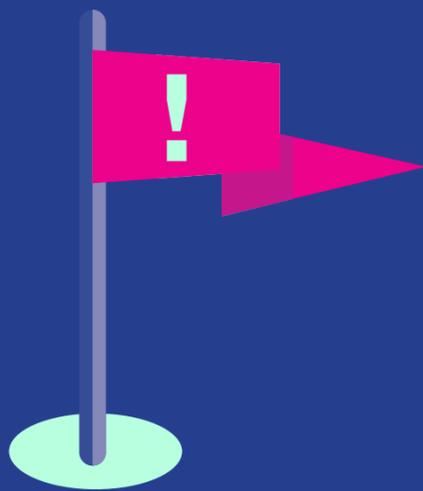


Malaysian Youth Sexual and Reproductive Health Survey

Unwrapping The Truth
About Malaysian Youth
And Their Attitudes
Towards Sex





We have a serious problem. We need to act.

Every day...



10
Malaysians
will discover
they have
HIV¹



45
teenage girls
will be giving
birth²



A girl or a woman
is being sexually
assaulted, every
35
minutes³

These are real issues concerning the sexual and reproductive health (SRH) of our young people. These numbers are not just statistics, they are real people with years ahead of them.

We hope that this study will trigger the much-needed conversations on improving SRH awareness amongst young Malaysians.

Clearly, there are opportunities to make a sustainable approach on this issue confronting our young people today.

Let's make a firm commitment towards addressing this issue and work together towards creating a platform that can help our young people make the right, informed decisions to protect themselves.

¹ Ministry of Health
Malaysia (2014)

² Ministry of Health
Malaysia (2015)

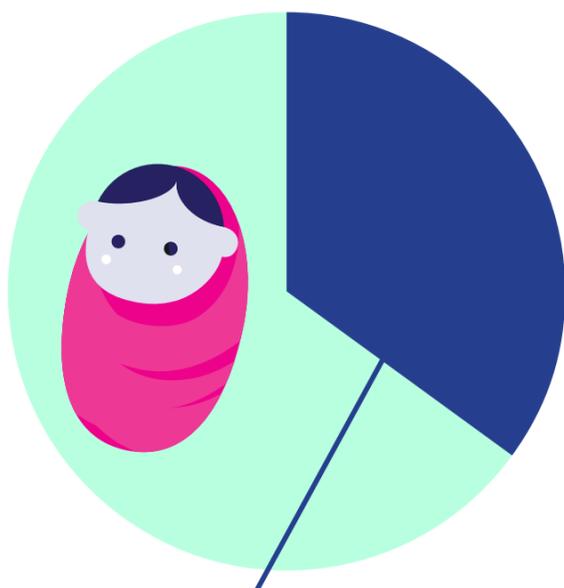
³ Women's Centre for
Change of Penang (2015)

Low levels of pregnancy knowledge

When it comes to experimenting with sex, young Malaysians do not know how to prevent unplanned pregnancies!

1 out of 10 young Malaysians said that washing a female's vagina (douching) with liquid after sex and another 42% believed that withdrawal (pulling-out before ejaculation) were effective methods to prevent pregnancy. 36% were unsure whether standing up during sex will prevent pregnancy.

Fact: All three methods above are not as effective as abstinence or the correct and consistent use of condoms as fluid is released even before ejaculation. It takes just one sperm to get pregnant.



35% did not believe that a woman will get pregnant the first time she engaged in sex.

“Some of my friends didn't even know they can get pregnant by having sex”

Female, 25, Kelantan

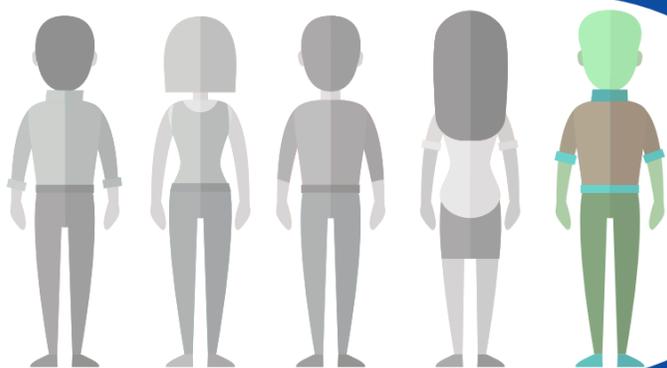
51% did not know a woman can get pregnant during her period. A greater percentage of females (71%) compared to males (61%) responded incorrectly.

Fact: Women can get pregnant if sex occurs during her fertile windows. If their cycle is shorter, say between 12-24 days, then they could ovulate earlier in the cycle, and if they've had sexual intimacy just before, the chances of conceiving is higher as sperms can live inside the body for up to five days.



Not sure how to protect themselves...

As we do not openly talk about the available methods of contraception, knowledge is severely lacking among young Malaysians.



1 out of 5

young Malaysians thought using two condoms at the same time is better than one.

Fact: Due to the friction that will occur during sex between the two condoms, this increases the likelihood of the condoms breaking. One condom is sufficient, as it provides up to 99% effectiveness against unplanned pregnancies and STIs through careful use.

“Sex education is a sensitive topic in Malaysia and it is not discussed openly. This is the problem.”

Male, 19, Selangor



25% believed that protection is not required, so long as there's mutual trust between partners.

Fact: This is not an issue on trust, but on being safe. Young people must be aware of the various methods to protect themselves against STIs and unplanned pregnancies.

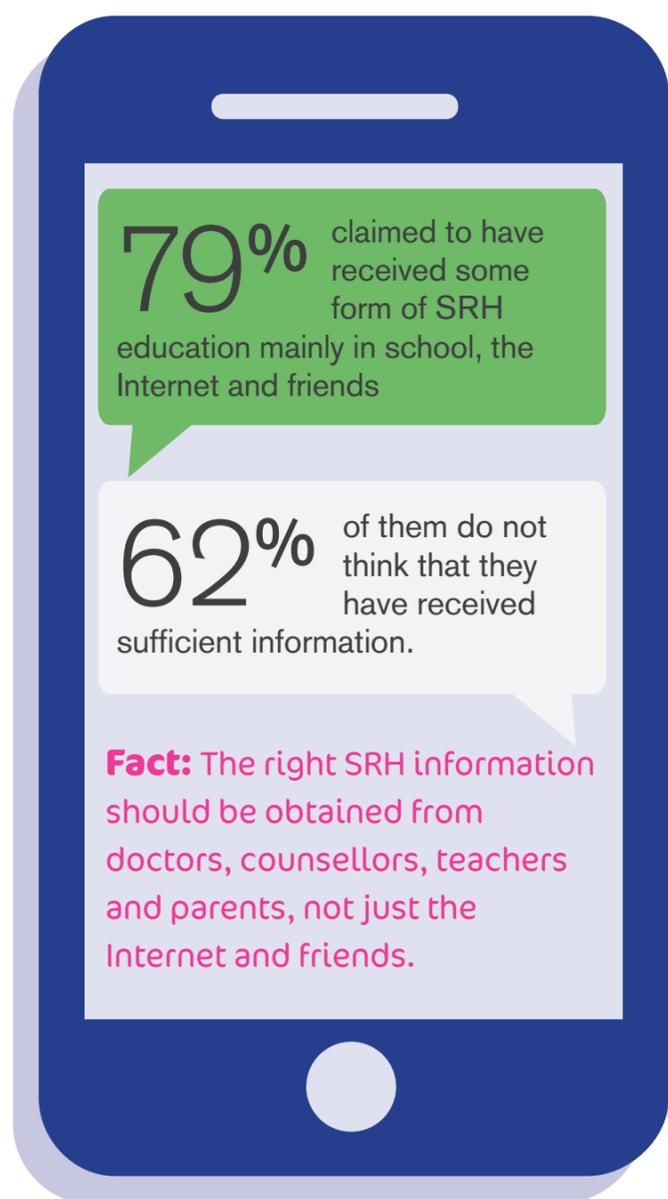
While 79% of the youths have seen a condom before and 93% of young Malaysians were aware of birth control pills, they have little knowledge on other forms of contraceptives such as Intra-Uterine Device (IUD), spermicides, injections, emergency pills and more.



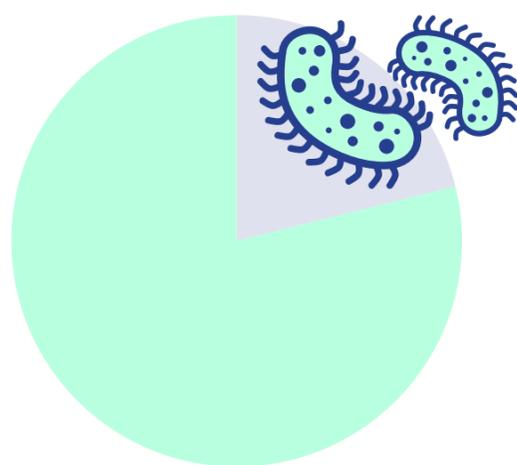
Fact: Knowledge is a primary defence against STIs and unplanned pregnancies.

Insufficient information...

Young Malaysians feel that they have not received sufficient, factually-correct information on SRH.

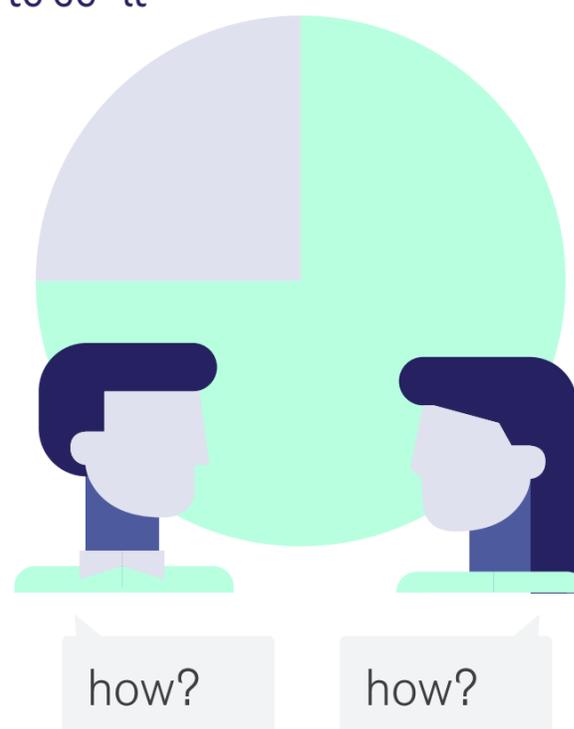


While 79% of young Malaysians are aware of STIs, their knowledge and understanding are limited. Many are unaware of any other STIs apart from HIV.



Fact: STI awareness needs to be heightened as some of the infections can be life threatening. With the right knowledge, they can protect themselves and others and have a better life in the future.

25% of young Malaysians believed that SRH education teaches them how to do "it"



Fact: The right SRH knowledge will help them understand their bodies, protect themselves, have healthy relationships and make responsible choices. It does not teach them about how to have sex safely.

“SRH education is necessary among young people to ensure they get the information from the right sources”

Female, 21, Johor

Rape myths are prevalent

More needs to be done to educate young Malaysians on gender and relationships

82% incorrectly believed that rape happens because of the perpetrators' uncontrolled sexual urges.



Fact: Rape is act of violence and often a premeditated crime. It is an act of power and control as perpetrators take away the control of victims in a sexual situation.¹

“Many teenage girls are having sex before marriage because they do not know how to say no, or how they should react when pressured.”

Female, 24, Selangor



56% believed that rape will more likely happen to those clad in sexually arousing clothes. Out of this, 53% of the males and 58% of the females agreed with this notion!

Fact: This way of thinking only seeks to shift the blame and responsibility to the victims, and not the perpetrator. No one is to be blamed by the way they look, the clothes they wear or what they were doing. The crime is the perpetrator's fault, not the victims. A mind-set shift is needed.

¹ World Health Organisation, Violence Against Women (2016)

Unaware of their rights

Youngs Malaysians are unclear on the importance of consent



While **60%** of the youth are aware that consent needs to be given before sex, another **34%** of young Malaysians do not seem to realise its importance.

Fact: Consent is a voluntary agreement between two parties to do certain things on their own free will. Every individual has a right to make a choice about sex and relationships. No means No, Stop means Stop!

“Having sex for the first time at 14 was the biggest mistake of my life. He ended the relationship 2 weeks later and said ‘I was too young’. I was left broken, ugly, dirty and angry

Female, 22, KL



More than half of the sexually active young Malaysians said that their first sex was unexpected or unplanned.

Fact: Having sex is an important decision. It requires thinking with a clear mind, and knowing the repercussions. When in doubt, young people must say no.

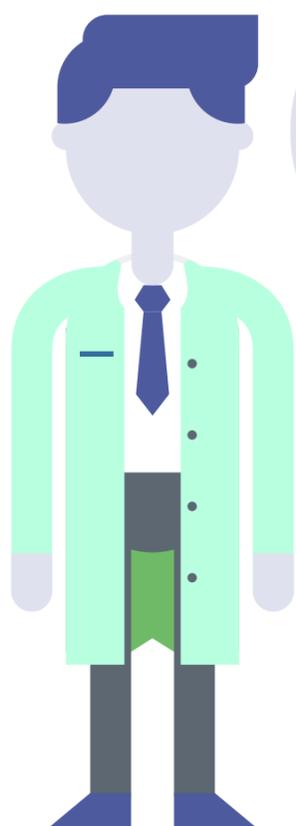
Fear of shame...

Social stigma and shame relating to STIs remain among young Malaysians.



1 out of 10 Malaysians would not get tested and treated even if they have been exposed to STI risks as it is “shameful”.

Fact: This mentality would prevent those at risk from coming forward to seek much-needed medical help. Everyone must get tested to avoid later health complications or infecting others.



1 out of 10 Malaysians thought that HIV can be cured.

Fact: No cure has yet been found for HIV. However, there are treatments to enable people living with HIV to have a long and healthy life. Therefore, it is important to get tested early if you are at risk of HIV, or any other STIs.

“My uncle did not know he was HIV positive until he was hospitalised following a serious illness. He passed away a week later. He lives in a village only 20 minutes from the city. But he was not educated and there are no awareness programme in the village.”

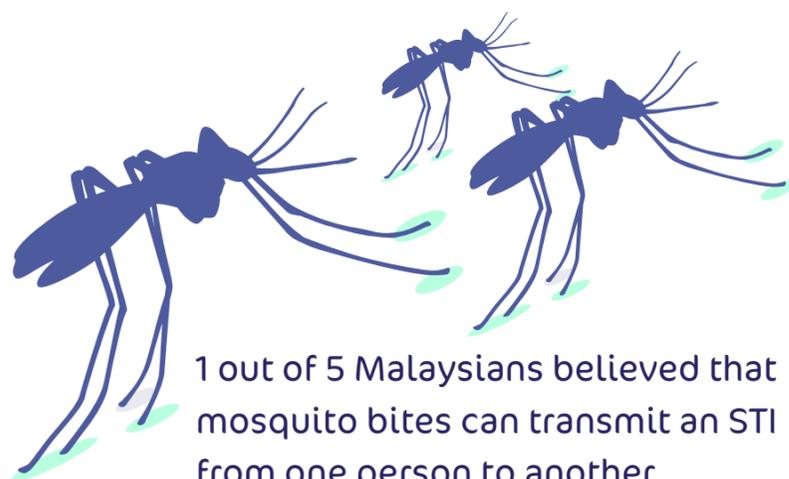
Female, 28, Sabah



31%

said a person living with an STI, including HIV always looks extremely thin or unhealthy.

Fact: This is not true. People come in all shapes and sizes and the only way to know is to get tested.



1 out of 5 Malaysians believed that mosquito bites can transmit an STI from one person to another.

Fact: Mosquitoes cannot transmit HIV.¹

¹ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, HIV Transmission

We can do something about this...

Let's empower positive thinking among young Malaysians. We have the responsibility to address these issues. It is our mission to see young people develop healthy relationships and make informed choices in their lives.

Let's start the Conversations...

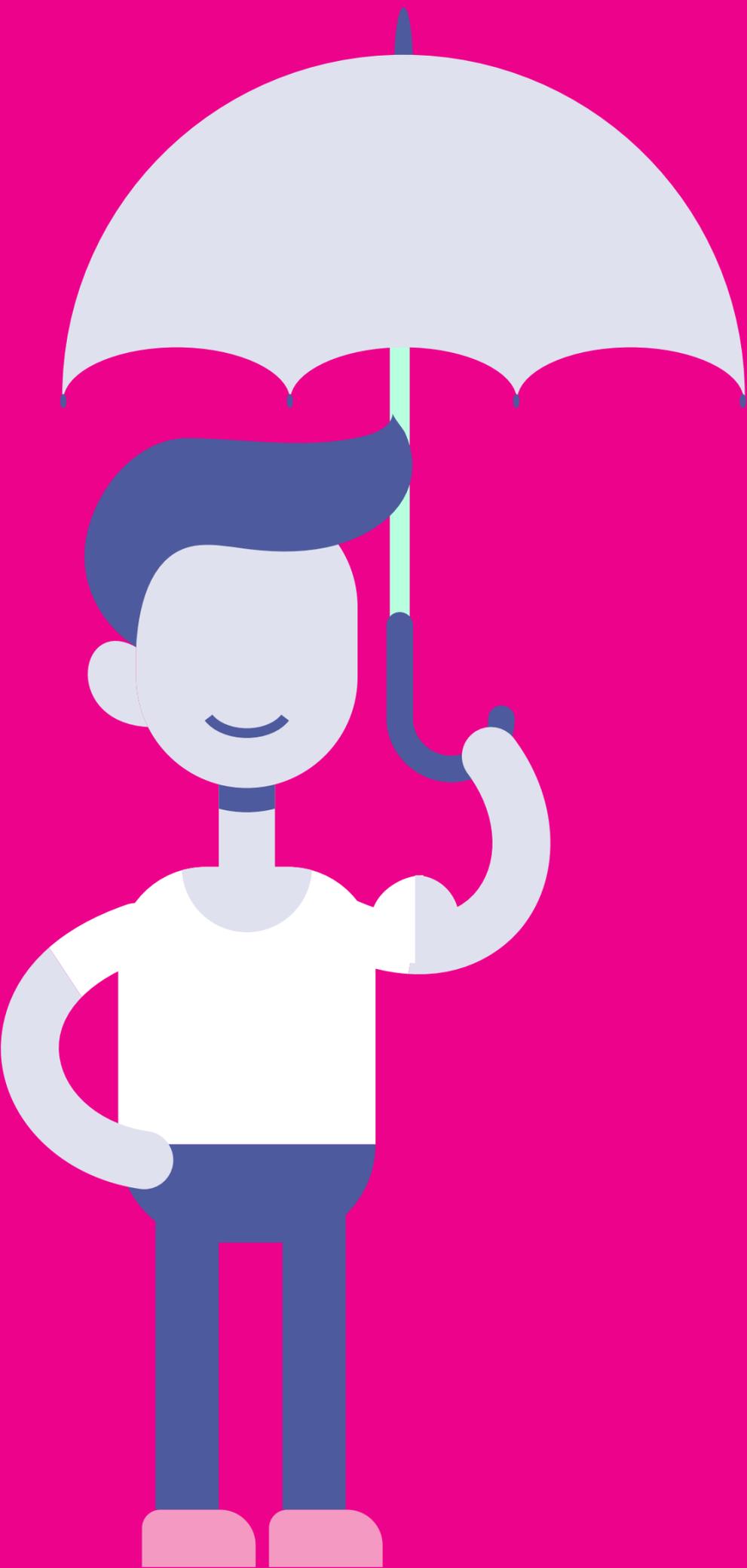
It's much easier to brush aside an issue and turn a blind eye, but communication is very important! Encourage young people to talk about it with medical professionals, counsellors or family members. Having an open and honest discussion about SRH is necessary to safeguard everyone's health.

“Human beings are sexual beings. It is natural for youth to get curious. Education will help them to make informed choices in life”

Female, 28, Negeri Sembilan

Boost knowledge with culturally sensitive and age-appropriate information





Young people should be equipped with culturally sensitive and age-appropriate SRH information. Teach them to verify SRH facts with medical professionals first, and never believe everything on the Internet.

Encourage respect for themselves and their bodies

Each individual must understand how their bodies function, and the risks faced. They must be responsible for the choices they make. Do not allow them to be influenced by peer pressure, myths and misconceptions touted by people who seem to know it all.

Empowerment and Rights

Every country in the world has rules and laws when it comes to sex – and they are there to protect everyone. Regardless of the circumstances, everyone has a choice. No one has the right to force anyone into sex or other activities against their will, or use violence, manipulation or other ways to pressure any individual.

Always Choose to Protect

With the right knowledge, they will then be able to make responsible choices that protect them from the risks of unprotected sex. While abstinence and staying faithful remains the best forms of prevention, using condoms correctly and consistently are also effective forms of protection for sexually active couples.

About the study

This study involved 1,071 young Malaysians nationwide via a survey which was conducted by Perspective Strategies Sdn Bhd between June and October 2015.

For more information about the Malaysian Youth SRH Survey, please visit www.durex.com.my

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