



# **“As many options as there are, there are just not enough for me”**

A qualitative analysis of contraceptive use  
and barriers to access among Australian women

Suzanne Dixon, Danielle Herbert  
Deborah Loxton & Jayne Lucke



- We know that contraceptive use and preferred methods change over time.
- A comprehensive life course perspective is lacking.
- What do adult women say about their contraceptive use throughout their reproductive lives?



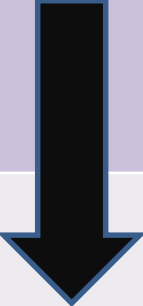
- Funded by Australian Government to inform women's health policy
- 40,000 women selected from Medicare database
- Postal self-report surveys completed every 3 years since 1996 by 3 age cohorts
- Recruiting new cohort of 18-23 year olds in 2013



***Have we missed anything?***

***If you have anything else you would like to tell us, please write on the lines below.  
You may also like to take a moment to check you have not  
missed any questions or pages.***

Thematic analysis  
of free-text comments  
from 690 women  
across 5 surveys

Theme	Survey Age	1 18-23	2 22-27	3 25-30	4 28-33	5 31-36
						

Theme	Survey Age	1 18-23	2 22-27	3 25-30	4 28-33	5 31-36
Side effects						

Theme	Survey Age	1 18-23	2 22-27	3 25-30	4 28-33	5 31-36
-------	------------	------------	------------	------------	------------	------------

## Side effects

“I have tried Depo-Provera numerous times but it leaves me with bleeding for three months at a time. This is a major stress factor in my life...as many options as there are, there are just not enough for me”

*(Survey 2; aged 24; major city; birth, miscarriage and abortion)*

<b>Theme</b>	<b>Survey Age</b>	<b>1 18-23</b>	<b>2 22-27</b>	<b>3 25-30</b>	<b>4 28-33</b>	<b>5 31-36</b>
Side effects						
Lack of information						



Theme	Survey Age	1 18-23	2 22-27	3 25-30	4 28-33	5 31-36
Side effects						
Lack of information						
<p><i>Survey 1; aged 19; inner regional area; never pregnant</i></p>						

“I think the youth of today are struggling severely with lack of knowledge especially in the pregnancy area...Most of us know nothing about the checks we're supposed to be having, and are too scared to ask the family doctor because in our area out west, the male doctors lecture the girls going on the pill - but the result is pregnancy.”

<b>Theme</b>	<b>Survey Age</b>	<b>1 18-23</b>	<b>2 22-27</b>	<b>3 25-30</b>	<b>4 28-33</b>	<b>5 31-36</b>
Side effects						
Lack of information						
Negative experiences						

Theme	Survey Age	1 18-23	2 22-27	3 25-30	4 28-33	5 31-36
Side effects						
Lack of information						
Negative experiences						
<p><i>Survey 2; aged 24; major city; never pregnant</i></p>						

“I have found the attitude to women’s health problems poor. My doctor rarely listens to my problem and simply prescribes me different contraceptive pills. The result has been discomfort affecting my sexual relationship and willingness to keep returning”

Theme	Survey Age	1 18-23	2 22-27	3 25-30	4 28-33	5 31-36
Side effects						
Lack of information						
Negative experiences						
<p><i>Survey 4; aged 31; inner regional area; never pregnant</i></p>						

“I went to get a pill prescription – he gave me a script for an out-of-date product. I couldn’t get in to see him again and spoke to an ‘emergency doctor’ at the hospital. He was very rude and wouldn’t accept I needed an urgent script as I was going interstate for a week”

<b>Theme</b>	<b>Survey Age</b>	<b>1 18-23</b>	<b>2 22-27</b>	<b>3 25-30</b>	<b>4 28-33</b>	<b>5 31-36</b>
Side effects						
Lack of information						
Negative experiences						
<b>Contraceptive failure</b>						

Theme	Survey Age	1 18-23	2 22-27	3 25-30	4 28-33	5 31-36
Side effects						
Lack of information						
Negative experiences						
Contraceptive failure						
<p><i>Survey 3; aged 27; remote area; birth and abortion</i></p>						

“I had the implant for 10 months and had continual bleeding. The Implanon was removed and 3 weeks later I had failure of barrier contraception. I took the morning after pill but it failed. Two weeks ago today I had a termination.”

Theme	Survey Age	1 18-23	2 22-27	3 25-30	4 28-33	5 31-36
Side effects						
Lack of information						
Negative experiences						
Contraceptive failure						

“Two years ago I had tubal ligation done. About six weeks after having it done I found out I was pregnant...Now I need to use condoms just in case another surprise pops out.”

*Survey 5; aged 35; major city; birth and miscarriage*

<b>Theme</b>	<b>Survey Age</b>	<b>1 18-23</b>	<b>2 22-27</b>	<b>3 25-30</b>	<b>4 28-33</b>	<b>5 31-36</b>
Side effects						
Lack of information						
Negative experiences						
Contraceptive failure						
Difficulty with access						



Theme	Survey Age	1 18-23	2 22-27	3 25-30	4 28-33	5 31-36
Side effects						
Lack of information						
Negative experiences						
Contraceptive failure						
Difficulty with access						

“I was on the pill but am unable to get a new prescription until I go for a Pap smear”

*Survey 1, aged 20; inner regional; never pregnant*

Theme	Survey Age	1 18-23	2 22-27	3 25-30	4 28-33	5 31-36
Side effects						
Lack of information						
Negative experiences						
Contraceptive failure						
Difficulty with access						

“I had to make 4 phone calls to get a doctor that would see me in my area. I eventually had to pay a ridiculous amount to get a repeat pill prescription because I was unable to find a doctor that bulk-billed”.

*Survey 3, aged 25; major city; never pregnant*

<b>Theme</b>	<b>Survey Age</b>	<b>1 18-23</b>	<b>2 22-27</b>	<b>3 25-30</b>	<b>4 28-33</b>	<b>5 31-36</b>
Side effects						
Lack of information						
Negative experiences						
Contraceptive failure						
Difficulty with access						

# In conclusion

**Side effects**



Lack of information

Negative experiences

**Contraceptive failure**



Difficulty with access

Important impact  
on women's  
mental and  
physical health

# In conclusion

Side effects

**Lack of  
information**

**Negative  
experiences**

Contraceptive  
failure

**Difficulty with  
access**

**Barriers to effective  
contraception  
continue throughout  
women's  
reproductive lives**

<http://www.alsw.org.au/survey>



australian longitudinal study on women's health

**Be the voice of your generation!**

**If you are:**

- Female
- Aged 18-23

and have a Medicare card  
number and live in Australia,  
Please do the survey!

**Click *HERE* to  
complete the  
survey!!**