

Phase 3 of Duke's *Return to Campus* effort is in effect. Please visit [Duke United](#) for more information.

Sex and Contraception Among College and Graduate Students During COVID-19 (2020-2021)

This is a new project team for 2020-2021. The team will begin recruiting student team members on July 27. Students can apply using our [online application](#). The deadline to apply is July 31 at 11:59 p.m. ET.

Background

The COVID-19 pandemic has prompted many changes in daily life. Although most of the focus has been on changes related to large-scale social activities (e.g., work, school, shopping, dining out), it is likely that the pandemic has also affected sexual habits, activities and health practices, especially outside of stable partnerships, in ways that could affect both reproductive health and COVID-19 transmission.

For young adults pursuing post-high school education, cancellation of in-person classes, closure of many campuses and reduced access to in-person healthcare may put those who are sexually active at higher risk of unplanned pregnancy or STIs. There are existing racial and ethnic disparities within this group in terms of contraceptive access and use and STI incidence, which may be exacerbated by the racial and ethnic disparities in the impact of COVID-19. Understanding the ways in which these factors may interact has important health implications for both COVID-19 prevention and reproductive health.

Project Description

This project team will examine sexual activity, sexually transmitted infection (STI) awareness and prevention, and contraceptive use and access among undergraduate, graduate and professional students in North Carolina before and after the COVID-19

pandemic. The team will focus on young adults who are undergraduate and graduate students, including those at two- and four-year colleges and universities in the Triangle.

The team will utilize a survey through REDCap that will address elements such as demographic information, attitudes toward social distancing, pandemic-related anxiety, risk-taking behavior, sexual behavior pre- and post-pandemic and contraceptive use, and will use existing and validated measures when they are available. Team members will plan participant recruitment through social media advertising and campus-based email listservs.

Additionally, team members will conduct a needs assessment regarding sexual health access and information at local colleges and universities, including Duke, to inform dissemination and capacity-building around sexual education and contraceptive access. The team will examine ongoing student access to healthcare, financial stressors affecting healthcare and campus response and planning for future instruction.

Team members will also engage local campus groups to help ensure adequate representation among racial, ethnic, gender and sexual minorities.

Anticipated Outputs

Needs assessment regarding sexual health access during a pandemic at local two- and four-year colleges; academic publications; educational materials; conference presentations; data for future grant applications

Student Opportunities

Ideally, this team will include 2-3 graduate students and 5 undergraduate students with interests and/or background in Computer Science, Statistics, Gender, Sexuality & Feminist Studies, African & African American Studies, Psychology, Global Health and Public Policy. Undergraduate students with experience in health, data visualization and/or training in survey statistics are especially encouraged to apply. We are seeking a diverse team composition and students with a variety of perspectives that will help make the team's research relevant and inclusive of racial, ethnic, gender and sexual minorities.

At the project's onset, team members will identify specific project goals and delegate goals to different subgroups. Goals will be divided by semester with a focus in the fall on administration of the online survey and spring on analysis and local needs assessments. Students will be assigned to subgroups based on their experiences and interests, and each subgroup will be led by a graduate student and/or faculty member. Each subgroup will meet at least weekly and the whole team will meet at least biweekly so that each subgroup has the opportunity to present its progress and seek feedback. We will plan to have these meetings via videoconference call but can transition them to in-person when it is safe to do so.

Student team members will gain experience in survey design and administration, research subject recruitment and data analysis. Students will take ownership of developing an original data-driven intervention, from data collection to community stakeholder engagement to project implementation. These skills can benefit students in multiple fields of study, but this project will be an especially good learning experience for students interested in public health, gender equity, behavioral studies and/or technological innovation.

Graduate students will specifically benefit from opportunities to mentor undergraduate students on the project and lead educational sessions. In addition, both undergraduate and graduate students will have the opportunity to contribute meaningfully to publications and/or conference presentations on the project's findings. Finally, we anticipate graduate students will be able to use data in secondary analysis for their thesis work.

Timing

Fall 2020 – Spring 2021

Fall 2020: Finalize and adapt survey design; begin contraceptive needs assessments with Student Health at each college/university campus

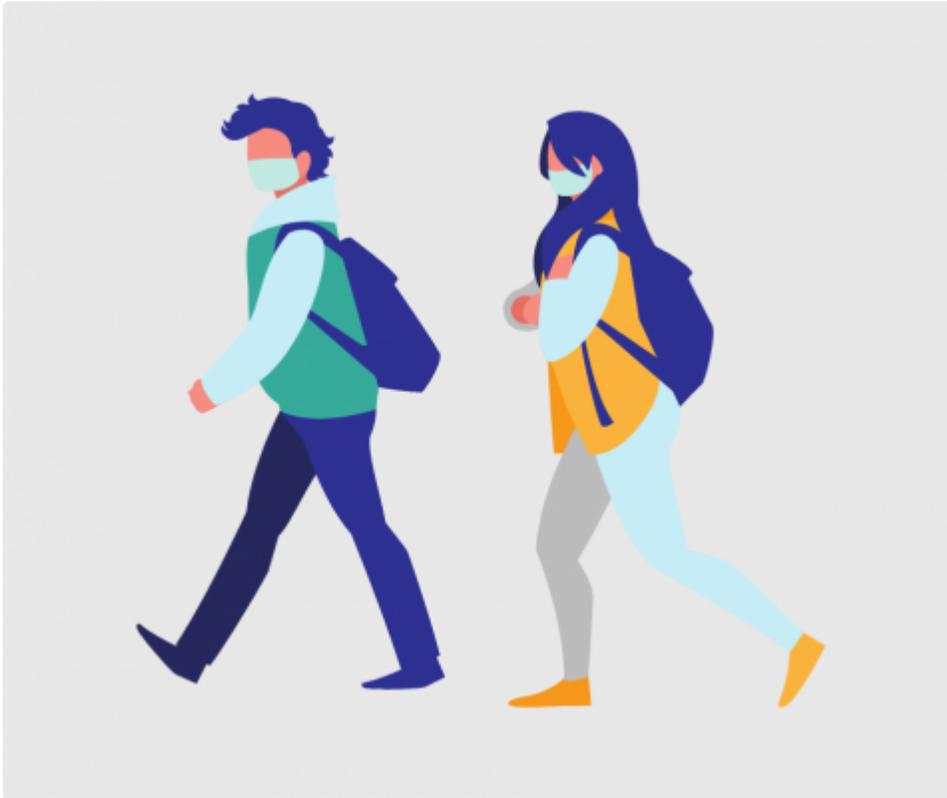
Spring 2021: Perform statistical analysis of survey results; develop education interventions based on results of contraceptive needs assessments

Crediting

Independent study credit available for fall and spring semesters

Apply Now

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Team Leaders

Keisha Bentley-Edwards, School of Medicine-Medicine: General Internal Medicine

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Graduate Team Members

Emily Chen, Medicine MD Second Year

Faculty/Staff Team Contributors

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