

## **INFORMATION SHEET**

### **Project Title: An examination of sexual and reproductive health experiences during COVID-19 in South Africa**

#### **What is this study about?**

This is a research project being conducted by Lucia Knight at the University of the Western Cape and Simukai Shamu of the Foundation for Professional Development in collaboration with the University of the Witwatersrand. We are inviting you to participate in this research project because you are living in South Africa and are over 18 years old. The purpose of this research project is to investigate how the social distancing measures during COVID-19 have affected your family situation, relationships, and your access to sexual and reproductive health services. The results of this study will contribute to the development of recommendations that intend to limit the negative consequences of these measures as much as possible.

#### **What will I be asked to do if I agree to participate?**

You will be asked to answer questions regarding your experience of the social distancing measures during COVID-19 with this online survey to the best of your ability and memory. This survey is expected to take 5-20 minutes. The question topics include: compliance with social distancing measures, family relationships, sexual behaviour, access to contraceptives, access to health services, mental health, nutrition, menstrual health, and circumcision.

#### **Would my participation in this study be kept confidential?**

The researchers undertake to protect your identity and the nature of your contribution. To ensure your anonymity, the surveys are anonymous and will not contain information that may personally identify you. To further ensure your confidentiality, we will store all data on a password-protected service that only the lead researchers will be able to access. Ensuring confidentiality, however, implies that it will not be possible to change, look at or delete your data afterwards. If we write a report or article about this research project, your identity will be protected.

#### **What are the risks of this research?**

There may be some minimal risks from participating in this research study. Some of the questions in this survey are about sensitive topics that may lead to feelings of discomfort and embarrassment. Where necessary, an appropriate referral will be made to a suitable professional for further assistance or intervention.

#### **What are the benefits of this research?**

This research is not designed to help you personally, but the results may help the investigator learn more about sexual and reproductive health experiences during COVID-19. We hope that, in the future, other people might benefit from this study through improved understanding of how social distancing measures affect these experiences and minimize any negative consequences.

#### **Do I have to be in this research and may I stop participating at any time?**

Your participation in this research is completely voluntary. You may choose not to take part at all. If you decide to participate in this research, you may stop participating at any time and choose to leave out any questions you prefer not to answer. If you decide not to participate in

this study or if you stop participating at any time, you will not be penalized or lose any benefits to which you otherwise qualify.

### **What if I have questions?**

This research is being conducted by Lucia Knight at the University of the Western Cape and Simukai Shamu of the Foundation for Professional Development. If you have any questions about the research study itself, please contact Simukai Shamu at: [simukais@foundation.co.za](mailto:simukais@foundation.co.za)

Should you have any questions regarding this study and your rights as a research participant or if you wish to report any problems you have experienced related to the study, please contact:

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This research has been approved by the University of the Western Cape's Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee.

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REFERENCE NUMBER: HS20/6/2

## Informed consent

Select a response to each of the following;

I understand the purpose of this study Yes  No

I grant permission for the data generated from this study to be used for the research objectives of the study, even if I do not fully complete the survey. Yes   
No

I understand that information collected through this survey will be treated confidentially Yes  No

I understand that I can stop participating at any moment in time without any penalty or loss of perceived benefits Yes  No

I agree to take part in this survey Yes  No

I am 18 years or older Yes  No

By ticking this box, I agree with the above mentioned, give my consent and wish to participate in the study Yes  No