. Byfield, MPhil (Health)
University of New England
School of Health
Lecturer in Nursing
University of New England
Armidale, NSW
Australia

Professional Experience: 2015- Current. Associate Lecturer in Nursing (Level A) [Temporary contract at Level B]. School of Health, University of New England 2013- Current. Registered Nurse, (Emergency and Paediatric Wards)Armidale Rural Referral Hospital, Hunter New England Area Health Service 2016-current. [Casual]School-Based Immuniser, Armidale Community Health, Hunter New England Area Health Service 2015-2016. [Casual] Staff Health Nurse Armidale Rural Referral Hospital, Hunter New England Area Health Service 2015. Emergency Response team, Northern Territory Healthcare system 2015-2016. [Casual] Nursing Academic School of Health, University of New England 2011-2013. Endorsed Enrolled Nurse Armidale Rural Referral Hospital, Hunter New England Area Health Service

Author Summary: Zach has an clinical interest in the areas of paediatric and emergency nursing. He has worked as both an Endorsed Enrolled Nurse and then as a Registered Nurse across a range of fields. His passion is teaching and learning and the adult students experience with learning, and this lead to his completing a Master's degree in Nursing with a major in teaching and learning. Zach's research interests are within the areas of stigma and taboo

Second Secondary Presenting Author

Corresponding Secondary Presenting Author

Leah East, PhD

University of New England

School of Health

Associate Professor

University of New England

Armidale, NSW

Australia

Professional Experience: Associate Professor [Primary Healthcare], University of New England (2016-Current) Senior Lecturer, Deakin University (2013-2016) Senior Lecturer, Southern Cross University (2012 – 2013) Lecturer, Southern Cross University (2012) Lecturer, University of Western Sydney (2010 - 2012) Associate Lecturer, University of Western Sydney (2009 – 2010) Sessional Academic, University of Western Sydney (2008 -2009) Research Assistant, University of Western Sydney (2007) Registered Nurse, Royal Prince Alfred Hospital (2005 – 2011) Registered Nurse, Royal Hospital for Women (2007 – 2010)

Author Summary: Leah is an Associate Professor of Nursing (Primary Health Care). Leah's research portfolio is largely focused on risk management within the context of vulnerable populations. Her research interests include women's health, public health, sexual health and wellbeing, and patient safety. Leah has a range of research methodological experience with expertise in qualitative research. Leah is well published, at both an international and national level particularly for her work on sexual health and wellbeing.