YOUNG & RESILIENT RESEARCH CENTRE

Y&R 2024 SEMINAR SERIES

17 September: Prof. Kath Albury

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Digital technologies for sexual and reproductive health – young adults' lived experience and lived expertise.



Digital and data practices present specific challenges for the fields of sexual healthcare provision and health promotion, intersecting with both social and commercial determinants of health. Young people aged 12-29 are framed as a 'priority population' within sexual health policies, and digital technologies seen as particularly important to this age-group. However, the majority of research into young people's sexual and reproductive health needs has focused on school-aged young people. This presentation draws on qualitative research with 'older' young people aged 18-29 (n=32), intended to inform the development of digital capability-building resources for the Australian sexual and reproductive health workforce. Participants shared the ways that they engaged with everyday digital cultures to support their sexual and reproductive health, but found it difficult to imagine how this information could best be utilised by health professionals. We subsequently facilitated a second round of activities with 18-29-year-olds currently employed in the sexual and reproductive health sectors (n=18). Participants offered feedback on resource design and content, from their dual perspectives as 'young person' and 'health professional'. Many were the only person under thirty in their organisation. These participants expressed frustration with managerial attitudes that dismissed digital practices as inherently 'risky', and the awkwardness of being positioned as a 'digital native/expert', regardless of actual training and expertise. These findings point to tensions between recognising 'lived experience' and 'lived expertise' in digital sexual health policy and practice, and suggest that the digital transformation of youth sexual and reproductive health is still a work-in-progress.

Biography

Kath Albury leads the ARC Future Fellowship project 'Digital and data capabilities for sexual health policy and practice', and co-leads the FORTE (Sweden) project 'Digital sexual health: Designing for safety, pleasure and wellbeing in LGBTQ+ communities'. Her recent co-authored books include Everyday Data Cultures (with Jean Burgess, Anthony McCosker and Rowan Wilken, Polity 2022) and Data for Social Good: Non-Profit Sector Data Projects (with Jane Farmer, Anthony McCosker and Amir Aryani, Palgrave Macmillan Open Access 2023).

17 September, 11.30am to 1:00pm

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