

# SUMMER RESEARCH 2024/25

## PROJECT ABSTRACT



THE UNIVERSITY OF  
**WAIKATO**  
*Te Whare Wānanga o Waikato*

### PROJECT # 45

<b>SUPERVISOR/S:</b>	Associate Professor Victoria Egli & Dr Callie Vanderweile
<b>PROJECT TITLE:</b>	Understanding Intimate Health in Public Spaces: Social Media and Sexual and Reproductive Health in Aotearoa
<b>FIELD:</b>	Health/Public Health
<b>DIVISION/SCHOOL:</b>	HECS - Te Huataki Waiora School of Health
<b>PROJECT LOCATION:</b>	Hamilton

#### PROJECT ABSTRACT:

This project aims to understand how women in Aotearoa, New Zealand, use social media for sexual/reproductive health support. The physical distancing implemented during the COVID-19 pandemic created ideal conditions for social media to become an important communicative tool for health information and support (Tsao et al., 2021). A more comprehensive understanding of how individuals connect with one another and access information about intimate health in online spaces is essential as social media continues to play an extensive role in the accessing of health information (Clark et al., 2018).

This summer research project will allow a summer scholar to work with academics across the health and social sciences, presenting an opportunity for experience in transdisciplinary research. The project investigates how women in Aotearoa use social media to seek intimate health support and information, to understand how online information may be evaluated by those seeking it, and how social engagement and anonymity affect healthcare access in physical and online spaces.

Clark, J. L., Algoe, S. B., & Green, M. C. (2018). Social network sites and well-being: The role of social connection. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 27(1), 32-37.

Tsao, S.-F., Chen, H., Tisseverasinghe, T., Yang, Y., Li, L., & Butt, Z. A. (2021). What social media told us in the time of COVID-19: a scoping review. *The Lancet Digital Health*, 3(3), e175-e194.

#### STUDENT SKILLS:

- Ability to think critically and undertake critical appraisal of information from a variety of sources.
- Graduate or near-graduate level academic writing skills, including APA 7th referencing.
- Independent time management
- An excellent team player and a willingness to be part of a multi-disciplinary team
- (Please note this project already has Human Ethics approval and data collection is already under way)

#### PROJECT TASKS:

1. The student will undertake a narrative literature review on sexual and reproductive health and the role of social media in health communication in Aotearoa New Zealand.
2. The student will analyze open-ended survey responses using thematic analysis.
3. The student will write up the methods of analysis and the results found.
4. The student will work with the wider project team to determine the implications of the results found and then write these up in a final research poster.
5. The student will draft a paper for publication with the help of the wider research team. It is anticipated this will be submitted to *The Australian and New Zealand Journal of Public Health* [IF 3.5] a Q1 journal in the first instance.
6. The student will work with A/P Egli to jointly prepare a presentation to the 2025 Goodfellow Symposium or like.
7. The student will be trained by team members in qualitative analysis of open-ended survey responses using NVivo.
8. The student will join a vibrant multi-disciplinary team including public health researchers, public policy experts and anthropologists spanning The University of Waikato, The University of Auckland and key stakeholder groups.

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**EXPECTED OUTCOMES:**

- Student's Research Poster (as per clause 6 of the [Scholarship regulations](#))
- An understanding of how women in Aotearoa New Zealand use social media for intimate health information and support with specific information for GPs, Nurse Practitioners and other healthcare providers, services, and organisations, on how social media may influence sexual and reproductive health seeking behavior.
- A summary of the potential utility of social media to promote/educate traditionally discriminated populations about sexual/reproductive health
- Joint contribution with AP Egli, a presentation at GP and Nurse Practitioner continuing medical education training
- A final research poster