



Guest Lecture

'Diagnosed Late, Dismissed Often: The Hidden Realities of Contraceptive Care for Adults with ADHD'

By: Dr Bronwen Merner, Dr Jessica Moulton and Marthilda Christin Finsae

Friday, 21 November 2025
1:45pm to 4:00pm (Jakarta time)

Indonesian graduates and scholars of Australian tertiary institutions who are interested in attending this event, please RSVP by Wednesday, 19 November, via this link:

<http://oz.link/rsvpGL21NOV>

**Due to the limited availability of places, early registration is recommended. A link to this event will be shared with you after registration.*

Lecture overview

The lecture highlights a qualitative study examining how individuals with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) who have, or have had a uterus, make decisions about accessing and using contraception in Victoria, Australia. It seeks to understand the personal, social and systemic factors that shape their choices, challenges and experiences within healthcare settings.

ADHD has long been viewed through a male-centric lens, resulting in the underdiagnosis of women and people with a uterus. Traditional diagnostic criteria have prioritised hyperactive symptoms more commonly seen in males, overlooking presentations more typical in women. Although adult ADHD diagnoses now show greater gender balance, women continue to experience delayed diagnosis, reduced access to treatment and distinct reproductive health risks, including higher rates of premenstrual dysphoric disorder (PMDD) and a sixfold increased likelihood of depression when using oral hormonal contraceptives.

These issues are compounded by medical misogyny, which has historically dismissed and marginalised women's health concerns. Deep-rooted gender biases, traceable to ancient medical traditions, continue to shape healthcare practices and reinforce stereotypes about women's reasoning and credibility. For neurodivergent individuals, these barriers intersect with ADHD-related executive dysfunction and inadequate sex education, further limiting their ability to make informed contraceptive decisions.

Guided by a hermeneutic phenomenological approach, the study draws on in-depth, semi-structured interviews with 15–21 adults aged 18 and over, recruited through purposive sampling and analyses them thematically. By centring the voices and lived experiences of participants, the research aims to inform the development of more inclusive, accessible and context-responsive models of contraceptive care, particularly within sexual and reproductive health services that often overlook neurodivergent populations.

Ultimately, this lecture highlights how the intersecting factors of gender, neurodivergence and structural inequity shape reproductive decision-making, and invites reflection on what meaningful reform in policy and practice might look like.



Guest Lecture

Dr Bronwen Merner is a Senior Research Fellow in the Centre for Health Equity at The University of Melbourne and the Academic Convenor of the Hallmark Research Initiative in Reproductive Justice. In this role, she leads efforts to strengthen research and community capacity, advancing reproductive justice in Australia.

Since completing her PhD at La Trobe University in 2018, Dr Merner has developed expertise in community engagement in health research, evidence synthesis and ethically complex healthcare provision. From 2016 to 2021, she served as Managing Editor of Cochrane Consumers and Communication at La Trobe University and continues to hold a part-time appointment with the Centre for Health Communication and Participation at La Trobe.

With this breadth of experience, Dr Merner brings academic leadership, deep community engagement and a commitment to interdisciplinary collaboration to her work, positioning her as a key contributor to reproductive justice research at The University of Melbourne.



★ / **Dr Bronwen Merner**
Senior Research Fellow,
Centre for Health Equity
The University of Melbourne

Dr Jessica Moulton is a Postdoctoral Research Fellow in the Melbourne School of Population and Global Health at The University of Melbourne. Her research sits at the intersection of sexual and reproductive health and rights, structural inequity and health systems, with a focus on how gender and institutional power shape access to care and patient experiences. Dr Moulton currently leads participatory research examining reproductive justice and neurodivergence.

Dr Moulton completed her PhD at Monash University within the NHMRC SPHERE Centre of Research Excellence, where she co-designed a nurse-led model of care to improve access to medication abortion and contraception in rural and regional general practice. Dr Moulton also holds a Masters of Public Health from The University of Melbourne, specialising in gender and global health, and a Bachelor of Food and Nutrition Sciences from Deakin University.

Before joining The University of Melbourne, Dr Moulton worked in policy and service delivery across sexual and reproductive health and family violence. She contributed to statewide family violence workforce development reforms through the Victorian Department of Education and Training, following the Royal Commission into Family Violence, and worked in client services at MSI Australia, supporting the national delivery of sexual and reproductive healthcare.



★ / **Dr Jessica Moulton**
Postdoctoral Research Fellow
The University of Melbourne





Guest Lecture

Marthilda Christin Finsae earned her Midwifery degree from Universitas Sebelas Maret, Indonesia, and is a recipient of the LPDP Scholarship. She is currently completing a Masters of Public Health at The University of Melbourne, where she also serves as a Student Ambassador for the Faculty of Medicine, Dentistry and Health Sciences. In 2024, Marthilda and her team won first place in the Indo-Pacific Global Health Case Competition.

With a strong commitment to global health and interdisciplinary collaboration, Marthilda integrates her midwifery background with public health training to help improve health outcomes in Indonesia and across the Indo-Pacific region.



★ / **Marthilda Christin Finsae**
Masters Student
The University of Melbourne

