



## SEXUAL HEALTH SURVEY AMONG ADOLESCENT STUDENTS IN SINGAPORE

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### Context

There is a low uptake rate of contraception among Singapore women. In the survey done in 2006, it was found that only 46.6% of Singaporean women practiced birth control methods. This is even lower than the worldwide contraception prevalence rate of 54.8%, which includes prevalence rates in third world countries. Lack of contraception use can result in unwanted pregnancies and abortions. In 2012, the Ministry of Health found that that 1 in 5 pregnancies in Singapore end up with abortion.

### Objective

The study aims to determine (1) the sexual behaviour including use of contraception, (2) the sexual knowledge and (3) perceptions on sex and unwanted pregnancy among female polytechnic students in Singapore.

### Methods

Polytechnic students from a single institute were invited to participate in an anonymous online self-filled questionnaire from Dec 2016 to June 2017.

### Patient(s)/Participant(s)

A total of 337 Republic polytechnic students participated in the online survey, ranging from 16 to 35 years old.

### Intervention(s)

NA

### Main Outcome

NA

### Measure(s)

NA

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## Result(s)

Most participants were aged 16-20 years and single (82.8% and 99.1% of participants respectively).

Among sexually active participants, average age of sexual debut was 17.2 years. Only 56.1% used some form of contraception with only 14.3% admitting to using contraception consistently. The most used contraception was condoms (61.2%), followed by oral contraception pills (9.2%).

Knowledge was lacking in all participants. Less than half of the participants were aware of other forms of contraception besides condoms and oral contraception pills. Most participants (79.5%) were not aware of the effective period for emergency contraception use. Only 16.7% of participants responded correctly to the statement "long term use of oral contraception pills can result in infertility".

Most participants (87.0%) felt that they would not be ok for if they were to fall pregnant. However, participants were divided on if they would opt for an abortion if they were to fall pregnant, with 26.4% agreeing that they would likely opt for an abortion and 42.3% disagreeing.

## Conclusions

Most of the students surveyed admitted to being not ready for pregnancy. However, this is not translated to action, as there is a low rate of contraception use. Despite being in a tertiary education institute, these students show significant knowledge gaps in sexual education. More can be done to bridge these gaps.