

Clinical Toolkit

Clinical Tips: Barriers to condom use in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people

A 2017 survey suggests that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people tend to be more aware of and concerned about pregnancy rather than STIs ([see Aboriginal STI rates](#)).

Both young men and women believed that people who experienced STIs were older and lived far away, and that acquiring an STI was associated with having sex with these 'others'. These young participants perceived themselves as being at low risk of contracting STIs because they were having sex with familiar young people, a practice that was equated with safer sexual choices.

A separate, small study of young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women showed low condom use. The main reasons for not using contraception were 'just not thinking about it', shame and problems with access, and a need to protect reputation (and not carry condoms against the perception that that young women who carry condoms are 'slutty'). Shame may also make communication about STI risk reduction difficult.

In addition, as for the general population, lack of confidence and negotiation skills ([see Skill Building](#)) were issues.

More information can be found in [Working Together: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Mental Health and Wellbeing Principles and Practice](#).

References

The Kirby Institute. Bloodborne viral and sexually transmitted infections in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people: Annual Surveillance Report 2016. The Kirby Institute, UNSW Australia, Sydney NSW 2052.

Stephen Bell, Peter Aggleton, James Ward & Lisa Maher (2017): Sexual agency, risk and vulnerability: a scoping review of young Indigenous Australians' sexual health, Journal of Youth Studies