

MEDIA RELEASE

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For immediate release

Study indicates sexuality education is reaching young people

The results of an international study into secondary students' sexual health released today confirm that most students (88%) were seeking information about their sexual health, and that since 2002, there has been an increase in student confidence in talking to their parents about sex and sexual health related matters. *More students are engaging in sexual activity at a younger age compared with 10 – 20 years ago. In light of this increasing sexual activity amongst young people, it is vital that they are well educated about the associated health risks,* commented Cecelia Gore, FPQ's Director of Education and Communication.

Of the almost 3,000 years 10 and 12 students from across more than 100 Australian government, Catholic and Independent school systems polled, 2,340 have experienced some form of sexual activity. Over one quarter of year 10 students and just over half of year 12 students had experienced sexual intercourse. Just under half the students surveyed had experienced oral sex, with a considerable proportion of these having engaged in oral sex with 3 or more people.

Despite the increase in sexual activity, most students (69%) reported using a condom the last time they had sex, and half the sample of sexually active students always used a condom when they had sex in the previous year.

FPQ's Ms Gore remarked that *although we knew from our clinical practice and dealings with young people that adventurous sexual activity is happening at quite young ages, we are pleased to see that at least some educational messages are beginning to take some effect. We can see from the survey that knowledge about Chlamydia amongst young people has increased by 20% but still has a long way to go, and that 76% of young people believe using a condom will protect them from STIs.*

FPQ will draw upon the survey results to review and align its current educational programs targeted toward young people. The study, undertaken by Australian Research Centre in Sex, Health & Society (ARCSHS), La Trobe University, is a valuable resource for FPQ because it provides evidence based data against which FPQ education and curriculum developers are able to qualify their assumptions about, and practical experience with, young people related to their sexual health. The findings confirm for FPQ the need for young people to have *readily available access to sexual health information and education, and that such education pays off – slowly but surely,* said Ms Gore.

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