

# SPHERE Research Projects 2026



**MONASH**  
University

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# Why undertake research with SPHERE?

The key goal of SPHERE 2.0 is to improve the capacity, safety, and quality of primary health care services to achieve better outcomes in women's sexual and reproductive health (SRH). This will be achieved through a research program that is focused on three key pillars.

## Our research program is focused on:

- **Building system and workforce capacity** – We innovate strategies to ensure the Australian primary care workforce adequately addresses women's sexual and reproductive health needs, including trialling alternative service delivery methods to enhance accessibility, particularly in rural and regional areas.
  - **Addressing consumer needs** – Understanding consumer needs and preferences is also important in helping women achieve optimal sexual and reproductive health
  - **Using data to advance knowledge** – Health data sets are useful in gaining insights into the state of women's sexual and reproductive health in Australia and identifying gaps in service provision
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# Benefits of conducting research with SPHERE

One of SPHERE's strengths is its focus on continuing and fostering existing national and international multidisciplinary collaborations.

## Chief Investigators

- a. Professor Danielle Mazza AM (Monash University)
- b. Professor Kirsten Black (University of Sydney)
- c. Professor Deborah Bateson AM (University of Sydney)
- d. Professor Wendy Norman (University of British Columbia)
- e. Professor Gita Mishra (University of Queensland)
- f. Professor Jane Fisher (Monash University)
- g. Associate Professor Luke Grzeskowiak (Flinders University)
- h. Associate Professor Kristina Edvardsson (LaTrobe University)
- i. Associate Professor Laura Tarzia (University of Melbourne)

## Associate Investigators

- a. Professor Faye McMillan (National Rural Health Commission)
- b. Ms Sarah Parker (National Rural Women's Coalition)
- c. Dr Sarah White (Jean Hailes for Women's Health)
- d. Ms Renee Carr (Fair Agenda)
- e. Professor Karen Price (Royal Australian College of General Practitioners)
- f. Professor Angela Taft (LaTrobe University)
- g. Professor Kristina Gemzell-Danielsson (Karolinska University Hospital)
- h. Professor Daniel Grossman (University of California, San Francisco)
- i. Professor Judith Stephenson (University College London)
- j. Associate Professor Rebecca French (London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine)

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# The value for our students

- Supervision and mentorship from internationally-recognised leaders in women's sexual and reproductive health, primary care and health services research
- Work and study within a buzzing, supportive and collaborative research environment
- Participate in our primary care research education program with our large cohort of early career researchers
- Shape your own project within the SPHERE research program
- Opportunity to be involved in large funded projects or smaller projects
- Great support and camaraderie with regular research team meetings, weekly academic seminars, research student workshops
- Financial support to publish and present at national and international conferences



Kira Percival-Cobb  
2024 Honours Student

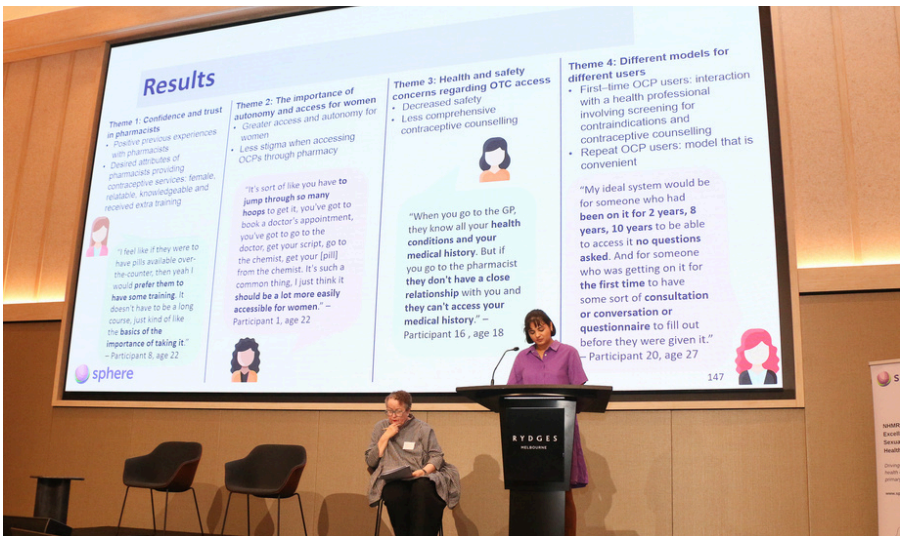


Kajol Babu  
2025 Honours Student

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(L-R) Isabella Papadopoulou, Bronwyn McDonald, Jenna Perkins, Jarrod Cross, Dr Maryam Moradi, Herrah Naveed, Selma Karovic, AAAPC Conference 2023



Tara Dev, SPHERE annual meeting presentation, 2023

# Student Publications

BMJ Journals

**BMJ Sexual & Reproductive Health**

Original research

**Australian women's experiences and perceptions of interconception care: a qualitative descriptive study**

Sarmitha Kodavaluru , Isini Appuhamy Mudiyansele , Danielle Mazza , Sharon James

Correspondence to Sarmitha Kodavaluru; sarmithakdvrl@gmail.com

THE MEDICAL JOURNAL OF AUSTRALIA

**MJA**

**General practitioners' views and experiences of postpartum contraception counselling and provision: a qualitative–descriptive study**

Jenna K Perkins, Sharon James, Danielle Mazza and Jessica R Botfield

Med J Aust 2024; 221 (7): 385–385. doi: 10.5694/mja2.52438


Published online: 7 October 2024

FORUM PAPER  
<https://doi.org/10.1071/PY23101>

**Postpartum contraception in Australia: opportunities for increasing access in the primary care setting**

Rhea Singh<sup>A,B,\*</sup> and Jessica R. Botfield<sup>A,B</sup>



**AJGP** Australian Journal of General Practice

Volume 52, Issue 8, August 2023

**General practitioner experiences in delivering early medical abortion services to women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds: A qualitative–descriptive study**

Rhea Singh Danielle Mazza Lauren Moloney Mridula Shankar Asvini K Subasinghe

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# Student Testimonials

## Meet Jarrod Cross

I have a passion for women's health and as such, I chose to do my honours at SPHERE CRE. The projects that were on offer at SPHERE all intrigued me however, projects that focused on patients/consumers appealed to me the most. In addition to having projects that interested me, SPHERE had a workplace culture that I was hoping to find. The workplace was very supportive and welcoming, which, in my opinion helped me to do the best I could.

My research was supervised by Dr Anisa Assifi and Professor Danielle Mazza, and had a focus on women's views on accessing medical abortion services through general practice. Throughout my honours project, I encountered difficulties with research which I believe has assisted me with growing both professionally and personally in overcoming challenges. Although there were some challenges throughout the project, there were many highlights some of which, including presenting at the AAAPC conference and attending the SPHERE Annual Meeting. At these events I was not only able to share some of my work but I was also able to hear about other work SPHERE, and other researchers across the country have done.

The SPHERE team and the Monash Department of General Practice helped me develop my researching capacity to limits I never thought possible and allowed me to meet some wonderful people that I am privileged to call not only colleagues but more so a friends.



***" I found doing my honours project through SPHERE extremely rewarding and would recommend anyone to do a project with SPHERE! "***

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# Student Testimonials

## Meet Tara Dev

I chose to complete my Honours year with SPHERE as I have a strong interest in both general practice and women's health. Additionally, the SPHERE projects available all really interested me. I also read through previous SPHERE Honours students' theses and I felt inspired to complete a project in this area. I was also drawn to the incredibly supportive environment provided by not only the SPHERE team, but also the entire Department of General Practice at Monash.

My research focused on women's opinions on whether or not the contraceptive pill should be available over-the-counter. This involved interviewing 20 women and developing themes around access to the contraceptive pill over-the-counter based on our discussions. The highlight from my year working with SPHERE was being able to present at the SPHERE annual meeting where I received valuable feedback from researchers in the field of women's health from all over Australia and from many different disciplines.

There were many benefits to being a SPHERE student. The team was very supportive and encouraging. The team is full of very experienced researchers and so I could seek advice from many different people. Additionally, there were many opportunities to present my work to the team to gain feedback. There were also other Honours students within the SPHERE team so it was great to work alongside each other. Overall, I thoroughly enjoyed my year with SPHERE and would recommend others to consider completing their Honours with SPHERE!



***“ Overall, I thoroughly enjoyed my year with SPHERE and would recommend others to consider completing their honours with SPHERE! ”***





# **2026 Honours Projects**

## Acceptability of adolescents undertaking contraceptive counselling with pharmacist

The lack of comprehensive sexuality education in schools and the stigma around adolescents' sexual activity prevents adolescents from accessing high-quality accurate sexual and reproductive health information and services. For adolescents, pharmacists have the potential to be an entry point to sexual and reproductive health services in the primary care system. Understanding the acceptability of pharmacists delivering contraceptive counseling is important to ensure that delivery of service by pharmacists meets the needs of adolescents. We will use qualitative methods to better understand adolescents' views and experiences of receiving contraceptive information from community pharmacists to ascertain how we can improve the service delivery and experience of adolescents accessing sexual and reproductive health care in the pharmacy setting.

### Keywords

adolescent, contraception, pharmacy, women's health, primary care

### Available options

Masters by research  
Masters by coursework  
Honours  
BMedSc(Hons)

### Time commitment

Full-time

### Physical location

553 St Kilda Road

### Supervisor

Dr Anisa Assifi

### Co-supervisor

Prof Danielle Mazza AM



## Contraception provided over the counter by pharmacists: What do pharmacists think?

Internationally, in an attempt to increase accessibility, improve continuation, and reduce costs, there is a move to provide a wider range of contraceptive products over the counter by pharmacists. This qualitative study will explore the views of pharmacists regarding the provision of over-the-counter contraception in the Australian context.

### Keywords

contraception, pharmacy, women's health, general practice, primary care

### Available options

Masters by research  
Honours  
BMedSc(Hons)

### Time commitment

Full-time

### Physical location

553 St Kilda Road

### Supervisor

Dr Anisa Assifi

### Co-supervisor

Prof Danielle Mazza AM



## Exploring the use of online contraceptive providers: who are these services catering?

There has been an increase in online prescription services offering access to contraception methods without having to physically meet with a medical provider or pharmacist. Understanding the perspectives of individuals accessing contraception through online contraception providers is important to determine who these online services are catering to and what the gaps that these services are potentially filling in the healthcare system. We will use qualitative methods to explore these questions.



### Keywords

contraception, pharmacy, online contraceptive providers, women's health, primary care

### Available options

Masters by research  
Honours  
BMedSc(Hons)

### Time commitment

Full-time

### Physical location

553 St Kilda Road

### Supervisor

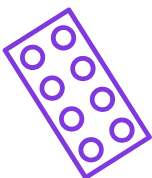
Dr Anisa Assifi

### Co-supervisor

A/Prof Luke Grzeskowiak (External)

## Pharmacists' experiences and thoughts on dispensing medical abortion medications in community pharmacy

Registered community pharmacists have been able to dispense medical abortion medicines (MS-2 Step) to individuals with a prescription in Australia since 2015. It is essential to understand pharmacist's current knowledge, practice, and delivery of MS-2 Step to identify gaps in knowledge and additional support that the pharmacist may require to provide high-quality person-centered abortion care. We will use qualitative methods to elicit pharmacists' experiences to ascertain how we can improve the knowledge and service delivery of MS-2 Step.



### Keywords

abortion, pharmacy, women's health, primary care

### Available options

Masters by research  
Honours  
BMedSc(Hons)

### Time commitment

Full-time

### Physical location

553 St Kilda Road

### Supervisor

Dr Anisa Assifi

### Co-supervisor

Prof Danielle Mazza AM

## Self administration of injectable contraception: What are the views of Australian women?

Depo Provera is a highly effective long acting reversible contraception administered by a three monthly injection. Internationally, in an attempt to increase accessibility, improve continuation and reduce costs, there have been studies on the feasibility and acceptability of self injection of contraceptive products such as depo provera by women. This study will utilise facebook recruiting to survey women about the acceptability of self-administration of injectable contraception in the Australian context.



### Keywords

contraception, pharmacy, general practice, women's health, primary care

### Available options

Masters by research

Honours

BMedSc(Hons)

### Time commitment

Full-time

### Physical location

553 St Kilda Road

### Supervisor

Dr Anisa Assifi

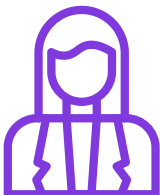
### Co-supervisor

Prof Danielle Mazza AM

Dr Jessica Botfield

## Understanding pharmacist perspective and needs to provide adolescent-centred care

Community pharmacist have the potential to provide accessible health services to adolescents and the potential to improve adolescent's access to sexual and reproductive health care. To ensure that pharmacists are supported and have the appropriate skills to provide adolescent-centred care, this study will seek to understand pharmacists' perspective and needs to deliver adolescent sexual and reproductive health services. We will conduct a qualitative study with pharmacists to explore their views and needs.



### Keywords

sexual and reproductive health, SRH, pharmacy, women's health, adolescent, primary care, qualitative

### Available options

Honours

BMedSc(Hons)

### Time commitment

Full-time

### Physical location

553 St Kilda Road

### Supervisor

Dr Anisa Assifi

### Co-supervisor

Prof Danielle Mazza AM

## Understanding sexual and reproductive health content included in pharmacy curriculum: are pharmacists prepared?

Pharmacists' provision of sexual and reproductive health (SRH) services has expanded from mainly dispensing medications to including services like comprehensive counselling, prevention, screening, prescribing, and referral to other health providers. Pilot studies have been underway in Australia looking at pharmacists' resupply of oral contraceptive pills and the prescribing of contraceptive methods in QLD. With pharmacists' expanding scope of practice, understanding the SRH content included in the Australian pharmacy curriculum is essential to know whether pharmacists are adequately prepared to provide SRH services.



### Keywords

sexual and reproductive health, women's health, primary care

### Available options

Masters by research  
Honours  
BMedSc(Hons)

### Time commitment

Full-time

### Physical location

553 St Kilda Road

### Supervisor

Dr Anisa Assifi

### Co-supervisor

Dr Sharon James

## What are individual's experiences accessing medical abortion medicines (MS-2 Step) in community pharmacy?

Once a registered medical practitioner has prescribed medical abortion medicines, also known as MS-2 Step, an individual must access a community pharmacy to be dispensed the medications by a registered community pharmacist. In Australia, in 2021 approximately 25% of community pharmacists were registered to dispense MS-2 Step. To ensure individuals are receiving high-quality person-centered abortion care it is essential to understand an individual's experience of accessing medical abortion medicines from community pharmacists. We will use qualitative methods to elicit individuals' experiences to ascertain how we can improve the delivery and provision of medical abortion in primary care.

### Keywords

abortion, pharmacy, women's health, primary care

### Available options

Masters by research  
Honours  
BMedSc(Hons)

### Time commitment

Full-time

### Physical location

553 St Kilda Road

### Supervisor

Dr Anisa Assifi

### Co-supervisor

Prof Danielle Mazza AM



# Australian and international models of care for postpartum contraception provision

Many pregnancies in the first year after a birth are unintended, and can place significant physical, social and financial strain on women and their families. Early access to contraception information and services in the postpartum period can help to avoid closely spaced and unintended pregnancies. However, in Australia, there is limited guidance for maternity care providers and a lack of consistent models of postpartum contraceptive care. Through a literature review and key informant interviews, this project will undertake a cross-country comparison to identify and document existing programs and models of care for provision of postpartum contraception nationally and internationally, to inform consideration of how these might be implemented or refined in the Australian context.

## Keywords

women's health, contraception, postpartum contraception, sexual and reproductive health, general practitioner, nurse, midwife

## Available options

Masters by research  
Masters by coursework  
Honours

BMedSc(Hons)

## Time commitment

Full-time

**Physical location**  
553 St Kilda Road

## Supervisor

Dr Jessica Botfield

## Co-supervisor

Prof Danielle Mazza AM



# Child and family health nurse provision of postpartum contraceptive care: What do women think?

To support pregnancy planning, all women should receive information and resources regarding fertility return and available contraceptive options as part of their routine postpartum care. Child and family health nurses are well-placed to provide this information and support, as they often have regular contact with mothers and can support maternal health and wellbeing, including in relation to postpartum contraception information and services – yet this is not part of routine practice. A qualitative study will be undertaken with women to explore their views, experiences and preferences regarding provision of postpartum contraception information and support by child and family health nurses, to better understand the role they could play in increasing access to postpartum contraception in Australia.

## Keywords

women's health, contraception, postpartum contraception, sexual and reproductive health, nurse, community nurse, maternal child health nurse

## Available options

Masters by research  
Masters by coursework  
Honours

BMedSc(Hons)

## Time commitment

Full-time

**Physical location**  
553 St Kilda Road  
**Supervisor**

Dr Jessica Botfield

## Co-supervisor

Prof Danielle Mazza AM



# HealthPathways for contraception information and support

HealthPathways is a free, online portal that has been established in different regions in each state and territory in Australia to provide evidence-based information and resources for health practitioners on the assessment and management of common clinical conditions and guidance on local referral options. An online review of HealthPathways will be undertaken for this project to determine what information is currently provided in relation to contraception, particularly long-acting reversible contraception (LARC), to better understand commonalities and differences and to determine potential gaps and opportunities for improvement. Qualitative interviews with general practitioners (GPs) will also be undertaken to explore their views and experiences of using HealthPathways for contraceptive care in their practice.

## Keywords

healthpathways, contraception, sexual and reproductive health, women's health, general practice

## Available options

Masters by research  
Masters by coursework  
Honours  
BMedSc(Hons)

## Time commitment

Full-time

## Physical location

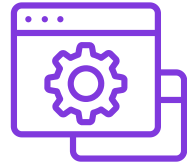
553 St Kilda Road

## Supervisor

Dr Jessica Botfield

## Co-supervisor

Prof Danielle Mazza AM



# Nurse provision of postpartum contraception information and support in general practice

Women are recommended to have a 6-8 postnatal check after having a baby, usually with their general practitioner (GP). Whilst there is an expectation that GPs will discuss contraception at this appointment, there are no consistent guidelines in relation to this in Australia and contraception counselling/provision does not commonly occur at that visit. General practice nurses may be well-placed to fill this gap and provide support and services in relation to postpartum contraceptive care. A qualitative study will be undertaken with general practice nurses to better understand whether and how they are currently contributing in this area; identify their training, resource and other needs; and determine opportunities to support them and optimise provision of postpartum contraceptive care in general practice.

## Keywords

women's health, contraception, postpartum contraception, sexual and reproductive health, general practitioner, practice nurse

## Available options

Masters by research  
Masters by coursework  
Honours  
BMedSc(Hons)

## Time commitment

Full-time

## Physical location

553 St Kilda Road

## Supervisor

Dr Jessica Botfield

## Co-supervisor

Prof Danielle Mazza AM



## Exploring the needs of adolescents with endometriosis and parents in Australian primary care

Endometriosis often starts in adolescence, yet adolescents' symptoms are often misunderstood and diagnosis is difficult. A GP is usually the first point of contact to address endometriosis-related symptoms. However, navigating the health system for endometriosis diagnosis and management is challenging, and delays in diagnosis are often attributed to GPs. Parents play an important role in coordinating their adolescent's healthcare, decision-making and advocating for their child, later handing over responsibility to the older adolescent to independently manage their condition. This qualitative research will explore the experiences and needs of adolescents with endometriosis, and parents of adolescents with endometriosis, around diagnosis and management of the condition in Australian primary care settings. The findings will help inform future research focussed on improving care for adolescents with endometriosis in Australian primary care settings.

### Keywords

endometriosis, adolescence, parenting, women's health, primary care

### Available options

Honours  
BMedSc(Hons)

### Time commitment

Full-time

### Physical location

553 St Kilda Road

### Supervisor

Dr Sharinne Crawford

### Co-supervisor

Dr Alissia Hui



## Emergent roles and experiences in medication abortion provision

This project builds on our previous research about general practitioner and registrar provision of medication abortion as well as our work through the [Australian Contraception and Abortion Primary Care Practitioner Support \(AusCAPPS\) Network](#) outcomes. Recent changes to the Therapeutic Goods Administration and state/territory legislative changes have enabled nurse practitioners and authorised midwives to provide medication abortion care. These clinicians have a key role in meeting the needs of women's reproductive care including pregnancy, termination, contraception and sexual health. In practice, knowledge about sexual and reproductive health, referral pathways and timely access to care for patients are key concerns. Through a literature review and interviews with nurse practitioners and authorised midwives, this research seeks to understand the experiences of these clinicians and their support needs about medication abortion provision.

### Keywords

general practice, nurse, midwife, abortion, primary care, women's health, qualitative

### Available options

Masters by research  
Honours  
BMedSc(Hons)

### Time commitment

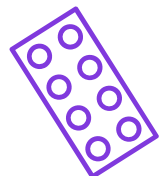
Full-time

### Physical location

553 St Kilda Road

### Supervisor

Dr Sharon James





## Innovative multidisciplinary models of intrauterine device provision in primary care

Primary care clinicians including general practitioners, nurse practitioners and practice nurses have a key role in meeting the needs of women's reproductive care including pregnancy, termination, contraception, and sexual health. They have expertise in patient diagnosis, treatment and improving access for those most at risk of an unintended pregnancy e.g. priority populations such as rural and remote communities. This care includes the provision of efficacious forms of contraception such as intrauterine devices (IUDs). In practice, there are barriers to the provision of sexual and reproductive health services, and little is known about how innovative multidisciplinary models are enacted in practice to meet patient needs. Through a literature review and interviews with primary care clinicians, this research seeks to understand how to implement innovative multidisciplinary IUD models of care in the primary care setting.

### Keywords

general practice, primary care, women's health, sexual health, reproductive health, nursing, workforce, nurse practitioner, contraception

### Available options

Honours  
BMedSc(Hons)

### Time commitment

Full-time

### Physical location

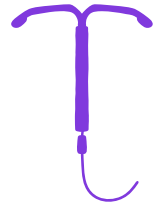
553 St Kilda Road

### Supervisor

Dr Sharon James

### Co-supervisor

Prof Danielle Mazza AM



## The development of an audit tool to understand the provision of women's sexual and reproductive healthcare in general practice

General practice is pivotal in the management of care for patients across the lifespan. General practice represents an ideal setting where opportunistic and planned care about sexual and reproductive health can occur. However, little is known about ways clinicians are currently providing this care and ways the general practice team could be optimised to support women's sexual and reproductive healthcare. This project will involve a literature review and the development of an audit tool to analyse consultations in women's sexual and reproductive health. Findings will inform current clinician involvement and potential future directions in women's sexual and reproductive health care.

### Keywords

general practice, primary care, women's health, sexual health, reproductive health, nursing, workforce

### Available options

Masters by research  
Honours

BMedSc(Hons)

### Time commitment

Full-time

### Physical location

553 St Kilda Road

### Supervisor

Dr Sharon James

### Co-supervisor

Prof Danielle Mazza AM



## What are GP registrar experiences of providing long-acting reversible contraception?

GPs have a key role in meeting the needs of women's reproductive care including pregnancy, termination, contraception and sexual health. In practice, knowledge about sexual and reproductive health, referral pathways and timely access to care for patients are key concerns for GPs. However, experiences about long acting and reversible contraceptive (LARC) methods often occurs following GP accreditation and training impacts the prescription of efficacious methods of contraception. Through a literature review and interviews with GP Registrars, this research seeks to understand GP registrar perceptions of LARC care and their training needs.



### Keywords

general practice, contraception, women's health, qualitative, registrar

### Available options

Honours  
BMedSc(Hons)

### Time commitment

Full-time

### Physical location

553 St Kilda Road

### Supervisor

Dr Sharon James

### Co-supervisor

Prof Danielle Mazza AM

## Identifying barriers and enablers for GPs in training to become providers of long-acting reversible contraception and early medical abortion

Uptake of reliable and cost-effective long-acting reversible contraception, such as IUDs and implants, is lower in Australia compared to similarly developed countries, and there is inequitable access to early medical abortion. GPs are key providers of sexual and reproductive health care in the Australian community. Through interviews with clinicians this research seeks to understand the current barriers and enablers for them to become providers of long-acting reversible contraception and early medical abortion, and how the Australian Contraception and Abortion Primary healthcare Practitioner Support (AusCAPPS) Network, an online community of practice, can support their needs.

### Keywords

women's health, sexual and reproductive health, contraception, abortion, primary care, general practice, GP, community of practice, online education

### Available options

Honours  
BMedSc(Hons)

### Time commitment

Full-time  
Part-time

### Physical location

553 St Kilda Road

### Supervisor

Nadia Lusic



## Increasing access to long-acting reversible contraception – what and how are medical students and GP registrars learning about LARC?

Uptake of reliable and cost-effective long-acting reversible contraception, such as intrauterine devices (IUDs) and implants, is lower in Australia compared to similarly developed countries. General practitioners (GPs) are key providers of sexual and reproductive health care, and other medical practitioners may provide advice on contraception to patients in hospital or community settings. Through a literature review, survey of medical education organisations and key informant interviews, this research seeks to understand how and what information on LARC is included in medical and GP training curricula and how GPs registrars access the practical training they require.

### Keywords

women's health, sexual and reproductive health, contraception, primary care, general practice, GP, GP registrar, medical education

### Available options

Honours  
BMedSc(Hons)

### Time commitment

Full-time  
Part-time

### Physical location

553 St Kilda Road

### Supervisor

Nadia Lusic



## What are the health literacy needs of women with endometriosis?

Endometriosis is a chronic inflammatory condition that affects up to one in seven Australian women by the age of 44. It is a significant public health issue and has a significant impact on the physical and mental health and wellbeing of those with the condition. Effective treatment options are currently limited, and women are often exposed to a plethora of information (including misinformation), necessitating increased interaction with the healthcare system to manage symptoms effectively. Patients need skills and support to manage this condition effectively and to advocate for themselves and their healthcare needs. Health literacy is one tool that can empower and support individuals in health promotion, disease prevention, and healthcare. This research seeks to understand the health literacy needs of women with endometriosis using a validated Health Literacy Questionnaire.

### Keywords

Endometriosis, health literacy, HLQ, women's health, sexual health, reproductive health, health needs, general practice, primary care

### Available options

Masters by research  
Honours  
BMedSc(Hons)

### Time commitment

Full-time

### Physical location

553 St Kilda Road

### Supervisor

Dr Satish Melwani

### Co-supervisor

Dr Sharinne Crawford



# What are the sexual and reproductive health literacy needs and preferences of international students in Australia?

International students often face challenges such as cultural differences, language barriers, employment, and housing issues after moving to a new country, impacting their health and wellbeing. Studying abroad also allows students to experience new cultures, develop self-autonomy, and explore sexual behaviour and relationships with fewer constraints. This makes them more susceptible to sexual and reproductive health (SRH) issues, including unintended pregnancy, abortion, and sexually transmitted infections. They often face challenges in accessing SRH information and services due to cultural and religious norms, limited SRH knowledge, lack of awareness of specific health services, language barriers, cost of services, and stigma associated with utilising these services. Through a literature review and interviews with international students in Australia, this research will explore their sexual and reproductive health literacy needs and preferences

## Keywords

International students, health literacy, sexual health, reproductive health, health needs, general practice, primary care

## Available options

Masters by research  
Honours  
BMedSc(Hons)

## Time commitment

Full-time

## Physical location

553 St Kilda Road

## Supervisor

Dr Satish Melwani

## Co-supervisor

Dr Sharon James



# Understanding choice and uptake of effective contraception in young women from culturally diverse (CALD) backgrounds: A qualitative study

In Australia, over one in 10 women aged 19–24 years experienced an unintended pregnancy. Disparities exist, with women from culturally and linguistic diverse (CALD) backgrounds showing poorer sexual and reproductive health outcomes, lower effective contraception use, and higher risk of unintended pregnancies compared to their non-CALD counterparts. This can be linked to a range of intersecting issues including cultural norms, beliefs around contraception, and access to appropriate sexual health education. The influences on women's choice and use of effective contraception are poorly understood in this population. This qualitative study will involve interviewing young women from CALD backgrounds to explore the behavioural influences to choosing and using effective contraception. The results will help inform future projects within SPHERE.

## Keywords

women's health, primary care, enablers, barriers, contraception, choice and uptake, sexual health

## Available options

Honours  
BMedSc(Hons)

## Time commitment

Full-time  
Part-time

## Physical location

553 St Kilda Road

## Supervisor

Dr Vera Camoes Costa

## Co-supervisor

Dr Sharinne Crawford



## Exploring Reproductive Coercion in South Asian Communities

This project will explore how South Asian women experience reproductive coercion (RC), with a focus on the influence of cultural norms, gender expectations, and son preference. Using qualitative interviews with women from South Asian backgrounds, the study will examine how RC is perpetrated not only by intimate partners but also by extended family members, and how pressures related to childbearing—particularly the preference for male children—shape women’s reproductive autonomy. The research will also explore how women navigate these experiences and the extent to which they seek or receive support. By centring lived experiences, this study will contribute to a deeper understanding of culturally specific forms of RC and provide insights for improving recognition and response in healthcare and community services.

### Keywords

reproductive coercion, South Asian communities, qualitative research, son preference, cultural norms

### Available options

Masters by research  
Masters by coursework  
Honours

BMedSc(Hons)

### Time commitment

Full-time

### Physical location

553 St Kilda Road

### Supervisor

Prof Danielle Mazza AM

### Co-supervisor

Susan Saldanha



## Perceptions of Implicit, Explicit, and Tacit Reproductive Coercion: A Cross-sectional survey study

This project will explore how women perceive and recognise different forms of reproductive coercion (RC), focusing on explicit, implicit, and tacit forms of control over reproductive decision-making. Using a survey with short scenarios and perception-based questions, the study will examine how women interpret a range of coercive behaviours—from overt threats and pressure, to subtle emotional manipulation and culturally normalised expectations. The project will investigate which behaviours are recognised as coercive, which are dismissed or overlooked, and how recognition may vary across different demographic groups. By examining how women draw boundaries between acceptable influence and coercion, this study will contribute to a more inclusive understanding of RC and inform the development of awareness campaigns, support services, and future screening tools.

### Keywords

reproductive coercion, survey, women’s health, violence recognition, primary care

### Available options

Masters by research  
Masters by coursework  
Honours

BMedSc(Hons)

### Time commitment

Full-time

### Physical location

553 St Kilda Road

### Supervisor

Prof Danielle Mazza AM

### Co-supervisor

Susan Saldanha



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# Social Media Content Analysis of Reproductive Coercion Experiences

This project will explore how reproductive coercion (RC) is discussed on social media, analysing user-generated content to identify key themes and narratives. By conducting a qualitative content analysis of publicly available posts, this study will provide insights into how individuals articulate their experiences, the role of social media in shaping awareness, and the potential implications for healthcare providers and policymakers. Findings will contribute to a broader understanding of RC, highlighting lived experiences and gaps in awareness, with the goal of improving recognition, response, and support for victim-survivors.



## **Keywords**

reproductive coercion, social media, qualitative research, digital narratives, women's health

## **Available options**

Masters by research  
Masters by coursework  
Honours  
BMedSc(Hons)

## **Time commitment**

Full-time

## **Physical location**

553 St Kilda Road

## **Supervisor**

Prof Danielle Mazza AM

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Susan Saldanha

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# **2026 PhD Projects**

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# Opportunities to enhance postpartum contraception care in Australia

In Australia, 20% of pregnancies occur within the first year of a birth and most are unintended. Unintended pregnancies and short interpregnancy intervals (<12-18months) can have adverse effects and increased risk of complications. Women are often unaware of fertility return after pregnancy, optimal pregnancy spacing, or the safety of contraception postnatally. Whilst contraception enables women to attain the number and spacing of births they desire, there is no routine provision of postpartum contraception information or services during pregnancy or after birth in Australia and access can be challenging. This PhD will investigate key policy opportunities to enhance postpartum contraception care in Australia through exploring models of care, and legislative, regulatory and professional requirements, from key informant and stakeholder perspectives.

This project sits within a program of research being undertaken by Professor Mazza in SPHERE, a NHMRC-funded Centre of Research Excellence in Sexual and Reproductive Health for Women in Primary Care. This is the first dedicated Centre to lead research that is aimed at improving the quality, safety, and capacity of primary health care services to achieve better outcomes in women's sexual and reproductive health. Students working within SPHERE will be supported by Professor Mazza's research team, which consists of Post-docs, PhD students, academic registrars and Honours students. Students will be part of a large, multidisciplinary, collaborative team of investigators, which includes prominent national and international researchers and experts working in women's health, general practice, pharmacy, nursing, epidemiology, knowledge translation, health economics, and policy development.

## Keywords

women's health, contraception, postpartum contraception, sexual and reproductive health, policy, models of care

## School

School of Public Health and Preventive Medicine  
School of Public Health and Preventive Medicine » General Practice

## Available options

PhD/Doctorate

## Time commitment

Full-time

## Top-up scholarship funding available

No

## Physical location

553 St Kilda Road

## Supervisor

Dr Jessica Botfield





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# Postpartum contraception information, support and service needs of priority populations

Women require access to postpartum contraception information to enable them to plan for and access contraception after having a baby. Early access to contraception in the postpartum period is associated with a high continuity rate and efficacy for reducing unintended pregnancies and short interpregnancy intervals. Minimal research has been conducted with priority populations in Australia in relation to postpartum contraception (including, but not limited to, young people, and people from migrant and refugee communities), and little is known regarding their information needs and preferences in relation to this. This PhD will explore the postpartum contraception information, support and service needs of priority population(s) in Australia, through a scoping review, interviews with priority population (s), and key informant interviews.

This project sits within a program of research being undertaken by Professor Mazza in SPHERE, a NHMRC-funded Centre of Research Excellence in Sexual and Reproductive Health for Women in Primary Care. This is the first dedicated Centre to lead research that is aimed at improving the quality, safety, and capacity of primary health care services to achieve better outcomes in women's sexual and reproductive health. Students working within SPHERE will be supported by Professor Mazza's research team, which consists of Post-docs, PhD students, academic registrars and Honours students. Students will be part of a large, multidisciplinary, collaborative team of investigators, which includes prominent national and international researchers and experts working in women's health, general practice, pharmacy, nursing, epidemiology, knowledge translation, health economics, and policy development.

## Keywords

women's health, contraception, postpartum contraception, sexual and reproductive health, priority populations, marginalised populations, resources

## School

School of Public Health and Preventive Medicine  
School of Public Health and Preventive Medicine » General Practice

## Available options

PhD/Doctorate

## Time commitment

Full-time

## Top-up scholarship funding available

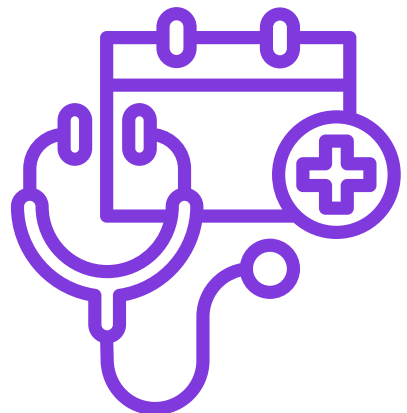
No

## Physical location

553 St Kilda Road

## Supervisor

Dr Jessica Botfield



# For more information

Supervisor connect: <https://www.monash.edu/medicine/research/supervisorconnect>

If you are passionate about women's sexual and reproductive health but don't see a topic that interests you in this booklet, or you have a topic idea of your own, please reach out to us to discuss this further.

## Contact us



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