The use of peer education model to tackle sexual health issues among international students in Australia

Alison Coelho
Aditi Sharma
Who we are?

- CEH Provides support to agencies in Victoria and across Australia on developing culturally competent service systems.
- This is undertaken via **training, capacity building, research, resource development, project management and consultancy**.
- Multicultural Health & Support Service (MHSS) form **partnerships with the community, education, support and advocacy**
CEH are leaders in

- Cultural Competency
- Health Literacy
- Community Participation
- Understanding Health Belief Systems
MHSS works with

- Communities from refugee & migrant backgrounds, asylum seekers and mobile populations including international students
- Service providers, and
- Multicultural organisations including ethno-specific services
Issues facing international students sexual health

What are the concerns?

• In recent years, health professionals and service providers working with international students have expressed concerns about their sexual and reproductive health and wellbeing.
Issues facing international students sexual health

What's the cause?

- Limited sex education in their country of origin
- Few universities provide sexual and reproductive health promotion
- International students prefer to use friends and family as support
- More priority required on health and wellbeing of international students
- Lack of evidence around the needs of international students, for e.g. failure to record visa status, no data around unplanned pregnancies.
Peer Education Model

- Peer education is the method of health promotion based on the notion that people learn from their peers (Shiner, 1999).

**Benefits of peer education model:**

- Cost effective
- Credibility
- Proven
- Relatable
- Role model
- Sustainable
Sex, Study, Safety Peer Education Project

This project was designed to:

• Promote the sexual health and wellbeing of international students.

• Empower them with skills and knowledge to experience healthy relationships through a peer lead model.

• Train international students to educate their peers about BBV/STI’s, sexual health and healthy relationships.

• A key aspect of the project was sexual health and healthy relationships resources that were developed by the students.
Co-designed Resources

IT TAKES TWO TO TANGO!

Using a CONDOM will help to prevent STIs and lowers the risk of unplanned pregnancy (82% effective) by creating a physical barrier (FPV, 2016)

The CONTRACEPTIVE PILL uses hormones to prevent fertilization and unplanned pregnancy (92% effective) (FPV, 2016)

When used consistently and safely, both methods are effective on their own, but are even more reliable when used together!!

For more information, visit http://www.deakin.edu.au/students/health-and-wellbeing/counselling/topics-to-explore/healthy-relationships

Source: http://www.fp.org.au/for-you/contraception/barriers-you-will-need-to-take-every-time-you-have-sex/condom-males , accessed 02/06/2017
Image: https://justaskshawnna.wordpress.com/tag/talking-about-sex/ , Accessed on 02/06/17
Co-designed Resources

Whoops! Condom broke? Forgot to use one?

The Morning After Pill/ Emergency Contraceptive Pill is effective for up to 72 hours, but you want to ensure that you take it as soon as possible. This can be taken in case of emergencies, but should not be used on the regular. This pill usually costs around $16-20.

Head to your local pharmacy, talk to the pharmacist and you can get your pill. Make sure you follow the instructions!

For more information, visit http://www.deakin.edu.au/students/health-and-wellbeing/counselling/topics-to-explore/healthy-relationships
And consult your Doctor to discuss other contraception options.

#safesex #useprotection
During Pregnancy

- PREGNANCY TEST
  Standard OSHC Policy
  Early visit to GP (12-34 weeks)

  HIGH Risk Pregnancy
  Obstetrician (Public or Private)

  LOW Risk Pregnancy
  Regular visits to Shared Maternity (Local GP/ community midwife)
  GP will refer to a hospital

  Private hospital of your choice (Up-front out-of-pocket fees)
  Public hospital (located in your local residential area)
  Notify OSHC

  Completing the Hospital Guarantee Request Form to avoid delay and to inform OSHC
  The Maternity Booking Confirmation: as your doctor will contact your insurance company to verify your eligibility for maternal care.

  Once cover has been confirmed, OSHC will send the hospital guarantee of payment for your hospital stay.

  Centre for Culture, Ethnicity & Health
You must hold a valid family policy for your child to have health cover. If you not hold family policy at the time of birth treatment for your baby is not covered. Upgrade to family policy before delivery date.

Students have choice to shop around for the insurance (get insurance from other sources)
Advice: Search before buying insurance.
What we learnt

Challenges

• **Project timeline delayed**- This project time line was delayed during the application and signing off period and also staff changeover lead to further delays.

• **Recruitment process**- Peer educators were not able to follow up with the recruitment process, due to a formal lengthy process of recruitment.

• **Retention**- The retention of the international students peer educators was difficult due to their overseas travel and busy semester hours.
What we learnt

Recommendations

• **Time management and flexibility** is essential in close collaboration with the peer educators, looking at their availability to provide sessions to their peers.

• **Careful planning** is needed in selecting and targeting interventions to meet the needs of the international students.

• **Advocacy and capacity development** targeting education providers is essential.
Thank you

Alison Coelho (Manager)
Aditi Sharma (Community Engagement & Projects Officer)
CEH – MHSS program (www.ceh.org.au)
T: (03) 9418 9929
https://www.facebook.com/CEHAustralia/
Appendix: References

Contact Details

Alison Coelho
Co- Manager CEH
Manager Multicultural health and support services
Centre for Culture ethnicity and Health
T: (03) 9418 9909  M: 0409 166 870
E: alisonc@ceh.org.au
W: www.ceh.org.au

Aditi Sharma
Community engagement and projects,
Multicultural Health and support Service
Centre for culture ethnicity and Health
23,Lennox street,
Richmond VIC 3121
D: 03 9418 9921
M: 0438 990 592
E: aditis@ceh.org.au
W: www.ceh.org.au