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## A cross-sectional study to explore postgraduate students' knowledge on sexual and reproductive health at University of Cape Town

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Sexual and reproductive health (SRH) addresses the reproductive progressions, roles and structures at all stages of life and implies that people are able to have responsible, satisfying and safe sex lives, and 'the capability to reproduce and the freedom to decide if, when and how often they do so'. However, there is limited published information about SRH knowledge among postgraduate students worldwide and South Africa to be specific; therefore, it is an area which requires further studies. The purpose of this study is to determine SRH knowledge of postgraduate students at university of Cape Town (UCT). Data on SRH knowledge among university students may be important for effective planning of educational programmes at the university. In this study reproductive health will focus on postgraduate students' knowledge with regards to contraceptives, STIs/HIV & AIDS, breast examination and pap smears. Globally, studies have shown that many university students engage in sexual relationships because the university environment, especially for students who have left home for the first time, opens up opportunities for young students to enjoy their new found freedom away from the norms, values, and restrictions of the family home. The focus of these studies was on undergraduate students only. This level of freedom is however often accompanied by experimentation that could lead to risk-taking particularly with regard to sexual behaviour. In African societies, the current generation of university student's transition between the sociocultural norms of largely traditional societies, and new possibilities and experiences outside of the societies in which they were raised.

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## Barrier to use modern contraceptives for birth control

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Family planning has been on the reproductive health agenda since the 1960s and today many effective and safe birth control methods are available, yet the level of unmet need for contraception remains high. Increasing the level of contraceptive use among women of child bearing age is an important component of many national population and developmental programs in sub-Saharan Africa; however the coverage of these methods are still low despite the efforts of many governmental and nongovernmental agencies (NGOs). Due to high unmet need for family planning and its subsequent effect, many women in Ethiopia are experiencing the challenges of abortion and unwanted child birth. As a result, the Federal Ministry of Health of Ethiopia has allowed the distribution of contraceptives in drug stores and the provision of safe abortion services in medical setup for those who demand the service under certain conditions such as rape, incest, sexual violence, etc. Lack of access to modern contraception is an issue for countless women and couples in Ethiopia and around the world. But, what about the physical and financial barriers to access aren't the problem? What about personal, educational, and cultural barriers? Studies show that these types of obstacles may be equally responsible for the high prevalence of unintended pregnancies we see today, more than 50 years after the introduction of the birth control pill.

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