



# **Influences on contraceptive decision- making**

**Faculty of Wellbeing Education  
and Language Studies (WELS)**

Call for PhD projects starting in October 2024

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# Project description

## School

Health, Wellbeing and Social Care

## Members

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## Aim

The project aims to address a research gap by establishing novel interdisciplinary linkages between applied folklore and health. It addresses the broad question: How does vernacular knowledge influence contraceptive choices and mediate experiences of reproductive control?

## Description

The Reproductive Bodylore project, to which the PhD will be aligned, has two work packages and a dissemination strand.

Work package 1 was a qualitative secondary analysis of interview data from five different UK research studies on women's contraceptive use and experiences of

reproductive control undertaken by Victoria Newton and Lesley Hoggart between 2010 and 2016.

Work package 2 involved participatory research with 18 volunteer researchers who interviewed their friends and family about contraceptive knowledge and communication. During this work package we also shared emerging findings with clinicians to seek their feedback on implications for practice.

The dissemination strand of the product involved a large in-person public engagement exhibition in October 2023.

## **Contribution**

The Reproductive Bodylore project is a unique partnership between the OU, Public Health England and the Folklore Society. It is ground-breaking in that, for the first time, it brings together folklore studies and applied health research in the UK.

Vernacular beliefs, when contextualised, can reflect the histories, values and concerns or anxieties of a group or community. Research into vernacular knowledge about contraception can help address a knowledge gap in this area. Such overlooked perspectives can assist clinical understanding as to why certain contraceptive methods maybe accepted or rejected.

The Reproductive Bodylore project is currently in the dissemination phase but is located within a wider body of ongoing work on contraceptive choices. Our future plans include further participatory research into effective contraceptive

consultations, with support from the Open University's Open Societal Challenges programme.

## Websites

<https://wels.open.ac.uk/research/projects/bodylore>

<https://gtr.ukri.org/projects?ref=AH%2FS011587%2F1>

<https://www.open.ac.uk/research/news/demystifying-contraception>

<https://folklore-society.com/event/fertility-folklore-and-the-reproductive-body/>

# PhD project

The Reproductive Bodylore project explores women's vernacular knowledge about contraception and the role it plays in contraceptive decision-making. One aspect that has come out of advisory group discussions, and responses to conference presentations is that we do not know enough about partner knowledge and involvement in contraceptive decision-making. There is a large research gap in this area.

We invite applications for a PhD which explores partner involvement in contraceptive decision-making. This is a very overlooked area for study. The candidate would have the potential to make a significant contribution to furthering knowledge about contraceptive decision-making, as well as vernacular knowledge in health research. We envisage that the project will take a participatory qualitative approach.

