



# In[ter]view: SHINE SA

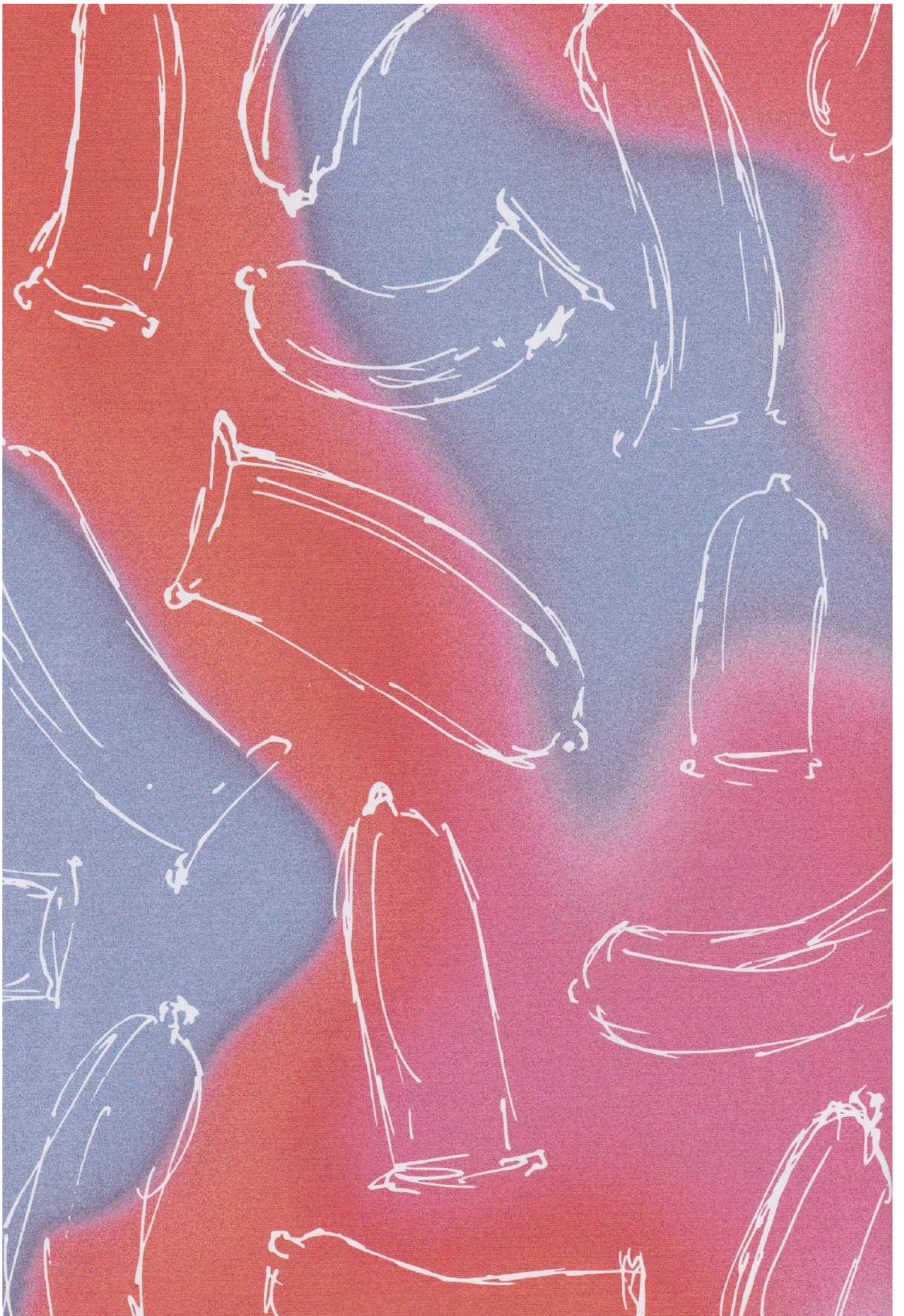


Interview conducted by Jesse Neill

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Jesse Neill spoke with SHINE SA's Amy Moten, one of Australia's leading not-for-profit providers of education and primary care services surrounding sexual and relationship wellbeing asking various questions students may have regarding their own sexual health.





### **What does SHINE SA do and what is your role?**

SHINE SA is a key sexual health agency in South Australia. It provides individuals and communities with services and information to improve their sexual health so they can enjoy their relationships with safety, pleasure and respect.

My role as a medical educator is to educate other health professionals to enable them to provide sexual and reproductive health services to the community.

Clinical services at SHINE SA include STI testing and management, contraception services, pregnancy testing and referral, and vaccinations for hepatitis A, B and HPV, which are free for eligible people

### **What is an STD/STI and what is the difference between the two?**

Sexually Transmitted Disease (STD) is the old term for Sexually Transmitted Infection (STI). While it is important you be tested and treated if you have any chance of an STI, not all infections cause "disease". Using the term STI reduces some of the previous shame and stigma which came with using the term STD. What ever you call it, reduce your risk by using safer sex and have regular testing.

### **How many young people have STIs?**

People under 30 who are sexually active have the highest risk of getting an STI. In SA there are close to 6000 cases of chlamydia diagnosed each year, and around 80% of these are in people under 30. The rates of chlamydia and gonorrhoea are increasing every year.

### **What are the symptoms of common STIs?**

Symptoms of STIs can include pain when urinating, discharge from the penis or vagina, anal pain, pain in the lower abdomen, bleeding during or after sex and bleeding between periods. Up to 70 per cent of people with chlamydia, which is the most common STI, have no symptoms. That's why using condoms, and regular testing is important, even if you don't have any of these symptoms.

### **Can people catch an STI from mutual masturbation, anal or oral sex?**

Yes. Some STIs can be transmitted through bodily fluids and skin to skin contact. These include chlamydia, gonorrhoea, syphilis, herpes and genital warts. HIV and Hepatitis B can't be transmitted through these types of sex.

### **Is there a link between cold sores and herpes? Could I catch an STI from kissing?**

Cold sores are caused by the herpes simplex virus, most commonly herpes simplex virus type 1 (HSV 1). Although HSV 1 can be transmitted by kissing, most people get exposed to HSV as a child, and many people who've been exposed to HSV 1 never get cold sores. The type of HSV that causes genital herpes doesn't usually cause cold sores, but if someone with a cold sore gives oral sex it can occasionally cause genital herpes. If you have a cold sore you should avoid kissing or giving oral sex until it has healed.

### **Can I get an STI more than once?**

You can get STIs such as chlamydia or gonorrhoea with repeat exposure, even if you've been treated. That's why it's important to make sure you don't have sex with any partners who also might have been exposed until both of you have been treated, for at least 7 days after treatment. Any new sexual partners can also give you an STI even if you've been treated before. You can get a test of re-infection after 3 months and with every new sexual partner.

### **Is it possible to catch an STI from a toilet seat?**

No. Just no!

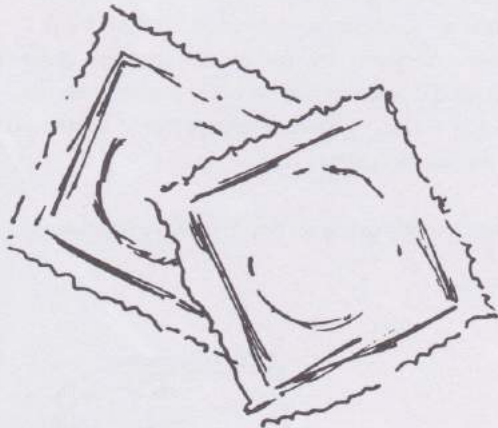


### **Can common STIs be treated and cured?**

Yes, common STIs such as chlamydia and gonorrhoea can be treated with antibiotics. Unfortunately the antibiotics we use for these STIs are losing their effectiveness. There have been 2 cases of multi resistant gonorrhoea recently detected in Australia and there has been an increase in drug resistant gonorrhoea worldwide. If you do need antibiotics for an STI it's important to make sure you finish all the tablets and have any follow up tests that are recommended.

### **Do any genders have a greater risk of contracting an STI compared to others?**

STIs don't discriminate. Anyone can get an STI regardless of their gender, sexuality or sexual orientation.



### **Who should get a test?**

Routine STI screening is recommended for any new sexual contact, or if your partner has had a new sexual contact. You should also be tested if you or your partner develop symptoms of an STI, or if you know a recent partner has had an STI. You should be tested every 3 months if you have new or multiple sexual partners but anyone under the age of 30 should have at least 1 STI test per year.

### **Where do I go to get tested and can I do this anonymously?**

You can get a test at your GP, at any SHINE SA clinic and Adelaide Sexual Health Centre at 275 North Terrace, Adelaide. Your Medicare records are anonymous but it's a good idea to get your own Medicare card once you turn 15. If you are aged between 14 and 17 and have an online My Health Record you should apply to have control of this record yourself.



### **What could happen to an STI that goes untreated?**

STIs such as chlamydia and gonorrhoea can infect the reproductive organs and can lead to infertility, chronic pelvic pain and increase the risk of ectopic pregnancy. Untreated hepatitis B can cause severe damage to the liver.

### **Should you tell your sexual partners if you have an STI before engaging in any type of sex? Is it illegal not to?**

You should take every reasonable precaution not to pass on an STI, such as using condoms.

Whether you disclose your personal health information is up to you. However getting tested and treated before you have sex is important to stop passing the infection to others and getting reinfected yourself. If you are diagnosed with an STI and need to tell other partners that they might have an STI you can tell them anonymously by SMS or email.

Anonymous partner notification sites are:

<http://www.letthemknow.org.au/>

<https://www.bettertoknow.org.au/>

<http://www.thedramadownunder.info/notify/>

### **How does sexual health affect relationships?**

Sexual health is a state of physical, mental and social well-being in relation to sexuality. It needs a positive and respectful approach to sexuality and sexual relationships, as well as the possibility of having pleasurable and safe sexual experiences, free of coercion, discrimination and violence. Sexual health contributes to healthy relationships and healthy relationships are an essential part of sexual well-being. ◊