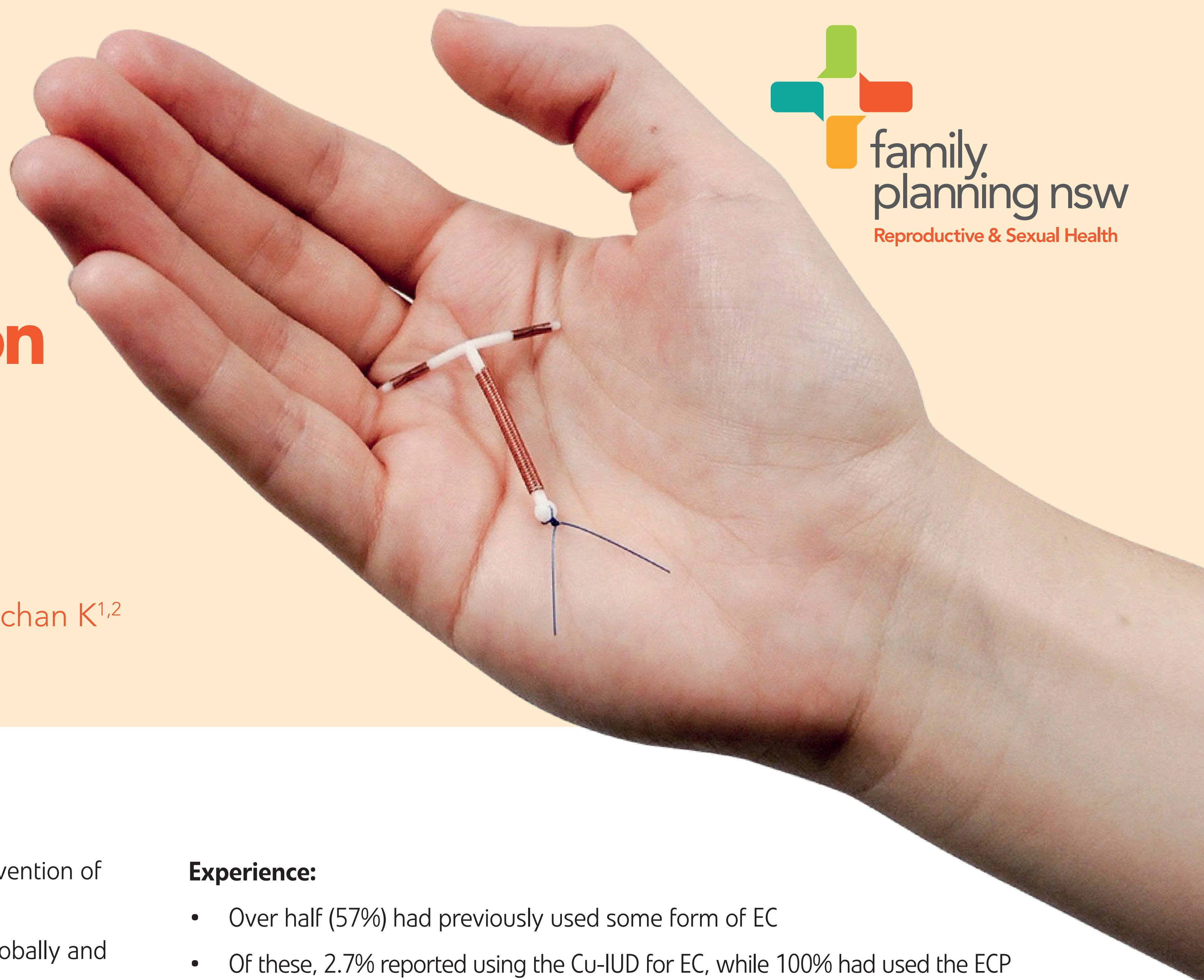


# Acceptability of the Copper Intrauterine Device as a form of Emergency Contraception for young people in Australia



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## Background

- Access to postcoital emergency contraception (EC) is important for the prevention of unintended pregnancy
- Use of EC, primarily the emergency contraceptive pill (ECP), is increasing globally and in Australia<sup>1,2</sup>
- The copper intrauterine device (Cu-IUD) is the most effective method of EC<sup>3</sup> and the only method that provides ongoing long-term contraception; however, it remains largely underutilised as a form of EC<sup>4</sup>

## Methods

A cross-sectional convenience study was undertaken to explore the knowledge and attitudes of clients of Family Planning NSW (FPNSW) regarding the Cu-IUD as a form of EC. A survey was conducted among clients between July-October 2018. Clients identifying as female or transgender male and living in Australia were eligible and invited via email. The survey explored previous experience with and knowledge of EC, and perceived barriers and enablers to the use of the Cu-IUD as EC. Data from young people aged 16-25 years are presented here.

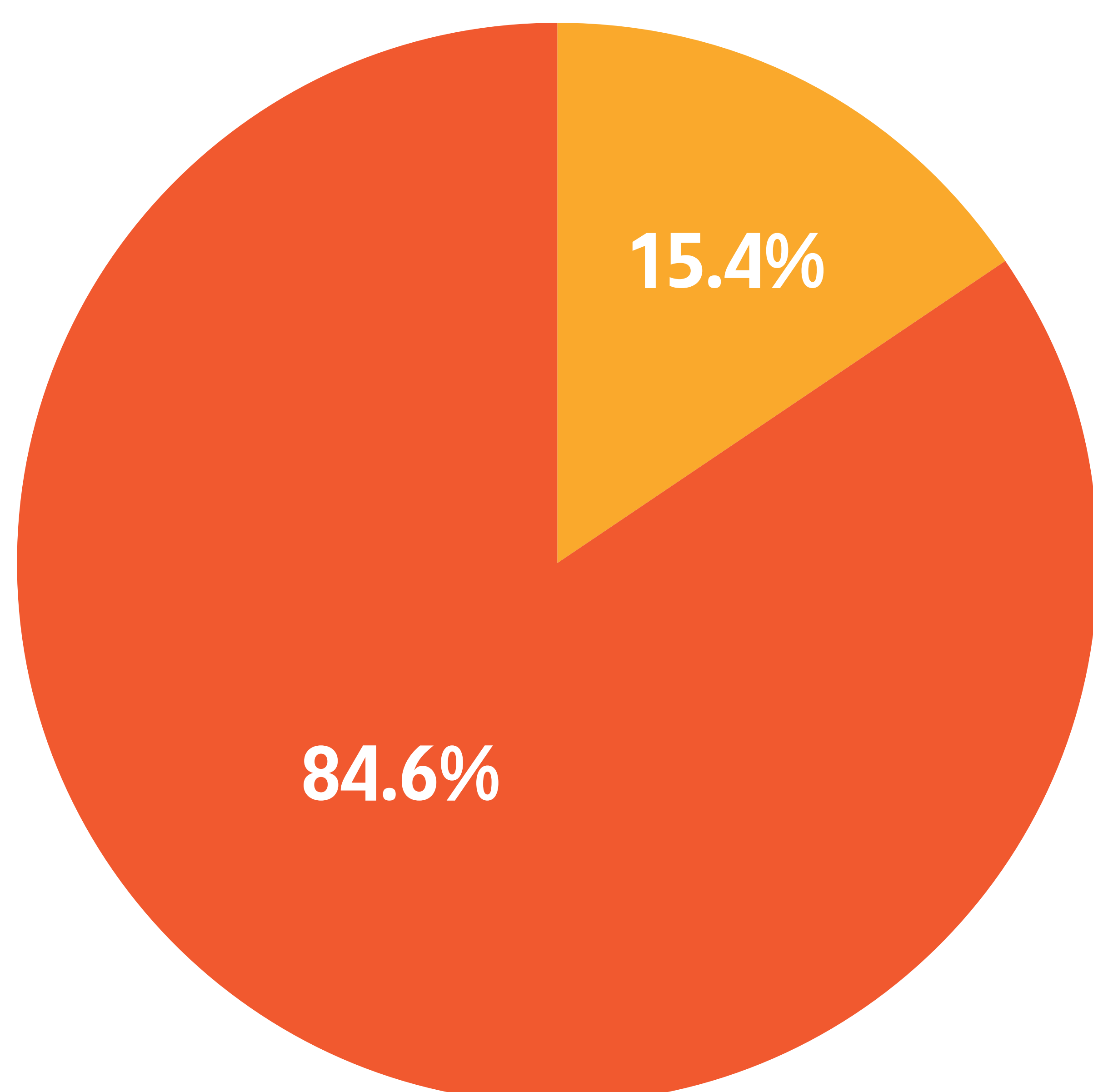
## Findings

- 123 young people (16-25 years) completed the survey in full

### Knowledge:

- 84.6% knew of some form of emergency contraception
- Of these, 96.4% knew of the ECP and only 9.1% were aware that the Cu-IUD was a form of EC
- Less than half (45%) knew that the ECP was effective beyond 24 hours of having unprotected intercourse

**85% of respondents knew of some form of Emergency Contraception**



### Experience:

- Over half (57%) had previously used some form of EC
- Of these, 2.7% reported using the Cu-IUD for EC, while 100% had used the ECP

### Preferences:

- When given information on effectiveness, possible side effects and costs of the Cu-IUD as EC, 47.9% reported they would consider the Cu-IUD as a form of EC.
- However, 45% also viewed potential side effects, time to access the Cu-IUD, and cost as barriers.

“I didn’t know copper IUD was available as emergency contraceptive”

“I didn’t know it existed before I did this survey and I’m glad that I now have another option to consider if I need to”

“I would consider it, especially considering the difference in effectiveness”

“Probably not (an option for me) as it’s very expensive for a young person. I might consider it if I was on a higher income (I’m on \$40K)”

## Conclusion

There is limited awareness of the Cu-IUD as a form of EC amongst young people in Australia. With greater knowledge of this option, young people may consider the Cu-IUD over the ECP. Emergency contraception, and all options available for this, should be included in school-based sexuality education. When raising awareness about the Cu-IUD as EC, it will also be important that processes are in place to ensure access and timely insertions.

## References

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