



A pilot study of a free condom distribution program at The University of Melbourne

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The Australian and UoM context

- Increasing STI rates in young people aged 15-29 years
 - ↑ Chlamydia (73% of notifications in 2017)
 - ↑ Gonorrhoea by 73% (2013-2017)
 - ↑ Syphilis by 226% (2013-2017)
- Socially and sexually curious
- ↑ International students at UoM
 - Mostly Chinese students
 - Little data on their sexual knowledge and practices



Health Promotion Program at UoM



Established in July 2017

Partnership with Bupa
Within Wellbeing
Department,
University Services



Student survey in October 2017

1,043 participants
In general, students
want more sexual
health support



Sexual health needs assessment found:

Condom use during
vaginal intercourse:
31% 'always'
19% 'never'
73% 'never' for oral
sex



Condom Fairy program @ Boston University

↑ availability and
accessibility
↓ privacy and
embarrassment
↑ STI testing

Condom Fairy: how did it work?

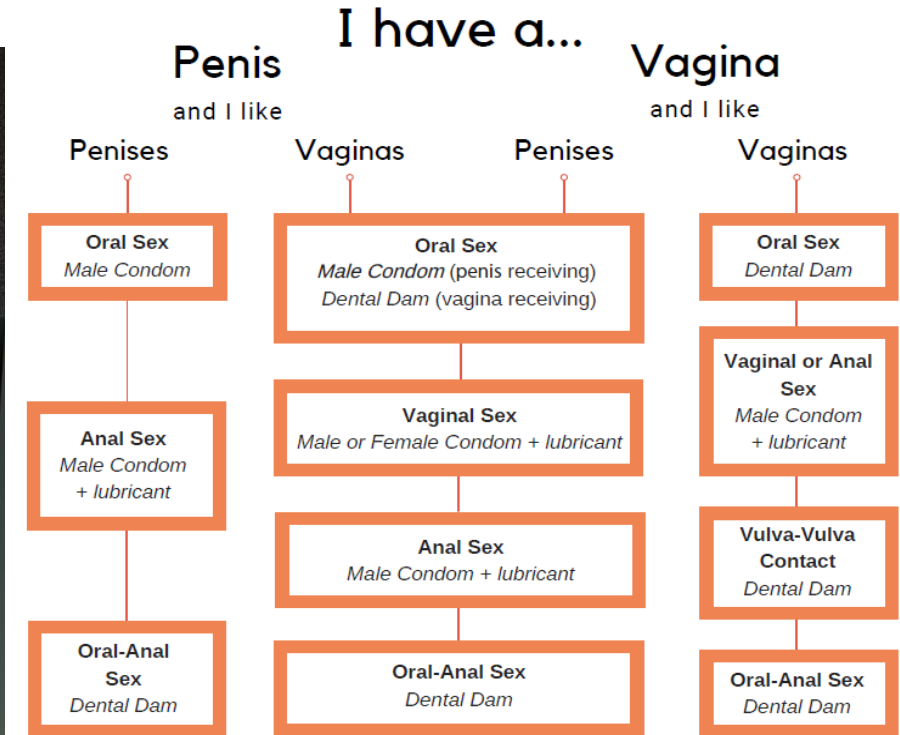
- Online and anonymous
- Launched on 27th August 2018
- 4 week pilot
- Advertised on UoM student portal
- Protection flowchart
- Collect from lockers at UoM Health Services




DO YOU KNOW WHICH CONTRACEPTIVE TO USE?
The **Condom Fairy** is here to help!

Follow the chart below to find the appropriate contraceptive to use to prevent against Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs) and pregnancy. **Note: only condoms provide protection against STIs.**

Always ensure you have consent to engage in sexual activity.



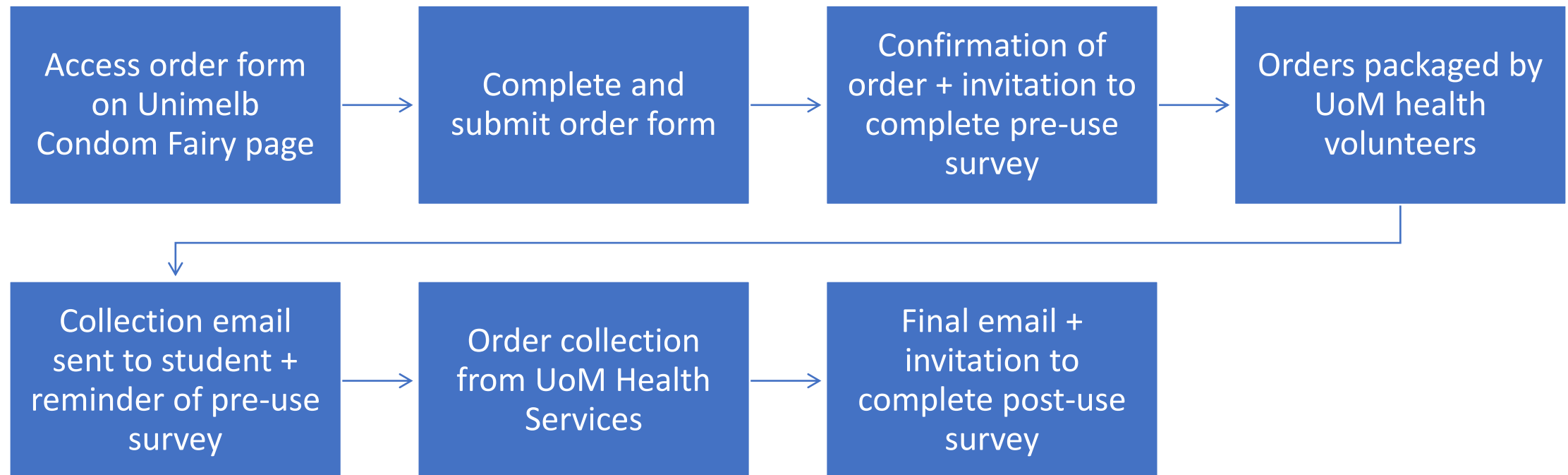
CHOOSING THE RIGHT LUBRICANT & PRODUCTS:

- Only use water- or silicone-based lubricants with latex condoms. Do not use Vaseline or baby oil!
- If you are allergic to latex, the Condom Fairy can provide non-latex supplies that are equally effective in preventing STIs and pregnancy.

For more information and resources, visit students.unimelb.edu.au/health/condom-fairy-program



Condom Fairy: ordering process



Condom fairy: evaluation

Aims of evaluation:

- To describe the effectiveness of the pilot at promoting safer sex practices
- To determine students' response to the program at UoM

Methods

- Pre-use survey (12 Qs)
 - Experience in accessing contraceptive and STI testing
 - Confidence in asking for sexual consent
 - Exposure to the program
- Post-use survey (13 Qs)
 - Experience with the program
 - Usage of products ordered
 - Barriers and facilitators to STI testing
 - Feedback on the program



Results

- 173 orders (166 students)
- Pre- use survey: 75 responses
- Post-use survey: 78 responses
- 4 themes:
 - Availability and access to contraception
 - Privacy and embarrassment
 - STI testing
 - Recommendations and comments

Table 1: Demographic profile of participants.

| Demographics | n | % |
|---------------------------|-----|---------|
| Gender | | |
| Male | 87 | 52.4 |
| Female | 74 | 44.6 |
| Non-binary | 2 | 1.2 |
| Trans | 1 | 0.6 |
| Prefer not to say | 2 | 1.2 |
| Age (years) | | |
| Average | 23 | (17-40) |
| Enrolment status | | |
| International | 98 | 59.04 |
| Domestic | 68 | 40.96 |
| Residential status | | |
| Off-campus | 147 | 88.6 |
| On-campus | 19 | 11.4 |

Availability and access to contraception



“You guys are doing a great thing...Besides the obvious that it’s free, ...convenient and anonymous...[it] makes the whole process so much easier and more comfortable and [I] will definitely ensure that my partner and I use contraception more often.”

“Very simple and easy to use service...Would be great for more students to know about the service!”

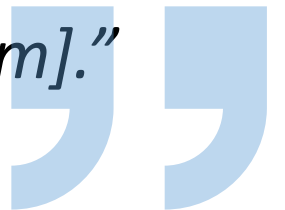


International students said...



“The main barrier for me is \$. As [a] sexually active international [student], buying condoms often can be pricey, and I have HIV, so I never have sex without them. Thank you so much for providing them!”

“This is a new thing for me to order condom online. As I am an international student, I am curious about the different sort of things [compared] with my country, and it seems interesting because I have seen many [contraceptive] options [through this program].”



Privacy and embarrassment

“Thank you so much for the condoms. It was embarrassing to go to a store and get judged....”

But...

“...It’s embarrassing to have your student ID seen and a potential breach of privacy.”

“...I recommended it to one of my friends and she said she wouldn’t opt for Condom Fairy because you have to give your student ID...”

STI testing

- Pre-use survey
 - Have never considered STI testing (31.2%)
 - Have thought about it (32.8%)
 - Have been tested (32.8%)
- Post-use survey: Are you more likely to get an STI test since the Condom Fairy?
 - True (33.8%)
 - Somewhat (47.3%)
 - Not true (18.9%)

Barriers and facilitators to STI testing

- 47.7% in post-use survey indicated that they have never been tested for STIs

| Barriers | Facilitators |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Did not think they have a STI• Did not think it necessary since they and their partners had not had any STIs before• Concerns about costs | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Doctor's recommendation• Having unprotected sex |

Recommendations and comments

- Off-campus collection, prefer on-campus
- Overall...
 - “Great initiative”
 - 85% said it made it easier to practise safer sex
 - Would recommend to peers



“...I [have] never heard of female condoms and this tissue thing [dental dams] before so I [have been doing] the oral part ‘unsafe’....”

“...this educational and informational program is really great...It is...a need nowadays to have an educational sort of way to tell people (especially young adults and teens) about safe and [consensual] sex.”



Sex and its taboo

“This is such an incredible initiative. I’m so...happy to see an initiative spreading awareness about sexual health and breaking down taboos regarding it.”

“This is really cool. I do think university is a time where a lot of people are exposed to this world [of sexual curiosity and exploration] and so a program like this really helps acknowledge and educate and makes us feel more normal.”

BUT...

A student commented that the word ‘condom’ can be sensitive and make some students uncomfortable





Where to from here?

Unimelb Safer Sex Program

- Upscale from pilot
- Launched on 22nd July 2019
- Semester long
- Readvertised on student portal
- Evaluation as part of my PhD
- Improved survey Qs + one-on-one interview