

(2020 MENSTRUATION ISSUE)

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LETTER OF THE WEEK

To Whom It May Concern,

As a very concerned parent of an Otago University student I am writing to voice my disgust at using artificial intelligence for exams. What is already a very stressful time - in abnormal circumstances and surrounds - the University threaten the students if they take their gaze off the computer, notice any unusual activity - no using pen & paper or being able to go to the toilet they will be given a zero mark or worse still the threat of being expelled from University! We are in a pandemic - not North Korea! The heightened stress level has now sky rocketed - the University obviously have no responsibility to their students mental health at this very vulnerable time - how irresponsible to threaten expulsion after 5 years of very hard work!

Think again Otago University - you have not handled Covid 19 with compassion and it is a double whammy that you sent out the exam timetable a month late adding to what is an already stressful situation.

Yours sincerely

Jacquie Martin

Hey who wrote the last moaningful confession and is he available?

Editor's note: 0275090143 (printed with enthusiastic consent)

Kia ora, Critic, but here's the thing:

Our fine institution has a name, and it is not Otago University. The official name of the university is University of Otago. I'll be the first to admit that the current administration has a hard time ensuring that we (students, alumni, and public) have a difficult time respecting the varsity due to decisions and direction they take this institution, but I will out myself as being proud to be a student of the University of Otago. Part of that pride means that I will refer to it by its proper name.

Fun fact: each university in New Zealand has the naming convention of University of X, the only exceptions being Massey University, Lincoln University, and Auckland University of Technology. I can understand that colloquially it is marginally easier to say Otago University, but there is no such university with this name.

I understand it coming from people who don't attend the University of Otago, or who have

no stake nor reason to know that its proper name. If one has only ever heard the erroneous diminutive 'Otago University,' they cannot be blamed for the misconception. However, I have a very difficult time forgiving the student association for misnaming the university. For all the good it does for students and support it gives, how can I put my faith in a union that cannot be trusted to use the proper name of the university, the students for which it serves to support?

I've been a student here for seven years, and have seen Critic magazine transformed in that time from an irritating, vapid fact of campus life, to a respectable and even cutting edge example of student journalism. This just saddens me more to see the style guide transformed from only accepting the actual name of the university to a laissez-faire, 'who cares?' stance.

I know, it's a very pedantic and strange hill on which to die, but I swear, this is where I stand, and I will defend this hallowed land until my dying breath, or until Harlene Hayne makes me wish I'd never considered enrolling to begin with (whichever comes first, though I fear greatly it will be the latter.)

Ever faithful,
Me



Editorial: ULTRASOUND REVEAL (NOT CLICKBAIT)

I had an ultrasound and it was weird.

I have polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS), along with approximately 10% of the NZ population of uterus-havers. Despite the name, not everyone with PCOS actually has cysts - according to whoever gave me the ultrasound, the gold standard is the blood and hormone tests, which is what I had done. I was diagnosed five years ago and could never afford the \$250 ultrasound to see if I actually had the cyst part of PCOS. I never bothered applying for a public ultrasound - my GP told me that the public health system would only do it if I was having fertility troubles.

With a full time job, I could finally afford peace of mind.

So the lady put goop on my pelvic area, and she confirmed that my bladder was full enough to help her see my ovaries. Thank god. If your bladder isn't full enough, they have to take that ultrasound internal. I was grateful that the impending UTI from holding in my bladder would be worth it.

Opposite me there was a screen. I could watch the mysterious shadows and shapes move with every push and drag of the probe (it is literally called a fucking probe). Seeing your insides and knowing that it is where a baby could literally incubate was seriously existential

crisis inducing. I had to start doing breathing exercises just to chill out.

Then, she said that if I was ok with it, that an internal probing would give her the best view of my darling ovaries after all. I figured I was paying \$250 for this, so fuck it, and it happened. I thought that it would be even worse than the baby factory livestream I'd been watching. Turns out, it didn't take long for it to feel normal - even comfortable - to have my legs spread open and a long stick inside of me. I felt powerful. Is that feminism? Is this body positivity?? Is this a moaningful confession???

After all of that, it turns out that I have no cysts in my ovaries, and have maybe one less excuse for why I don't want to have kids.

It's pretty fucked up to think that I had to wait five years for this peace. But it made me appreciate the other kinds of pussy protection that the government offers. Like pap smears and shit. You should go get one - I know you are avoiding it.

This has been a menstruation issue storytime and PSA.

Happy bleeding.

ISSUE 7

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— George Papanicolaou, President, University of Auckland

The Future Is Now: University Implements Examination Software For Upcoming Competitive Exams

Students reportedly excited to not blink for three hours

By Alex Leckie-Zaharic
Critic Intern // critic@critic.co.nz

Fresh off announcing their long-awaited exam timetable, the University lobbed a curveball at Accounting students and the massive Health Science First Year cohort on Tuesday afternoon by informing them that their exams would be surveilled. Many students are concerned.

Yes, you read that right. In order to preserve the integrity of their competitive entry courses, the University has brought in examination software company ExamSoft to use their "Exemplify" program to administer exams for twelve different papers.

Exemplify blocks students' access to the Internet, as well as their files and apps on their computer during exams. They'll also take a picture of you during a mandatory practice assessment, and use the biometric data gathered to verify your identity when your actual exam takes place.

Because Internet access is disabled, Exemplify will record every student using the device's camera, microphone, and screen capture software throughout their exam, and then feed it to an artificial intelligence which will "watch" your entire three-hour recording to check you weren't cheating.

Because Internet access is disabled, Exemplify will record every student using the device's camera, microphone, and screen capture software throughout their exam, and then feed it to an artificial intelligence which will "watch" your entire three-hour recording to check you weren't cheating. If it does think you were cheating, it will refer you to a university staff member for further investigation. Students got in touch with Critic to relay their concerns, namely over privacy, but also that they had not been consulted nor had not given their consent to be recorded.

In a statement made to Critic by Emily Coyle, Academic Representative to OUSA, she said "I can't speak highly enough of the University team who have been working tirelessly to ensure that this software and the corresponding process is as straightforward and simple but also fair for students."

"I'm fully in support of this as the best possible method to sit competitive entry/accreditation exams under the current circumstances." She encourages students who still have questions to reach out to her.

However, not everyone is happy. Multiple students have written into Critic expressing their displeasure at the new system, with one summing up the system by calling it "intrusive" while another said they "definitely do not feel comfortable with the software being on my

computer and having access to my webcam".

The University responded to student concerns over the potential privacy issues this software raises. In a comment to Critic, the Registrar and Privacy Officer, Chris Stoddart, said that he, "the Deputy Privacy Officer and the IT Assurance and Cybersecurity Office have liaised with ExamSoft and completed assessments to ensure privacy and data security provisions are appropriate".

Those provisions won't please everyone however, as ExamSoft and their partners are entitled to store the recordings and other data for up to thirteen months after the University's contract with them ends. However, as long as the University has a contract with ExamSoft, that data will remain and potentially stay in the system for a long time to come.

Opinions definitely seem to be mixed over the new system, with many students citing inconveniences such as being unable to use the bathroom during the exam or not having the ability to work somewhere quietly as they share a room/live at home. Whether the University has any plans to help remedy those issues remains to be seen and, until then, the majority of the student population doesn't seem to be on board with the new technology.

Critic Saved an Auckland Uni Student from a “Cult”

Unclear if cults respect social distancing

By Sinead Gill

Critic Editor // critic@critic.co.nz

Last week, an Auckland Uni student claimed to have been approached by two girls from Elohim Academy. Elohim Academy is a sub-group of the World Mission Society Church of God (WMSCOG), which is known for its aggressive recruitment strategy, and has been labeled by some as a cult.

Keara Ofren wrote about her experience for Craccum, Auckland Uni's student magazine, and credited a 2017 Critic feature to her recognising the name 'Elohim Academy' on the folder of the girls who approached her.

“A lot of the interactions were almost the same as what [Critic] mentioned in past years, such as approaching in a very inactive way/not taking no for an answer, approaching women who are on their own, asking for address and age”.

In the Critic feature, Esme Hall described the experiences of her friend who alleged that she was coerced into a baptism after speaking to a pair of recruiters on campus. In 2017, Otago Uni Proctor Dave Scott advised “anyone who meets them should call Campus Watch”. At the time he considered “trespassing them from the campus”.

When Keara recognised the name, she accepted the offer to discuss the religion, and even began asking the group questions. She noted how unusually cagey the group was at being questioned, saying that in her experience, religious groups are typically super keen to chat. Keara described this experience to Critic as “bizarre and unsettling”.

WMSCOG is a Korean religious group that believes that a South Korean man born in 1964 named Ah Sahng-Hong is the second-coming of Jesus Christ. Of the students Critic has spoken to who have had negative experiences with them, all of them were female. In 2019, two students claimed that girls from this group had knocked on their flat door and soon attempted to convince them to come to a secret place to be baptised.

Keara said that she was shocked that they were recruiting in Auckland considering how many “horror stories” from Otago there had been. Since her opinion piece was published, she has received a number of messages from other Auckland women who claim Elohim also attempted to recruit them in areas outside of their universities. “A lot of the interactions were almost the same as what [Critic] mentioned in past years, such as approaching in a very inactive way/not taking no for an answer, approaching women who are on their own, asking for address and age”.

What struck Keara the most was that these young women were not Korean, despite the affiliation of the club to the Korean religious group. She believed this might make them more approachable to students, as students may not suspect that they were associated with this group. “I found their demeanor to be totally different to a usual student,” Keara told Critic. “They were kind of, like, friendly in words but kind of no expression in their faces. And were acting like they were watching if they were being watched”.

Students Will Vote on OUSA Support for Agnew

As the Beastie Boys once said, you gotta fight for your right to party

By Erin Gourley

News Editor // news@critic.co.nz

The upcoming OUSA referendum is likely to determine whether OUSA will support the Agnew Street Party.

Question 10 of the upcoming OUSA referendum will ask students whether “OUSA [should] investigate co-hosting Agnew Street with the Agnew Street Residents”. The referendum cannot force OUSA to do anything, but it will provide them with student views on the party.

“OUSA is primarily concerned with the safety of students at Otago, and for us to be able to support the party, we would need assurance that the party did not pose a risk to the safety of students, residents and attendees,” Jack said. “In its current form, the party is too dangerous to provide such assurance.”

“Whatever the results, the important thing here is that the student voice is central to the decision about the Party's future,” OUSA President Jack Manning said.

According to Jack, the OUSA exec believes that “in its current form, the Agnew Street Party is a dangerous event.”

“We will continue to talk with residents, and use the results of the referenda to guide our decision making.”

OUSA officials were present at the debrief for the 2019 party, where an alcohol ban over Agnew Street was suggested. Jack told Critic that OUSA would not support an alcohol ban.

“Such a mandate on student behaviour runs the risk of driving those who choose to drink underground into scenarios that may be even more dangerous,” Jack said. “Whatever response there is to the Agnew Street Party must be owned and led by the residents.”

Although OUSA does not support an alcohol ban, they do have concerns about the party. “OUSA is

primarily concerned with the safety of students at Otago, and for us to be able to support the party, we would need assurance that the party did not pose a risk to the safety of students, residents and attendees,” Jack said. “In its current form, the party is too dangerous to provide such assurance.”

The draft referendum question on Agnew lists the pros and cons of OUSA involvement with Agnew Street.

The considerations posed by the exec include student safety, “long-term success and existence of the party”, “effect on freedom of event”, and that OUSA's event department would require an expansion.

Documents released to Critic under the official information act showed that emergency services, including police and emergency department staff, were concerned about the party going ahead in 2020.

Voting in the referendum opens on 25 May at 9am.

Referendum Will Ask Students if NZUSA Is Any Use

Students' association proposes leaving students' association and forming students' association

By Erin Gourley
News Editor // news@critic.co.nz

OUSA will propose a theoretical alternative to NZUSA at their upcoming referendum.

Three of the draft OUSA referendum questions relate to NZUSA. The first, which is traditionally included in every OUSA referendum, asks whether students think OUSA should leave NZUSA. According to the question, leaving NZUSA would save about \$52,325 each year, which is 1.5% of OUSA's annual budget.

The next question asks whether OUSA should leave and "create a different structure for national student

voice". The word "different" was inserted to replace "better" at Monday's Exec meeting.

Lastly, OUSA will ask students whether they should support "a restructure of NZUSA". "A restructure could lead to infighting," the draft referendum questions note.

The considerations that OUSA list include the potential savings of leaving NZUSA, but also the potential loss of "at the table" government lobbying.

"These types of questions appear in most OUSA referendums, and every year, Otago students have overwhelmingly supported NZUSA," said NZUSA President Isabella Lenihan-Ikin. "Otago students value being part of the national student movement."

"The questions on the referendum are to now gauge student interest, both in a restructure and in OUSA's continued membership of NZUSA," said OUSA President Jack Manning. "The Executive has already

begun discussions with the National Office about a restructure, and an NZUSA committee to investigate this has been formed with OUSA membership."

The Vice-President of NZUSA, Matthew Schep, attended the meeting where the Exec discussed these questions, because NZUSA "thought it would be useful to provide comments or answer questions to ensure the questions were fair and accurate," said Isabella.

Matthew pointed out to the Exec that NZUSA was already intending to review their structure in 2020. "A restructure took place in 2018, and we are planning to review the effectiveness of these changes this year," Isabella said.

"We warmly welcomed this, and consulted with Matthew on the considerations for the referendum questions," said Jack.

The considerations that OUSA list include the potential savings of leaving NZUSA, but also the potential loss of "at the table" government lobbying.

CRIME: OUSA Are About to Breach Their Constitution

Better call 111 because there has been a sexy and deeply interesting auditing crime

By Erin Gourley
News Editor // news@critic.co.nz

OUSA have breached their constitution by failing to have their financial statements audited before the semester one referendum.

OUSA will acknowledge the breach in its referendum. "Disclosure: due to COVID-19 and the nature of auditing needing to be on sight, we have been unable to have our accounts audit to be passed at this current referenda," the draft states.

The draft referendum questions also notes that the breach will be included "in the Semester two referenda to be passed ensuring OUSA meets its legal requirements".

Clause 26 of the Constitution requires financial statements to be audited at the end of each financial year. OUSA Finance and Strategy Officer, Josh Meikle, said that "the breach here is in relation to s 37(k) that requires the first semester referenda [to] contain the audited financial statements."

OUSA could not comply with the auditing requirement due to the Covid-19 lockdown. "This breach happened because at the time of lockdown our audit was at a stage where in person presence at the OUSA offices was required," Josh Meikle said.

He said that there was no way for OUSA to avoid the breach. "The process itself was begun as soon as reasonably possible, as it is every year."

When Critic asked why students even need to see the financial statements, Josh said that "the reason it is brought to the student body is so that they can understand the financial position of OUSA". He described the audit as "an independent touchpoint to assess a company or association's risk of material misstatements in financial reports."

Putting a question about the breach in the referendum does not mean that OUSA is off the hook. The only way to ratify the breach (i.e. let OUSA

off the hook for it) is to put it to students at the SGM or AGM, Josh said.

"Despite this it is necessary that the audit does go to the student body at some point this financial year," Josh said. He said that this is necessary "regardless of whether it remedies this breach as the student body still needs to be given the opportunity to have oversight of OUSA and hold us to account."

Critic asked a few students what they thought about this. A third year summed it up with: "I'm real confused and I don't think I care enough to understand."

Opinion: ExamSoft Breaks All The Rules

A Study in Unethics

By Alex Leckie-Zaharic
Critic Intern // critic@critic.co.nz

Big Sister has arrived, and tasked with the preservation of the integrity of the University's competitive courses, she's wielding the University's newest weapon, ExamSoft.

On the surface this seems like an answer to everyone's prayers. A way to take your exam in the comfort of your own home (or hall) with the ability to type and edit your answers, while the University ensures that their students are staying honest.

However, when you dig beneath the shiny veneer of buzzwords in the students' FAQ page such as "remote invigilation", "artificial intelligence" and "used at Harvard & Yale", what you get is a program that doesn't come close to achieving any of the benefits extolled by the University.

ExamSoft records you during your exam using your camera, microphone and screen capture software, and sends that three-hour recording to an artificial intelligence who scrutinises that entire video for abnormalities. Unfortunately, those abnormalities include

the direction you're looking at, any background noise and the movements you make, as "you must keep your face towards the camera and not look around the room (even while thinking)".

Once ExamSoft finds something suspicious, it's referred to the University for investigation. Not only does a student now have a black mark against their name, but University staff have to review every single exam in which a student looks the wrong way. That's well over five thousand three-hour videos to meticulously go over. I'd like to preemptively apologise on behalf of the University to anyone who fidgets or doesn't want to stare directly at a screen for three hours for undue suspicion and scrutiny over their exam.

This doesn't even include students who deal with ADHD, or other impairments that make it difficult to sit still for extended periods of time. If you're a student living at home that doesn't have a place to quietly sit and do your exam, every word your parents say as they continue to work from home is a red flag sent

up against your name by ExamSoft, teeming with suspicion that you're cheating.

So not only can't you look at somewhere that isn't your camera, or read out the question out loud without setting off ExamSoft's systems, you can't even go to the bathroom or drink water as that would constitute violating both of the above rules. Add those who battle with incontinence or IBS to the list of the newly disenfranchised.

The inevitable response from the University is that this exam system is the best option they had available, but being the best doesn't excuse how unethical this is. Those who cheat will be the ones slipping under the radar because they've found their way to beat the system. ExamSoft might catch some of them, but by casting their net wide will watch far more innocent students. Students who don't deserve black marks against their name because they, for whatever circumstances, couldn't stare directly at a screen for three hours.

Opinion: As Students Adapt, so Must Student Representation

By Jack Manning
Lord Superior of OUSA // president@ousa.org.nz

If I were to list all the ways Covid-19 has impacted students, there wouldn't be enough room for an actual opinion. To name a few, just think of students who are essential workers, students who are parents, students without devices, the thousands of exchange students (both inward and outward bound) being uprooted, postgraduate students finding themselves faced with the choice of delaying their research or starting a new thesis altogether, international students, already facing financial uncertainty, having it exacerbated by the pandemic.

We've all felt the effect of Covid-19. At the outset of this lockdown, like many other Kiwi Hosts, I had to move with little notice. I'm lucky that this was the extent of my inconvenience during lockdown. But others weren't so lucky. They faced financial stress, drastic academic changes and mental hardship.

Student representation during lockdown had to change. Our work during this time has often been, to a frustrating level, behind closed doors and on private Zooms. When everything went online, the University could have shut us out (or they could have tried). Instead, the Exec have had a seat at so many tables - including the big ones. Most days, I have been in at least one meeting with the Vice-Chancellor and senior university management. Student representation has been regular and, for the most part, warmly welcomed. We've used this platform to see real changes happen for students: rebates for absent UniFlat residents and RA's that chose to stay, and a universal grade bump. The inclusion of a "COVID-19" special consideration category, and the largest hardship fund in the University's history. Not to mention the one-on-one advocacy we do for students that approach us, and our

collaborative lobbying efforts with NZUSA and dozens of students' associations to achieve equitable conditions and support for all students.

This lockdown has shown me that our advocacy needs to remain flexible so that we can produce results, no matter what the challenges are.

Alert Level 2 will bring with it a new normal, and a new set of challenges. This lockdown has shown me that our advocacy needs to remain flexible so that we can produce results, no matter what the challenges are. It has also reminded me that student representation isn't a waiting game. We need to demand student-focused representation, because the decisions institutions like the University and the Government make impact all of us.

K



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Long Live The King

By Fox Meyer

According to over 150 Critic readers, these are the definitive
King's Cup rules for Otago students:

2: You 93.6%

Nominate someone to drink.

3: Me 93.6%

You must drink.

4: Whores 61.8%

People identifying as female must drink.

5: House Rules 70.0%

Whatever you want.

6: Dicks 61.8%

People identifying as male must drink.

7: Heaven 91.8%

Last player to point up must drink.

8: Mate 91.3%

Nominate a mate for the rest of the game. When you drink, they drink. You may create chains of mates.

9: Rhyme 94.5%

The card-drawer starts with a word, and players go around the circle rhyming it until someone fucks up or repeats a rhyme.

10: Categories 57.3%

The card-drawer starts a category with an example, and then players go around the circle adding examples until someone fucks up or repeats an example.

J: New Rule 31.8%

Create a new rule for the rest of the game.

Q: Question Master 85.5%

Until someone else draws a Queen, you are the Question Master and anybody who answers a question of yours must drink. If they respond with "fuck you Question Master," you must drink.

K: Add to King's Cup 98.3%

When a king is drawn, donate to the King's Cup. The fourth king drawn must finish the King's Cup, and thus also the game.

A: Waterfall 89.1%

The card-drawer starts drinking, then the person to their left, and so on. When everyone is drinking, the card-drawer may stop, and then the person to their left may stop, and so on.

And here's a breakdown of every possible rule submitted to us:

A & B: Whoever drew the card closes their eyes, and another player nominates two people from the circle as "A" and "B". The card-drawer can be nominated. Then, without peeking, the card-drawer picks a task for A & B to complete, or for one to do to the other. ex: "A & B must..." or "A must do ___ to B".

Arrogance: Pour as much as you like into a vessel, and flip a coin. If you call the toss correctly, pass the vessel and coin to your left. They must then pour, bet, and drink if incorrect. Pass until someone loses.

Back to Back: The card-drawer nominates two people to stand back to back. They are asked questions along the lines of "who is more likely to..." or "who is better at ___?" They must point to themselves, or over their shoulder to the other person. If they point to the same person, everyone in the circle drinks, and if they don't, they each must drink. This continues until they get three questions correct.

Boxhead: You must wear an empty box on your head until someone else becomes the Boxhead.

Categories: The card-drawer names a category. Go around the circle until someone can't contribute, or repeats something that's been said.

Celebrate: Cheers! Everyone drinks.

Chicks: People identifying as female must drink.

Dicks: People identifying as male must drink.

Drive: Everyone puts both thumbs up. Start by saying "vroom" and point your thumbs left to pass it left. The next person may then say "vroom" and point in the same direction to keep the game moving, or say "skrrt" and point back to the sender to turn it around. Bonus: say "crash" and point across the circle to send it over there.

Floor: Last player to touch the floor with their hand drinks.

Gecko: Last player with three limbs touching a wall must drink.

Guys: People identifying as male must drink.

Hot Seat: The card-drawer may be asked any question by any player for 60 seconds and must answer. Questions asked at 59 seconds must be answered.

If I Were You: Everyone nominates a dare: "If I were you, I would..." and then whoever drew the card must complete one of the dares.

Jive: The card-drawer does a dance move, and the next person must repeat it and add to the end. This continues until someone fucks up and drinks.

Mate: Nominate a mate for the rest of the game. They must drink when you do, and you may create chains of mates.

Never Have I Ever: Played with either three or five fingers.

New Rule: Make a new rule for the duration of the game, or until a new rule is made.

Odds: The card-drawer says to someone "odds you ___." The other person supplies a number, say "10," and at the count of three both players say a number between 1 and that number. If they say the same number, the selected person must complete the task. If not, the card-drawer drinks.

One Frog: Open to interpretation, I guess?

Photographer: Count down from three, and take a picture. Anybody not in the picture must drink.

Question Master: Whoever drew the Queen is the Question Master, and if anyone answers any of their questions, they must drink. However, they can respond "fuck you Question Master" to make the Question Master drink.

Scientist: The group chooses a drink for the card-drawer, and they must blind taste-test it. If correct, everyone else drinks. If incorrect, they drink again.

Shoot, Shag, Marry: The card-drawer must choose between three names (supplied by the others) to shoot, shag, and marry.

Snake Eyes: If you make eye contact with whoever has "snake eyes", you must drink. Also known as "Medusa".

Space Cadets: Everyone makes goggles with their fingers and card-drawer starts by saying "boop" and passing to their left. Players say "boop" to pass to the left and "boowoop" to pass to the right until someone fucks up and they drink.

Thumbs: Place your thumb on the table. Last to do so drinks.

Toilet: Whoever holds the toilet card is the Toilet Master and everyone else must ask them for permission to use the loo.

Vikings: The card-drawer quickly puts two fingers on their head like a viking helmet. Last player to start paddling must drink. Alternate rules apply.

Waterfall: Starting with the card-drawer, start drinking until everyone is drinking at once. You may not stop drinking until the person to your right stops drinking, and the card-drawer is the first person who can stop drinking.

Whores: People identifying as female drink.

You: Nominate someone to drink.

What we can agree on (~90% of the vote):

Almost everyone plays with 2 as 'You' (93.6%) and 3 as 'Me' (again, 93.6%). The 6.4% of people who disagree with that usually play instead with 2 as "If I were you," and 3 as "A & B," which sounds like a lot more fun if you ask me. There's a small cabal of people that play 2 as "snake eyes".

We can't agree on 4, 5, or 6, but 7 is surely 'Heaven'. Just like 8, almost everyone (91.8%) agreed on this rule. The ones that don't stick 'em up on sevens instead play "Never Have I Ever," "thumbs," or "gecko". One person - and only God knows why - plays this as "Question Master". And if that wasn't bad enough, this person also plays Queen as "mate" and 8 as "thumbs," which makes absolutely no sense. Which fuckin' one of youse does this? Were you raised by wolves or something?

8 was almost uniformly 'Mate', which nobody seemed to have a problem with. Only three people didn't say "mate," and they instead said "gecko," "thumbs," or "celebrate" (celebrate sounds like way more fun, tbh). 8 as 'Mate' is a very safe bet, but if you're not seriously committing to getting absolutely fucked by a 4-person chain of mates, then what's the point? There are plenty of alternatives. Shake stuff up a bit.

9 was 'Ithyme' by a wide margin (94%), though it did receive some hate in the comments. The biggest variation in 9s was whether you must rhyme a single word or an entire sentence, and the vast majority of people opt for a single word. If you don't play rhymes, you opt for "Never Have I Ever" (2 responses) or "Snake Eyes" (one response).

Queen was "Question Master" with 85% of the vote, no surprises here. 'Question Master' was pretty heavily debated in the comments: A few people said they absolutely frothed it, but most of the attention it got was negative. The same people who threw shade at 'Question Master' also disliked 'Snake Eyes', another popular role-based card. If you don't play 'Question Master' or 'Snake Eyes' here, you play 'Never Have I Ever' or 'Categories'.

Ace: I'm gonna chalk this one up to a lack of creativity, but 89% of us play 'Waterfall' on ace. Why? Surely not because it's all that great, because I know from experience that I've seen about as many full-rotation waterfalls as I've seen real-life waterfalls (not many). Comments section agrees: "Fuck waterfall," and "why play it if nobody drinks?" Another option for ace is "Arrogance," while one flat opts instead for "Shag, Shoot, Marry," and one flat just tans half a bevvie every time there's an ace. One flat suggests simply "anything but Waterfall," and I couldn't agree more. If you're looking for a chance to shake up your game: this is it. Ditch Waterfall, play with a real rule.

What we can't agree on: "Guys and Chicks" or "Whores and Dicks?"

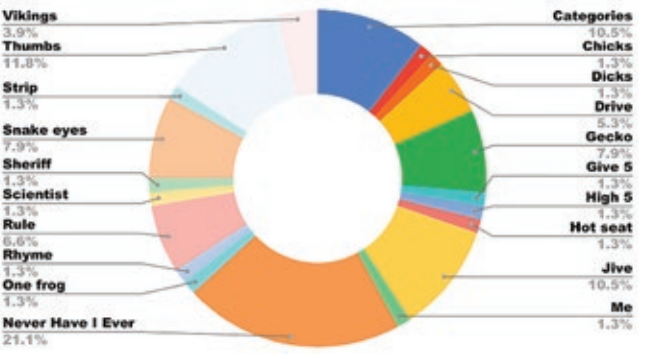
Here's the best part of the data, in my opinion. Almost everyone that plays divides 4's, 5's and 6's the same way: one number is for boys, one number is for girls, and one number is an oddball rule. The majority of us (62%) play with 4's as 'Whores' and 6 as 'Dicks', with an oddball rule on 5. But, there is this smaller contingency of people (30%) that opt for the "pussy rules," saying that five is 'Guys' and six is 'Chicks' because I guess they don't want to say "whores" or whatever. This leaves the 4 open for their oddball rule. "Alright, whatever," you say, but this small difference in lexicon actually has a huge impact on the game.

We've gotta talk about 5s

By playing the "clean" version, you use up 5's and 6's for "guys" and "chicks". With an open space on 4, every single person (except one) who played with the "pussy rules"

also plays 4 as “floor” and 7 as “heaven,” which seems pretty redundant to me - that’s a lot of pointing. However, by playing 4s as “whores” and 6 as “dicks,” you free up the 5 rather than the 4, and the 5 has way more options for play than 4 does. A free 5 opens the table to all sorts of wild shit like “vikings,” “space cadets” or “jive” that you don’t see on any other numbers (besides maybe on Jack - but we’ll get to that).

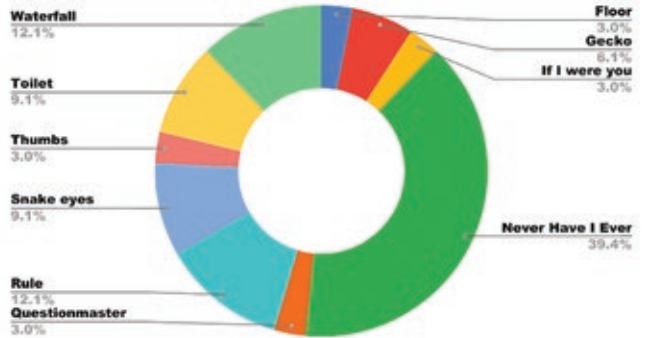
“Guys” won 5s with only 30% of the vote; the lowest majority vote of any card. The remaining 70% of people have some sort of creative rule for 5, so we made an executive decision: instead of our official list having “guys” on 5 and “dicks” on 6, we chose to leave 5 open as a “house rule”. The wide range of submissions for 5 split the vote into dozens of smaller splinter cells, and the minority of sneaky bastards (30%) playing 5 as “guys” ended up stealing the election. Thus, our final list would’ve featured 5 for “guys” as well as 6 for “dicks,” which we didn’t think was much fun, so we cut it. Besides, the data tells us that if you were to initiate a game of King’s Cup in Dunedin, you probably wouldn’t be playing 5 as “guys,” anyway. So, if you’re looking for a bit more fun, here’s the breakdown of all the possible rules for 5 if we ignore the losers that said “guys:”



What’s ‘One Frog’? I have no idea. They didn’t elaborate. I’m extraordinarily curious.

“What do I do on 10?”

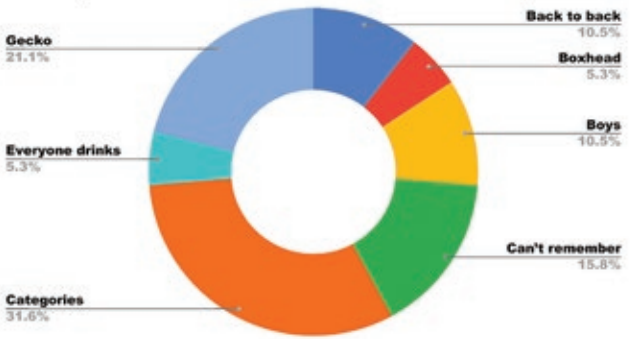
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What’s the deal with Jacks?

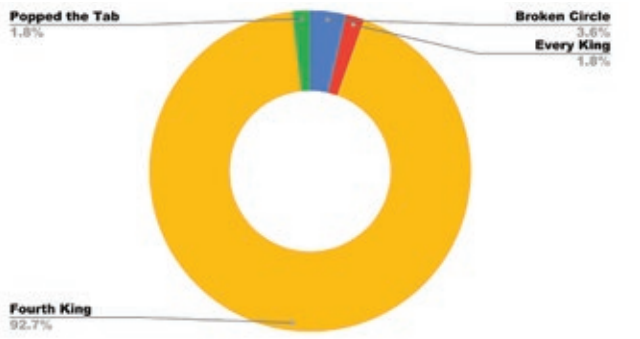
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Jack (Without “Never Have I Ever” or “Rule”)



The King’s Cup

This leaves us with the King. Pretty much everyone agrees that when a King is drawn, a few things happen: if there’s a King’s Cup, you add something to it, and 16% of people also take this opportunity to make a rule. In this most popular style of play, the poor soul that draws the fourth King must skull the King’s Cup. If we break it down, we find a few variations in the rule:



Only 23% of people specified that there’s some sort of consequence for breaking the circle, and while the ‘fourth King skulls it’ style of play dominates the Dunedin scene, there are some fringe groups:

Notably, some people opt for playing with tins instead of a large vessel that progressively fills. You’ve probably seen it before, but just to clarify: in this style, an unopened tin sits in the middle and players wedge their card under the tab until the stack of cards builds and breaks the seal. Playing this way means that nobody drinks anything too revolting (unless that’s what you’re into), and frees up the King for alternative rules such as ‘forehead,’ in which you stick the card to your noggin’ and can boss people around until it falls off.

Another way to play is to balance cards on top of a central bottle, with at least two corners of each new card needing to hang freely off the edge of the pile. Is this still King’s Cup? I can hear some of you are shouting “no”.

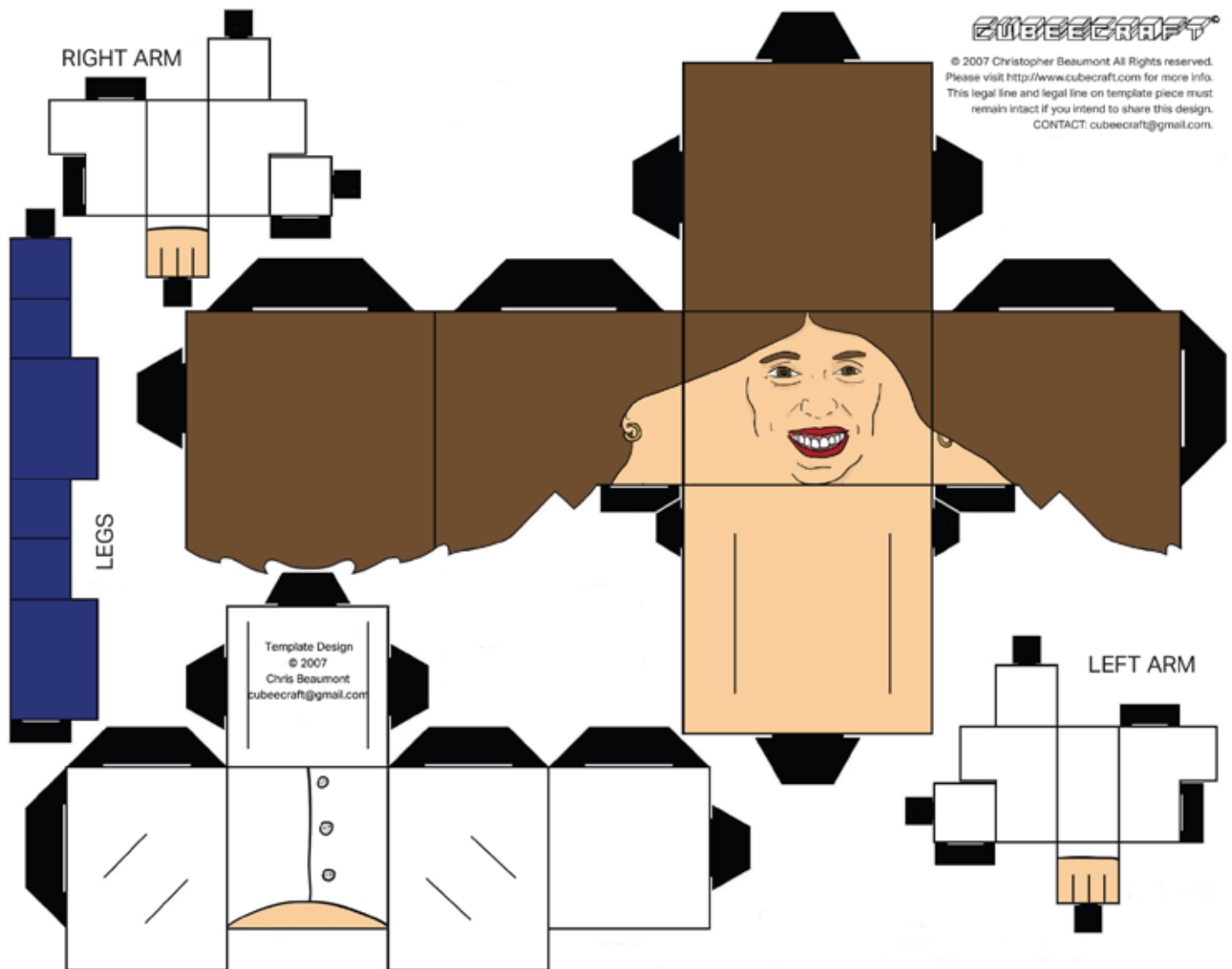
Also, a shoutout to the degenerates that found a way to turn things up a notch: every single time a card is drawn, you add to the King’s Cup, and any time a king is drawn someone has to skull the whole thing. Four King’s Cups per game: fuck me, right? You were so preoccupied with whether or not you could, you didn’t stop to think whether or not you should, and I appreciate that madness.

The creative geniuses behind the ‘four King’s Cups a game’ strategy also play with ‘Snake Eyes’ on Queen, but other groups stray further from the standard rules. One particularly creative group substitutes the rather boring ‘Me’ on 3 for ‘New Rule,’ and drops 7: ‘Heaven’ for the more chaotic ‘gecko’ playstyle. Their oddball rule on 5 is “High-5,” and Jack becomes ‘Boxhead’: two rules played by nobody else. To top it off, with this playstyle, “buffalo” rules always apply, so watch those hands.

There is no correct way to play King’s Cup, despite everyone insisting that their rules are somehow sacred. That being said, these are Critic’s rules, and the only rule that matters is rule #1: have fun.

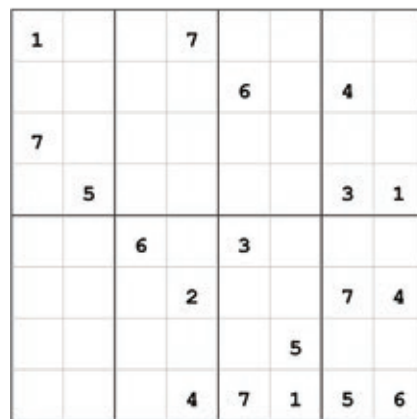
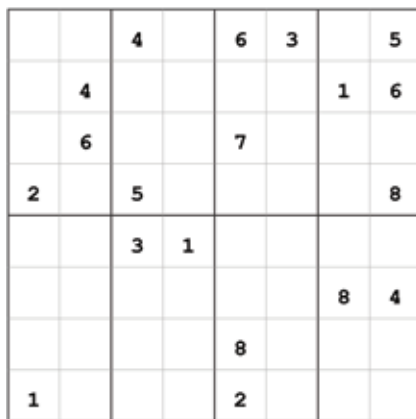
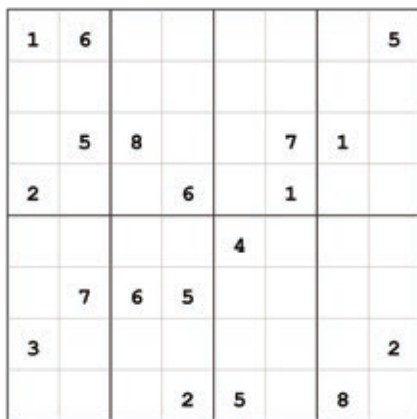
Cheers.

CRITIC COLLECTABLES



PM JACINDA ARDERN

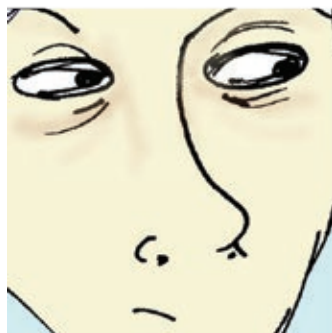
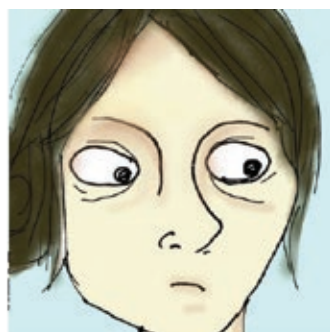
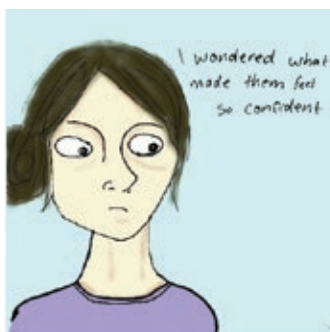
- STRENGTH:** Leading an entire nation through multiple crises
- WEAKNESS:** Actual socialist policies
- POWER MOVE:** Incredibly calming energy renders any enemy too passive to fight
- NEMESIS:** Capitalism



Menstruation Wordfind

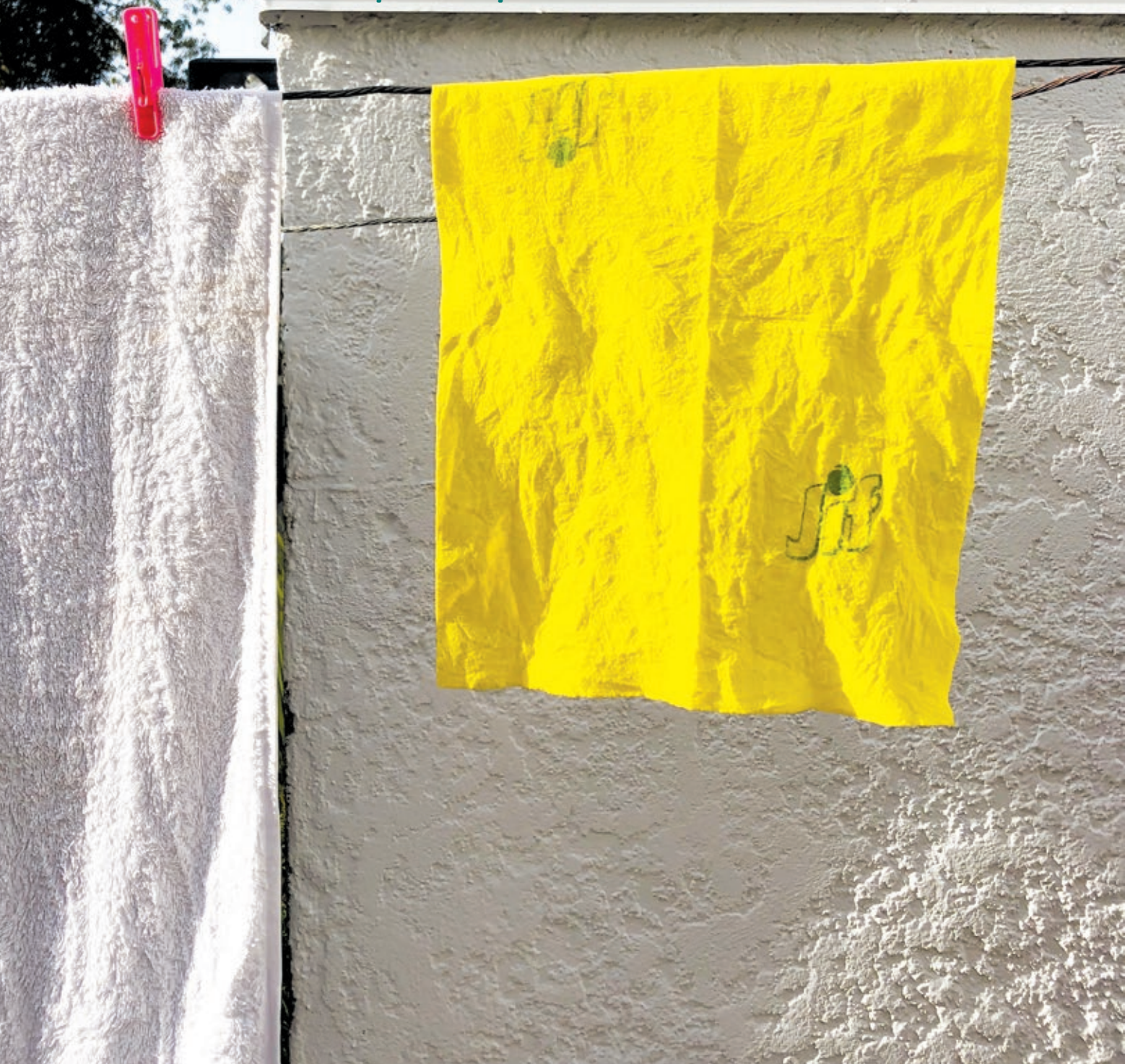


LIFE
TIRED
CRAMPS
MENSTRUATION
TAMPON
PERIOD
FERTILITY
OFFSPRING
PAD
PILL
PAIN
UTERUS
IRMA
STRENGTH
CONDOM
MENOPAUSE
RAG
EGGS
DIVINITY
MOOD



DIY TAMPONS: A WARNING, NOT A GUIDE

By Henessey Griffiths



There is no worse feeling than when you get a surprise period. On the one hand, it's cool because it means you're not pregnant. On the other hand, you have to deal with blood leaking out of your uterus for a week or longer, and all the other hormonal side effects alongside it. Everyone has different experiences with their period. Some get small flows that last a few days, some get big flows that last weeks, and others don't get them at all. But a universal experience shared by all period-havers is what sanitary products they use during this time.

Which sanitary product you select depends on your preference, body, and financial situation. Sanitary products can be pretty expensive, which is fucked up considering how essential they are. But on top of that, most are environmentally unfriendly and have literal (but rare) health risks.

Personally, I prefer tampons. As I just so happened to sync up with the release of the menstruation

issue, I sought out to try and find some cheaper home alternatives. After doing some comprehensive research on acclaimed and trusted news sites such as Buzzfeed and Cosmopolitan, I came up with four items that should theoretically work as a DIY tampon.

NOW, NO SITE SAID THAT THESE *SHOULD* BE USED AS TAMPONS, BUT NO SITE SAID THAT THEY *SHOULDN'T* EITHER.

However, let me please preface this by saying that this article should be a warning, not a guide.

TOILET PAPER

Everyone knows the old trick of when you need a pad on the go, you just wrap a bit of toilet paper around your underwear. It's not the most comfortable, but it gets the job done. Toilet paper makes for great liners or pad substitute, but what about an actual tampon? After getting about two squares of the finest Pux 3-ply, it was strategically rolled to resemble some kind of tampon.

Now this wasn't as uncomfortable as other alternatives, but my vagina definitely knew that there was something not right. The insertion was difficult given the lack of structural integrity of two squares. I was still able to go about my regular day and move about. It was able to absorb a fair bit of blood, more so than the others. But, the real issue was taking it out. As toilet paper is known to

disintegrate very easily, I feel like there's still little bits stuck up there. In saying that, this was probably the best of the makeshift tampons I made. It did its job okay, but works far better as a pad.

Comfort: The luscious lips of the sexy CottonSoft mascot.

Effectiveness: Tom Holland at the end of Avengers Infinity War.

Reusability: Give yourself an extra wipe, you deserve it.

JIF CLOTH

A stronger version of toilet paper, the mighty Jif cloth has provided alimant for many spills. But could it be enough to cover the spill of period blood? The thing most noteworthy about Jif cloths are their reusability. A leading issue with period sanitary products is how wasteful pads and tampons are, given that you can only use them once before disposing of them. But with a Jif cloth, you can easily wash it in boiling water and reuse it in the same way as a menstrual cup - kind of.

ONCE I TOOK IT OUT, I STARTED TO FEEL A BIT HEADACHY AND NAUSEOUS, WHICH WAS NOT HELPED BY SOME FRANTIC GOOGLING OF WHETHER OR NOT I GAVE MYSELF TSS.

The insertion was the hardest part, as it wasn't able to hold and stay the same shape as a normal tampon. But after some perseverance, we got there. As soon as I put it in, my body immediately

hated it. I started to get cramps and discomfort around my abdomen, and it was hard to move around without it falling out. I lasted about three minutes before I decided I had enough. It did manage to catch some blood, and it did come out after a thorough rinse. Once I took it out, I started to feel a bit headachy and nauseous, which was not helped by some frantic googling of whether or not I gave myself TSS. What the Jif cloth has in reusability does not make up for its uncomfortable experience as a tampon. Please, do not try this at home.

Comfort: Trying to push all your empty food scraps down the small drain holes.

Effectiveness: My personality as a form of birth control. Take that as you will.

Reusability: Wash in warm or hot water. Do not tumble dry. Do not bleach. For a better, streak free result, do not use a fabric softener.

SPONGE

IN HINDSIGHT, I DEFINITELY SHOULD HAVE CUT A LITTLE BIT OFF TO USE BECAUSE HAVING A WHOLE SPONGE IN MY UNDERWEAR FELT LIKE I WAS SITTING ON SPONGEBOB'S FACE.

The thought of sticking a sponge up my vagina as a tampon sent shivers up my spine. I got a mental image of accidentally putting some of the scouring side up there and I could feel my uterus shudder. I decided to then use the sponge as a pad, by giving it a thorough wash and sticking it in my underwear. In hindsight, I definitely should have cut a little bit off to use because having a whole sponge in my underwear felt like I was sitting on Spongebob's face.

On first thought, it's actually quite comfy. It feels like a little airbed for my coochie. However, the issue with most pads is how you feel as if you're wearing a thick diaper. After a while, it began to get less comfortable as the air bubbles started to scratch quite hard. I definitely felt more immobile than with the other solutions, because walking wasn't that much of a comfortable experience. I left the sponge pad in for around half an hour, and it did a pretty decent job. There was little leakage, and the sponge absorbed a fair bit of the blood. Plus, it was also able to be easily washed out, meaning that it can be reused. However, why someone would actually want to do this, I don't know.

Comfort: Foreplay with Spongebob.

Effectiveness: The best that a three pack of Value sponges for \$1.69 can offer.

Reusability: Give it a rinse, and put it back in the sink for dishes.

RICE

If you accidentally drop your phone in some water, what's the first thing you do? Put it in some rice to try and absorb the water all up. So, theoretically, could the same logic work for periods? After questioning everything that has led me to this moment, I set out to find out the truth. I decided that rice would not work as a tampon as such, but more like a pad that should absorb some of the blood. I used under a quarter of a cup, and tried to lay it out nicely on my underwear.

On first thought, this is utterly stupid. Rice kept falling out, and my mobility was limited by the fact that I felt like a maraca everytime I moved. It wasn't particularly comfortable, but I did get used to it after a while. Maybe I should have gently boiled some of the rice for a smoother experience. After leaving it for an hour, to my surprise, it actually sort of worked. Some of the rice did actually absorb some blood. Unfortunately, my jeans did the rest. It was more the surface level that was protected,

but the constant moving meant that there wasn't an even amount of protection. So theoretically, yes, this does work - but, for the love of God, it's not worth it.

NOW I'M JUST LEFT WITH A MESS OF SEMI-BLOODY RICE OVER MY BATHROOM FLOOR.

Comfort: Uncle Ben's Tomato and Basil Rice 250g.

Effectiveness: 2/8 tampons, not enough to warrant the joke.

Reusability: None, you sick fuck.

Overall, my recommendation is that if you're trying to create a DIY tampon, you're much better off free-bleeding. While putting these alternatives to the test, we can prove that they do work, but that you shouldn't use them. It's not worth the potential dangers and the cramping you'll get afterwards.

PERIOD SUPPRESSION:

THE HIDDEN BENEFITS OF CONTRACEPTION

BY NAOMII SEAH

The first time I got my period, I was nine. I didn't know what a period was, and I didn't know why people were making such a huge deal out of it. It didn't hurt much, it was just alarming. I was sure that it wasn't normal to bleed out of your vagina, and I was sure adults with vaginas weren't expected to calmly put up with such a harrowing experience on a regular basis. Well, I was wrong, it was normal. When I was told this at the age of nine, I was excited. I was "a woman" now, and my parents even wanted to take me out to dinner. Looking back, I realised that they were probably just attempting to compensate for a life-time of pain, inconvenience, period anxiety and pregnancy scares.

But what if there was a way that you could stop your periods? I discovered contraception, like most people, in high school. The prospect of controlling my bleeding excited me - not for any underlying medical reasons, I just didn't like having my period. Plus, it freaked me out. The average uterus-bearing person spends forty years menstruating, with a blood loss of 10-35mL per period. That averages to six litres of blood over a lifetime, and that's not even accounting for those who have heavier periods.

She was convinced that a lack of periods would cause some permanent fault to my reproductive system. Current research disproves that.

When I told my mother about going on contraception, she was not happy. She was convinced that a lack of periods would cause some permanent fault to my reproductive system. Current research disproves that. I took contraception, in part, to suppress my periods. But menstruators choose to suppress their periods for any number of reasons.

As far as periods go, I was lucky. I didn't experience extreme pain, or heavy bleeding. Marga*, Jo, Cindy* and Neveda* were not so fortunate. Marga went on the contraceptive pill at fifteen because she had extreme period pain. She said she had "really bad cramps, nausea, fatigue and headaches, among other things". She would "end up avoiding leaving the house for 2-4 days because [she was] afraid to feel sick in public and not be able to leave." Jo also went on contraception to suppress period pain, which she described as "quite severe". She also found it was "nice to be able to control when I had my period". Similarly, Neveda suppressed her periods as she had "very, very painful periods as a child. So much so that I would vomit, blackout and not be able to walk... [I also had] really intense hormonal migraines. I wouldn't be able to look at lights, or hear any loud noises. I'd have to take painkillers and go to sleep, which canceled out a whole day." In her teens, Neveda "started getting periods that would go on for longer and longer until eventually I was menstruating all the time. 365 days a year." Neveda says she therefore suppresses her periods because "if I wasn't bleeding, I wasn't in pain".

Cindy suppresses her period as she has endometriosis, which causes invasive growths of endometrial tissue to occur outside of her uterus. She suppresses her periods, as it "means I have less pain to deal with. It gets rid of menstrual pain, on top of all the other pain I have." She was prescribed birth control to regulate the growth of endometrial tissue in her body, and was recommended to run the pills on by her doctor.

Jamie* wanted to control her bleeding for another reason. She went on the contraceptive rods for reliable, long-term contraception, but then found that "I would bleed for 6-8 weeks at a time, and it was really heavy. It was unmanageable, and no one wants to bleed for two months at a time... I was losing so much iron from the blood loss, which is why I wanted to control my bleeding. It just made me feel shitty. I didn't get normal period symptoms as it's not technically a period, but before the rod I had really bad periods. Cramps, PMS, everything." She ended up taking Provera in addition to her rods, which contains a progesterone-like compound. It's commonly prescribed to treat abnormal bleeding.

As for methods, the women we spoke to used all different kinds of contraceptives. Most of the women used various contraceptive pills. Jo and Marga found that the pills they were put on initially worked really well, and they had no issues. Then, Marga changed pills due to funding, and experienced strong nausea. She went through "3-4 different ones which all had the same side effect. I then went on the mini pill which didn't make me feel sick, but... didn't do anything to improve my periods." She found that her bleeding also became very irregular. Neveda also went through many different forms of contraceptive pills in order to suppress her bleeding. Her "body would adjust, and I would get bleeding again". She finally wound up on Depo-Provera, an injection of progesterone that works as a contraceptive for three months. However, she found that "three months was too long between injections so I've had to go every two and a half months in order to stop my periods."

Cindy also started with a pill, but moved to an IUD. She found she "got cramping every day, so I switched to a new, smaller IUD." She found that the "pill definitely worked best for suppressing periods, specifically the combined contraceptive." She did find, however, that when she does choose to have periods, they are "heavier on the pill than on the IUD, as the IUD is more localised so it stops the uterine lining building up as much".

However, suppressing periods using contraception isn't as easy as it sounds. Three out of the five women we spoke to experienced some side effects that caused them to change their method of contraception. Cindy noted that having an IUD caused her to experience "changes to my boobs, and I got acne for the first time in my life. It's persisted despite not having the IUD anymore. Mainly my boobs change depending on contraception. On the pill they're fuller, and on the IUD they were less full, which kind of plays with your mind a little bit." Neveda found that "on the pill itself there weren't really any side effects, they just weren't working [to suppress my periods]. Though there was one pill where I didn't last more than a week because the mood swings were so bad. I was seriously depressed. I would cry for no reason during the day, and my partner would wake up at two am and I'd be sobbing into the bed." On the Depo-Provera, Neveda said she "put on a lot of weight, although it worked well for period suppression. I put on 10kg within the year, but more importantly than that, [the Depo-Provera] was increasing the fat content of my liver. Blood tests showed that I was going up incrementally at an alarming rate." Because of this, Neveda stopped getting Depo-Provera shots, and is currently relying on barrier methods of contraception.

For Jo, any side effects were “absolutely worth” it, as “having the pain under control meant that I could function like a normal human.”

Despite all these potential side effects, most of the women are still on contraception to suppress their periods. Marga said that she's still undecided whether or not the side effects of contraception are worth suppressing her periods. She said that "I definitely couldn't put up with the nausea I was experiencing because I would feel sick for at least half the day, every day, to the point where I was worried I would throw up in a lecture." For Jo, any side effects were "absolutely worth" it, as "having the pain under control meant that I could function like a normal human." Neveda and Cindy agreed. Due to her endometriosis, Cindy said that she would "take the doctor's word" that suppressing her periods was better for her in the long run, "if the side effects are tolerable, which they are". She said that she had "never had a regular cycle, not on the IUD, and not before contraception. Knowing when my period comes is worth being on [the pill] as I can control when I get it." For Neveda, she says that "if I could go back to having a regular cycle, that would be something I would choose. But that's not why I'm on contraception. It's definitely worth it for me because the alternative is really debilitating." As someone who's primary concern was pregnancy, Jamie also feels that her contraceptive journey has been worth it. She noted that "if you asked me a year ago I would say probably not, but... it's worth it just to minimise risk." Jamie did put a caveat on this statement, saying that "it's been very frustrating. [Initially] they gave me a pill they shouldn't have given me with the rod... [it] fucked with my mood almost immediately. I went to Family Planning afterward and they said 'what, why did they give you that? They shouldn't have given you that with the rod'."

As for any concerns around suppressing menstruation, most of the girls didn't have many. The biggest issue for them was the uncertainty around pregnancy, as not having a period means no signal that you're not, in fact, pregnant. Jo said her main concerns were "knowing I couldn't stay on it forever, and that I could potentially be covering up a more serious issue." Cindy said that she would "quite happily rely on barrier methods but that's not an option for me". Neveda added that "it would cause damage to us internally to stop suppressing our periods. I can't keep bleeding 365 days a year, and [Cindy] can't get endometrial lesions. There's no point sitting around worrying about it because the alternative is shit." Jamie has no concerns, as "for me the last five months have been great and I've felt great in general from not having any periods... but I think taking any drug for too long, especially hormonal drugs isn't good. I think take them so long as you need them."

Emma Macfalan, a nurse practitioner specialising in Women's and Children's Health, had this to say about period suppression: In her experience at Family Planning and working in a travelling women's healthcare unit, she has found that suppressing periods is very common. It also has a long history in New Zealand, with lots of "old guidelines" for menstrual suppression. Emma told Critic that there's "lots of research about stopping periods for therapeutic reasons. Currently the gold standard for menstrual suppression is the Mirena" - the same IUD that Cindy was on for her endometriosis. She said that period suppression is "certainly something I think is a good idea for several reasons. For some people their periods are horrendous, for others [menstrual suppression] is convenient." She noted that for some, it's an issue of money, where they can't afford to buy period products every month, otherwise known as period poverty. Others play sport, and find it easier not to menstruate. Some trans-men also choose to suppress their periods to help with transitioning. Yet other people simply want to stop their periods when they're camping, going travelling or getting married, and want a short term guarantee that they won't experience bleeding.

Emma also noted that quite a few people use the combined pill to suppress periods, and “that’s actually what we suggest that people do. It makes the pill more effective as well as stopping your periods, as you’re less likely to miss a pill.”

So it seems there are endless reasons why someone would want to suppress their period, and it's up to the individual to decide whether that's an attractive option for them. Neveda ended her interview by saying this: "For [Cindy and I], we have medical reasons to suppress our periods, but you don't have to. If you're more comfortable without a period or want to have more control over it, as long as you're speaking to your doctor who knows your medical history and you're being safe, just go for it."

"Just do it. It's not a big deal."

Which Menstrual Product Are You?



Tampon

- Waaaaay up in your business
- Always carries their weight though
- Reliable, if not a little plain
- Can be a bit dry
- Likes Frank Ocean



Pad

- Says "bless you" after you sneeze
- Thinks chicken noodle soup is a cure-all
- Says they're good at gardening, but actually is shit
- Stubborn, but successful
- Total parent of the group
- Can't take a joke or a dick



Moon Cup

- Deep pockets
- First to watch Tiger King, but didn't push it on anyone
- Voms when on the piss
- Knows how to fire a rifle and french braid at the same time
- Actually has their shit together



Hormonal IUD

- Says they give great massages but it just hurts
- Afforded R&V every year by tutoring children
- But really got the money from selling feet pics
- Leaves ciggie bums lying around the flat



Period Underwear

- Does the same thing again and again expecting a different result
- Gets stuck in abusive relationships
- Loves shitty TV but hates Love Island
- Prefers cider to beer



The Pill

- Chronic procrastinator
- Hasn't had a good night's sleep in four years
- Leaves their contacts in for days at a time
- Accidentally called their lecturer "dad"
- Consistently goes over their data allowance

Free bleeding

- Thinks white person dreads are cool
- Never pays to stay in DOC huts
- Can bum a cig off anyone
- Didn't shave through quarantine
- Only buys White Rhinos because they're a charity



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(MAY 2020 MENSTRUATION ISSUE)

PUSY FICTION

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69¢





How to Develop a Nicotine Addiction

An inside look at Otago's own Vape Nation

By Naomii Seah

When I was 18, I smoked my first cigarette. I was roaring drunk, on the balcony of an Auckland club, and I remember feeling so cool—rebellious, even. The morning after, however, I began to feel super guilty. My dad had smoked cigarettes his whole life, and he lost a kidney for it. I remember wrestling the pack off him as a child, convinced it was going to kill him. Then, in the summer of my third year at uni on a night out, I was passed a vape containing 50, maybe 60mg of nicotine in it. The next morning, I went out and brought a disposable vape. I went through maybe ten of these before I realised I needed to buy a more permanent solution. Just like that, I had developed my own nicotine addiction.

Drinking and smoking often go hand in hand. However, though drinking is widely known and accepted to be a part of student culture, vaping and smoking have become ubiquitous with a night out. So why is no one talking about it?

According to Smokefree NZ, people aged 18 - 24 in 2019 made up the highest percentage of smokers out of any age group in the NZ population, at 15%. That figure doesn't include people who vape, which has become increasingly common, especially amongst university-aged students. Currently, the best estimate we have of youth vaping is the ASH Yr 10 snapshot survey; which found that 1.8% of 14-15 year olds use a vaping device daily, and 4% weekly. However, they also stated that "smoking uptake predominantly occurs... among an older age group, and this pattern is plausible for vaping also."

Most of the students we spoke to took up smoking or vaping while at university, typically at flat parties or because of stress. We spoke to several students who graduated from social smoking to smoking regularly.

Social Smoking

For many students, smoking and partying go hand in hand. Taylor* said he would bum cigarettes at parties and while out in town, but that the bumming gradually increased, and eventually he ended up just buying his own packet. Taylor now uses nicotine almost every single day, noting that “[my] uptake was directly related to my alcohol consumption”. This is the same story for Emma*, a casual vaper, who also started vaping in this way. She “brought a vape at RnV because [she] thought it was funny,” and stated that it’s “really connected to drinking” and is “another part of drinking culture”. Jacob* said that he first bought cigarettes at a concert. “I didn’t want to say that I didn’t smoke so I bought a pack, because I thought ‘oh, does everyone smoke?’” He said that he was a casual smoker, and only smoked while on the piss, until one day “I got real stressed out so I picked up a sober [pack] and then didn’t stop.”

Socially, some students we talked to believed that smoking and vaping contributed positively to their lives. Ollie said that pulling a vape out at a party helped to calm his nerves and yarn with his mates.

The students that didn’t cite drinking culture as their gateway to nicotine addictions stated that the stress of university led to their uptake of smoking and vaping. Both Jacob and Andy* said that “something about university” was the driving force for their addiction. Jacob noted that “I always feel way more relaxed when I have nicotine. Sometimes one reaction won’t work and I’ll be like, where the fuck is the nicotine.” Ollie* said that “after a few hoons on [my ex-girlfriend’s vape] to de-stress about uni exams and assignments, I realised how convenient the vape was...[it was] a cheaper, easier and more portable way to have a breather, regain focus and de-clutter any internal stress.” Hannah* agreed, saying that “when I got to uni, I realised it was a really good stress relief, and when I was in third year uni, I was smoking a pack every one to three days.”

Lots of the students we spoke to who started smoking at uni, moved to vaping, citing financial, social or personal reasons for doing so. This is the story for London*, who said that she started smoking while drunk at parties, which led to vaping as she thought it was quite funny, but noww “my vape is like a part of me”. Taylor started vaping due to the financial benefits of vapes over cigarettes, and so did Andy. He said that he would “feel like a stinge cunt” bumming cigarettes off others at parties, but couldn’t afford to keep buying his own. “Then, vaping became a [more mainstream] thing, like it wasn’t just for men with neckbeards and man buns anymore.” Michelle said that she started vaping as she couldn’t afford to keep smoking cigarettes. “I knew that if I wanted to eat every week I couldn’t keep [buying packs].” So she brought a vape, which she said was “fucking cheap”, but the flipside to that is that she’s “way more addicted to nicotine now than when I was smoking cigarettes” even though vapes are marketed as a cessation tool.

Socially, some students we talked to believed that smoking and vaping contributed positively to their lives. Ollie said that pulling a vape out at a party helped to calm his nerves and yarn with his mates. Michelle agreed, stating that her nicotine addiction was the easiest way for her to socialise at parties. Hannah actually started “Otago University Nicotine Addicts” in her time at university and said that the social aspect, meeting up with others, really fueled her addiction.

However, Hannah also said that “when I was heavily chain smoking, it was at the pits of my eating disorder...it was a form of self harm [because] I was smoking as an appetite suppressant.” Michelle had a similar experience, stating “that’s why I’m so fucking skinny. [Me and my flatmates] all lost weight from nicotine addictions [as we] don’t get hungry.” She said that “it was a cycle” as “[not eating] made me feel bad about my life and my own health, and it would make me stressed and then I would smoke more.”

Financial Impacts

Hannah said that “financially, [smoking] absolutely fucked me. The amount of times I put aside groceries to buy a pack, or a pouch was ridiculous. I would hold out for my pay check to buy a pack... When I was desperate.”

Health NZ found that the lower your socio-economic area was, the more likely you were to be a smoker. Now it’s no secret that students are often broke, but according to the 2018 census, the residents of North Campus, Dunedin were found to have a median income of \$4600 per annum. Oof. Hannah said that “financially, [smoking] absolutely fucked me. The amount of times I put aside groceries to buy a pack, or a pouch was ridiculous. I would hold out for my pay check to buy a pack... when I was desperate.” Similarly, Andy said that “when I moved here in my third year, I was really poor. Me and my mate would spend all of [our] money on cigarettes. At times we would spend it on nicotine rather than food.” Taylor said that he believes the fact that “vapes are cheaper than cigarettes and less of a financial burden” is leading to a “general trend in people quitting smoking and taking up vaping”.

However, almost every student we spoke to believed that the financial accessibility of vaping led to an increase in nicotine addictions, rather than a decrease. Hannah said that “vaping is almost worse because you can do it inside and it tastes better, so you want to vape more. [You don’t] register that it could kill you.”

Quitting

Taylor said that he’s in the process of quitting, and tries to do days without using his vape. However, he still intends on keeping his vape for “casual use”.

Many of the students we spoke to believed that the uptake of smoking and vaping during nicotine was a strictly student experience for them. Taylor said that he’s in the process of quitting, and tries to do days without using his vape. However, he still intends on keeping his vape for “casual use”. London said that she’s not aiming to quit anytime soon, but that she “[doesn’t] want to be one of those old people that vapes”. However, “while I’m at uni, I don’t care.” Ollie said that he’ll quit “when I graduate, for real,” as he won’t have to deal with the stress of university anymore.

Hannah doesn’t have plans to quit, but notes that “Quitline doesn’t include vaping, but it should cater to that too.” She also said that “Quitline doesn’t affect young people. You think you have to be thirty-something to sign up.” She said that “students get caught up in the idea that they’ll just do it at uni... but the underlying addiction to nicotine is [still there].” For Hannah, she said “it feels shameful to admit I am a smoker. [People] always look down on you.”

Although not everyone develops a nicotine addiction at university, it seems like uptake of smoking is not an uncommon experience, especially given its relationship to drinking. Michelle said she feels it’s strange that there’s no messaging around social smoking as with social drinking, as she doesn’t think “anyone deserves to be controlled by something like this”. She notes that nicotine is a “cheap stress reliever that appeals to the working class and marginalised people” but then the “stigma is put back on these people [for having an addiction]. It’s shameful [of the government to do]. My nicotine addiction has ruled my life for four years.”

PMDD: PMS's Evil Twin

“AS SOON AS I GET MY PERIOD, I FEEL LIKE I TURN BACK INTO MYSELF AGAIN”

By Sophia Carter Peters

Premenstrual Dysphoric Disorder, more commonly known as PMDD, is a disorder that affects 1 in 20 people with uteruses but is relatively unknown. The symptoms of PMDD are extensive and can cause serious disruptions in day to day life, that often require medication.

What is PMDD? Well, most people are familiar with PMS, the mood swings, bloating and other uncomfortable symptoms that appear right before your period starts. PMDD is PMS on steroids. Alongside severe psychological effects, including increased depression, anxiety, paranoia, and suicidal ideation, there are also physiological impacts, severe fatigue, heart palpitations, gastrointestinal issues and sleeplessness, to name a few.

PMDD has a serious impact on day to day life, and unlike PMS which generally lasts a few days, PMDD can start weeks prior to the beginning of menstruation. It is often treated with birth control or SSRI's (Selective Serotonin Reuptake Inhibitor, a common type of antidepressant), both of which aren't always successful.

Like many mood-influencing disorders, it's easy to read a list of symptoms and think about how awful it may be, but that can never quite cover what it's actually like to live with it. I spoke to a few women with PMDD to hear in their words what it's like, how they've learned to cope, and what they would say to anyone who's been in their position, trying to understand what's happening and how to help.

“It sometimes feels fake, but PMDD is very real, if you hate yourself enough in the dark times it's easy enough to see it as a personal flaw and not a disorder.

Kathy is one of the many people with PMDD for whom hormone-based medications don't work. “I was prescribed a low dose contraceptive pill. I was nervous because in the past the pill has affected my emotions in a really unmanageable way.” Although the pill is a great contraceptive for many people, there are many who have severe side effects and it simply isn't an option. After trying it for a month, Kathy stopped and has since been unmedicated, which comes with its own issues.

“Most months, about a week before my period, I have a sudden downswing in my mood.” Kathy struggles with suicidal ideation, concentration and sleep issues, severe fatigue, and anxiety and mood swings, all common PMDD side effects. “Honestly, it's terrible, then I get my period and it all disappears instantly. As soon as I get my period I feel like I turn back into myself again.”

Dawn* was diagnosed with PMDD in 2013, and tried a variety of treatments to try to manage her symptoms, the first of which being Sertraline, an SSRI, and one of the first-line treatments for the disorder. After filtering through a range of similar drug treatments, Dawn got the Mirena, an IUD and common contraceptive method.

“In the past, before I was diagnosed, [PMDD] had a huge impact on my life. Even though it's well managed now, I do get breakthrough episodes maybe once every six months, which lines up with my period.” Dawn sincerely recommends seeing a doctor who specializes in PMDD management, “don't be afraid of taking medication to manage it. Let close friends and family know when you are having an episode.”

The mood influencing symptoms of PMDD can sometimes cause it to be misdiagnosed as Bipolar Disorder or Borderline Personality Disorder. Toni was misdiagnosed with Bipolar Disorder and spent five years believing this was the source of her issues.

“I had been struggling with severe depression and suicidal ideation since I was 14 and now I'm 30. I even started to measure my calendar year as 12 horrible periods, instead of 365 potentially amazing days.” She had been medicated for depression since she was 19, “I'm still in disbelief that my periods really have that much power over my day to day living... I feel so much better having the correct diagnosis.”

Toni has been on the depo injection for the past four months since receiving her diagnosis, another contraceptive method and treatment for PMDD. When I asked her if she had any advice to give people who think they may have PMDD, she said, “please please please talk to another woman who has any form of period struggles. It is more common than you know and often goes undiagnosed and untreated. You are not alone.”

Maddy* is one of the many people who was diagnosed with depression, and stopped looking for further treatment, thinking depression made sense as the cause of her struggles. “It wasn't until I started going to therapy regularly at 25 that I really noticed a pattern in my mood... I got intimate with listening to my body, which I was not very good at for other depression-related reasons. Eventually, I diagnosed myself (with reassurances from the therapist that my experiences were real).”

PMDD and depression, like BPD and Bipolar Disorder, are easily misdiagnosed. “Just before my period, for a week, I would become severely depressed. I couldn't be bothered existing... Hating myself for being fine one week and a wreck the next.” The sporadic and inconstant nature of PMDD makes it difficult to clearly associate if you can't connect it to your period because most mood disorder diagnoses require long term consistency, which PMDD doesn't always have.

The inconsistency also makes it easy to invalidate any real struggle being faced and try to pass it off as less of an issue. “It made me feel like I was imagining it, or that it was ‘all in my head’ as people like to say with mental illness. When I was fine, I couldn't fathom the shitty feelings and I'd just brush them off as a blip every month.”

When I asked Maddy* what she would say to someone who was experiencing PMDD symptoms, she said, “It sometimes feels fake, but PMDD is very real, if you hate yourself enough in the dark times it's easy enough to see it as a personal flaw and not a disorder... I love therapy, and it has helped me so much, but if it's not accessible to you, start a journal. Track your cycle, write down all your dumb feelings and take it with you if you want to talk to a doctor about trying some medication. And you gotta take it seriously, it's easy to forget when you feel fine. I want things to get better for you and I think they can. Talk to people who have it! Validate your experience!”

*Name changed for privacy.

PERIOD UNDERWEAR

WORTH IT?

BY ANDY RANDELL
AND SINEAD GILL

Try something for me: what do you think of when I tell you to think of period products. You will have, no doubt, had tampons and pads spring to mind, maybe even the more recently popular moon cup, but how many of you thought of underwear itself? Probably very few of you did, unless you read the title of this article, and even fewer of you have sampled any. We often consider underwear to be unfortunate casualties of our monthly cycles, but the prospect of making the least fortunate clothing article the shining star of the monthly cycle is sure to be the pipe dream of our downstairs plumbing. Well, babe, it's more likely than you think.

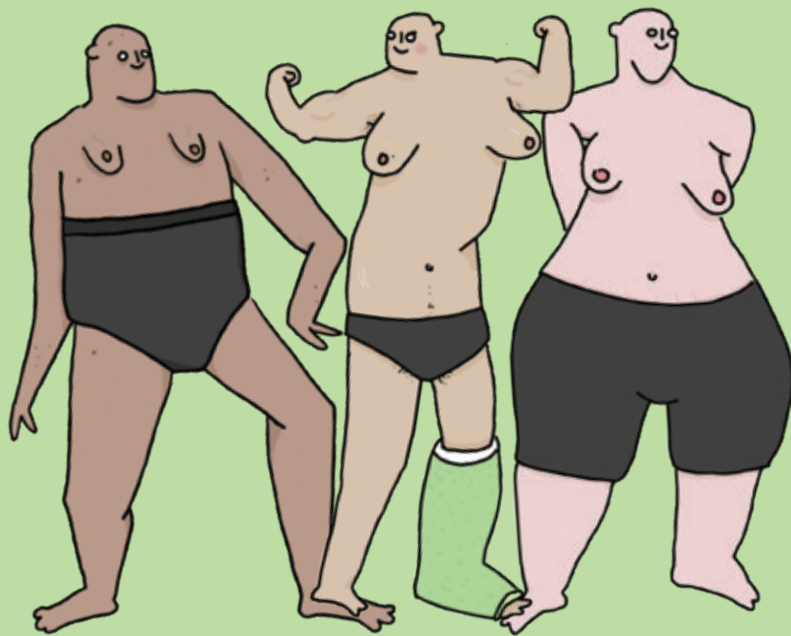
Over the last few months, three students who menstruate have been trialling out period underwear so that you can weigh up the pros and cons of investing in some serious stocks. And I mean serious. Period underwear can be expensive as fuck. The prices of the products these three folks tried ranged from \$17 from Love Luna, to \$39 from AWWA and \$44.50 from ModiBodi. That is a big jump, but is it worth it? Let's find out.

PEACE OF MIND

A barrier to beginning your period underwear journey is the concern that there will be leakage, and that is definitely something that our reviewers went through in the beginning. Rachel said she couldn't use mooncups without leakage, so using them in combination with the period underwear was the perfect mix. Katie did mention that once she had a slight mishap during sleep, which she explained could have been caused by her sleep posture, but this only happened once. Miley Cyrus taught us that nobody's perfect, and this extends to period products, but knowing that your panties have your back is a commoradery that will make you question how you ever went without.

CLEANING

Maintaining the underwear requires some work and, as Rachel observed, vital to do properly. This is to be expected with them being reusable, but the amount of overhead is surprisingly small. Before put in with the rest of the laundry, be sure to run them under cold water. In the grand scheme of things, cold hands are but a small price to pay for the benefit of easing the guilt experienced by contributing to the damage caused to our planet with disposable, largely non-biodegradable period-related waste. Be sure, though, not to include any fabric softener in the laundry and avoid tumble-drying, advice given by the manufacturers to ensure their longevity. Also mentioned by our participants, it is easy to run out of usable pairs when all of them are out on the line to dry, so back-up pairs are basically essential, but also costly.



COMFORT

So we know that these undies are fire, but that counts for nothing. Well, my vagina-bearing friends, you're in good hands. They were the best, and were the cutest to boot. Made for this reason, especially in red. For many, there is an attractive, even if this comes at a cost of comfort, but it is tailored such that you can feel comfortable while not.

EXPECTATIONS VERSUS REALITY

Our reviewers started off not anticipating good results, but "disappointment," and understandable position with the solution, they knew that the underwear would require the pants may have an unpleasant odour. This couldn't be helped.

When was the last time you were amazed by period products? Our test subjects were. Every complaint regarding the underwear was circumvented. As a glowing recommendation, Katie admitted having "enjoyed using them overall". Not only were the reviews positive, but reported that her cramps were not as severe as with usual period products. "Best and most painless period [she] ever had". Rachel said she "could not recommend enough".

It definitely isn't a cheap way to manage your period. For many, you have three or four pairs, but that requires a significant investment for the peace of mind. Katie points out that you should definitely check out the websites for bundle deals. The amount saved on purchasing disposable products is significant.

THE PRODUCTS REVIEWED

Love Luna:

Rachel: These ones were my favourite because they were like regular underwear (aka looked cute). They are not as bulky as regular underwear if you wear them on a heavy day.

Katie: So comfy and so cheap! Literally, these are cheap. How is that possible?

Maddie: Felt less like normal underwear and more like leggings. These under anything tight, but they were so secure I was fine.

AWWA:

Rachel: These pants are a good time. The fit is nice, although these that I would wear a light wash of denim with these in my time in my cycle.

Katie: Damn I felt so comfy and sexy in these, the mesh was so good and asked my partner to spank me, these made me feel like a slut.

Maddie: Unfortunately the wrong size was selected and they were too tight.

ModiBodi:

Rachel: The absorbent area on these pants was quite good. It was like a sanitary pad and generally a bit saggier around the butt, but getting the job done. The absorbance was solid and I felt like I was protected.

Katie: Really wide and thick gusset and undies seemed to do with the heavy absorbency.

Maddie: These were the most comfortable and even though they were a bit tight, I was comfortable wearing them out and for most of the day.

PEAR:

for zilch if you're burning from an unruly chafe. For this, Rachel said of the Love Luna brand that she commented that the ModiBodi brand was great for the inescapable pressure for underwear to be comfortable. Let it be known that there is period underwear that doesn't compromise on aesthetics.

REALITY

As Katie, for one, stated that she "expected" how she experiences periods. As a reusable product, a higher degree of upkeep, and expressed concern that it wouldn't be further from reality.

Products, if ever? Well, this was probably the first time using the standard disposable products was a game changer. I admits to being "fully converted", and Maddie to her trepidations proven unfounded, but Katie to her using tampons, going so far as to say that "it was the best" period underwear a "game changer" that she

Rachel said that it is easier to manage the labour if it's a smart investment. She believes that it is worth the cost if you are looking at investing, you should know that though the down payment may be daunting, trust that the products is worth it.

These were the most comfortable and similar to wearing pads, as absorbent as the others so may be susceptible to leaks.

Softer and as comfortable as my normal undies I

you were wearing a pad. I probably wouldn't wear them if you would definitely wear them overnight.

Though they do ride quite high. I am so confident in the pants as long as I matched them with the right

the panelling was hot! I literally bent over the bed and felt like a fucking queen...A bloody comfy queen and was unable to review this one.

prominent. This made them feel like wearing a bra instead of the others. But I cannot fault them on the fact that they had no fear of leakage.

and slightly baggy, overall still great, thickness could

kinda cute in red. On an average day I would be happy with it.

HOW TO FREE BLEED

VIVA LA MENSTRUATION

BY NAOMII SEAH

Periods are rough, messy, and miserable. Sanitary items are no better. Sometimes it's just too much effort to find one, let alone buy them. Sometimes your flow is so light that a sanitary product just doesn't seem worth it. Sometimes, you just need to free bleed. Here's how.

1. START OFF SMALL.

For those who are not used to free bleeding, or are open to trying the idea, free bleeder Caitlin recommends timing your free bleeding for a time when your flow is lightest, to minimise discomfort and swamp ass. Hennessey, another free bleeder, also recommends always wearing a liner, if you're not buying products specifically for your period. This helps protect against unexpected or light bleeding, so one can get used to more advanced free bleeding techniques. They're cheaper and much lighter than pads, and you can stick some of them together if the bleeding gets too heavy.

2. COMFORTABLE CLOTHING

Across the board, free bleeders recommended a pair of comfy pants and undies that you don't mind getting stained. These are essential if you're trying to free bleed. Make sure the underwear is somewhat absorbent, thick cotton, and the inner lining of the pants are as well. Your pants should also be on the thicc side to ensure that any spillage doesn't get on furniture.

3. SHOWER. THIS IS SELF EXPLANATORY.

4. COLD WASHES ARE YOUR FRIEND.

This tip comes from Caitlin, who says that you should clean undies or any blood stains in cold water, as heat binds proteins to fabric and makes it harder to get staining out.

5. DESIGNATED BLANKET.

For extra insurance against leakage, designate a blanket or other scrap of fabric to sit on while you free bleed. This is mostly for peace of mind and comfort, though it can get a little gross. The fabric should ideally be made of a less absorbent synthetic fabric like polyester or acrylic, because the blood stains just come right off in the wash.

6. CONTINGENCY PLAN.

Finally, if you do accidentally get some blood on your couch, carpet or chair upholstery, hydrogen peroxide gets rid of blood stains in a flash. Just dab some on and watch the blood lift right out.

COLONISATION MADE PERIODS GROSS

Māori have been spitting truths long before colonisers put their 2 cents in

By Kaiya Cherrington

Waiwhero, mate marama, mate wāhine, paheke, te awa atua. There are many ways to describe menstruation for Māori, because it is an important part of life. It is a sign of whakapapa, connection to the land, connection to the gods.

MENSTRUATION WAS POWER - UNTIL COLONISATION.

Colonisation did its damn best to erase Māori culture, and unfortunately, it did a pretty good job. It changed how Māori dressed, spoke, worked, and lived. Māori are not only deprived of stories from their ancestors due to the interference of oral tradition, but now, so much literature about Māori pre and post-contact is from some English man who rocked up on a boat and interpreted Māori narratives through a caucasian lens. Māori didn't tell their stories to every Tom, Dick and Harry that rocked up from Europe, so ultimately through colonisation and patriarchy, a lot of knowledge around Māori and periods were lost and replaced by ideas that periods were dirty and shameful. And, most notably, the idea that men are superior to women was a biggie.

**MANA WĀHINE (POWERFUL
WOMEN) WHO? APPARENTLY
WE DON'T KNOW HER
ANYMORE.**

Colonial ideas that periods are pollution have been carried on for years, especially by men. Unfortunately, the disgust by men towards menstruation intertwines with the concept that women are beneath men, reinforced by colonisers throughout the Pacific, with the use of a patriarchal religion and enforced gender roles.

Māori pre-contact didn't view periods the same way as Pākehā. Women's tapu (sacred) state during menstruation was different. They weren't unclean, they were connected to the gods, they were powerful. Menstruation for Māori was celebrated, not kept secret. The first bleed of a woman would be cherished and made known to others, and they would have hakari (feasts), give gifts, or receive moko kauae (sacred face tattoo).

Any restrictions women put on themselves during menstruation was for the protection of everyone, the power women held during this time if exposed to other tapu concepts could be dangerous. For example, not going into the sea to get food in order to avoid mixing the tapu of menstruation with the tapu of food. Throughout their bleed, Māori women rested. A common misconception was that women were banished to bleed alone because they weren't clean, however it's more commonly told they were just giving themselves time to have a rest, take a break from life for a bit. Alone time and no work - could be nice.

Ethnographers and other Pākehā often recited their own perspectives onto Māori women, in that women should not have sex on their periods otherwise the man would be harmed. But low and behold, contrary to the beliefs of a white man, Māori could do what they want; and sometimes had sex on their period.

Yet people haven't caught on to this perspective. Māori men grow up with a notion that periods are yuck, or it's a topic that shouldn't be discussed with their gender. The internalisation of colonial beliefs throughout generations of Māori and Pākehā is damaging to women, to how they are supposed to feel about themselves and their bodies. But it's because some Māori weren't taught this Māori worldview, that men respected periods and the power of women, not repelled by it all.

It's a tale as old as time. Two Māori women interviewed repeated the same notion; that their "periods were kept secret", a private idea that isn't talked about to people other than their mum, friends or sisters. Both women described feeling ashamed when they were teens, taking their "bags to the toilets so boys didn't see [their] sanitary products" in high school, and giving no cultural significance towards their periods besides recognition that they possess the special power to bring humans into the world.

A damaging consequence of colonisation is the fact that white men have inserted their opinions on how a women's body is viewed, and destroyed the cultural significance of Māori women and menstruation.

It's probably easier said than done, but we need to respect our bodies and take notes from our ancestors, because they had it right. Remind ourselves that menstruation is sacred, and the connection between our blood and the atua is so powerful. And if you aren't Māori, the sentiment stands: periods are power, don't be ashamed.

Perhaps it's time to get the culturally incompetent thoughts of white men out of our narratives, and decolonise our periods.

Gender Diverse Takes On Periods

By Sinéad Gill

There is a lot of stigma around periods. Not as much stigma as there is around gender diversity, though. So what if you were stuck in the middle of both discourses? This would be a shit menstruation issue without talking to the one group of menstruators who are most excluded when it comes to period chats: those that do not identify as women. Critic spoke to ten students at Otago University, four of whom identify as trans men, and the rest identifying as either genderfluid, non-binary or transmasculine non-binary.

Disclaimer: Inter-sex people exist, but none were available for this story. Many of the gender diverse contributors gave them a shoutout, and one said that they believe intersex people were even more often left out of period chats than others.

Menstruating

Experiencing body dysphoria is not a requirement to classify as gender diverse, but for all but two students, that is how they feel while menstruating. Alex said that at this point, it is “just a bit of an inconvenience” that they “don’t let” themselves think too much about. Saff was the only one who said that having to use a tampon or menstrual cup was the trigger, rather than just having the period itself. For the rest, menstruating is “terrible” or even “traumatic” for physical and psychological reasons. Scott said he “hates every second of it ... while I know that I am not a woman, it makes me feel like I’m not convincing anyone of that.” Most of these students now take contraception to suppress their periods.

Women’s issues

The overtly feminine framing of menstruation is something that these students find frustrating. “It makes me feel like I can never escape the gender binary,” Sian said. They also pointed out that it makes no sense, as “a lot of cis-women don’t menstruate” for hormonal or menopausal reasons. “Only referring it to a women’s issue doesn’t sit well with me,” Sian said, and others agree. L said he hates how this uncontrollable thing “lumps me in with women or reminds me of my unusual anatomy”. He and others wish the focus of menstruation was shifted from “this intense femininity”. “Products are marketed towards women, conversations refer to women. It makes me and others feel excluded,” said Bo.

Marketing aside, cis-women often forget that gender diverse people bleed too, and this can also lead to unintentional exclusion. “People frame it as some sort of solidarity between women ... to complain about periods,” Scott said. “It’s not exclusive to the female experience, it doesn’t make me any less of a man [to have a period]”. S pointed out how often gender diverse people get erased from the conversation, particularly when people get really intense about how periods are about ‘connecting with your womanhood’. “Fuck off,” he said, “it’s just a body doing what it does.” He also said that “honestly, the messaging around menstruation as being a feminine thing is more dysphoria inducing than the actual thing, to me.”

Period as weapon

Period talks can also be “weaponise[d]” against gender diverse people, said Saff. Some students specified that when people found out they had tampons, or were buying menstrual products, it sometimes felt like they had affirmed to people “what they want to know, being my assigned gender at birth”. Alex said they internalised a lot of rhetoric when they were younger, namely “you get your period because your body is designed for the miracle of childbirth”. “I hate being reminded of that,” Alex said.

Are there any plus sides to periods?

Six said that there were none. One said a plus is knowing they’re not pregnant, and another said it was a sign to them that they are healthy. Bo said that it was “pretty sick” knowing they could bring life into the world: “I’m a living, yet inefficient cloning machine.” Sam said that they appreciated having one when they had a menstruating partner, because if they synched up, they would “just have a movie day and cuddle”.

HOW TO GET \$50 WORTH FROM A MOON CUP

when you don't bleed four days a month

As written by someone who normally doesn't bleed four-ish days a month.

By Fox Meyer

Moon cups are great. They're inconspicuous, reduce plastic waste, and they're easily distributable to people with uteruses in developing nations. All my female friends were raving about them, and not one to miss out on the latest trend, I decided to invest and see what all the hype was about.

Turns out, these nifty bits of silicon are NOT in fact cups from which you're meant to drink. I was surprised to see that what I'd ordered was so small, and with a weird handle on one end, almost as if for inserting and removing from a confined space. Surprise - it's a menstrual product. Moon cups are designed to replace the single-use tampon, and provide an eco-friendly alternative to contemporary period products.

But since I have neither a vagina nor a need to collect blood every full moon, I've had to get creative with my latest fashion trend. Here are several uses for moon cups if you find yourself, like me, in unnecessary possession of one of these hemo-saturated Holy Grails.



1. Plant a little plant in it. So cute, but problems arise when the water can't drain out of the bottom, because the whole point is that they retain liquids really well. Oops. Now you have a dead plant. But it was cute while it lasted, and we all know you're a shitty plant mom anyway, so this isn't a surprise.
2. Make jello shots. Perfect for your PMS-themed party, these exciting molds are sure to appeal to all of your feminine friends, and absolutely scream "I'm an ally". Go get 'em, fellas. Can't go wrong with this one.
3. Speaking of shots, what better way to take advantage of your new \$50 vessel than to drink out of it? Whiskey, vodka, rum, whatever floats your boat, really. It all has the same sanguine aftertaste of menstrual blood. Yummy stuff, and all that extra iron really helps the vegans amongst us. Cheers.
4. Finger puppets are back in, right? You can pretend to be a plastic purple Darth Vader. It's way less scary, and way more fun for everyone.
5. Use it to catch and release spiders safely. Spider season is almost back upon us, and those furry friends will be soon invading your home to share your warmth and eat your bugs. So, instead of squashing your newest mates, just use your handy-dandy moon cup to safely secure and relocate these valuable members of the North Dunedin community.
6. And in the spirit of genital safety, you could try to use this as a really shitty condom, if your package is small enough. She'd appreciate the gesture, and since these lovely bits of silicon are designed for catching small amounts of liquid, it's perfect for your disappointingly diminutive dong.
7. Really amp up your consensual blood collection as a considerate vampiric member of today's society. With neck-biting being presumably illegal, the best way to feed your immortal lust for blood is by harnessing the shed waste of our PMSing pals. It's a win-win.







Kia ora e te iwi!

Things are looking very different since the last critic went to print and especially with the OUSA exec! Under lockdown your exec have been working hard at advocating for better grade considerations, released a student hardship survey, worked with the university on Pūtea Tautoko to alleviate student hardship, and kept up our events and recreation online!

Getting back to some means of normality does not mean we need to be complacent about the struggles we are still going through. Please reach out for help if you need it, apply for Pūtea Tautoko through eVision! This is a fund worth well over a million that has weekly contributions to top it up, there is plenty to go around if you need it. Whether you are foundation/undergrad/postgrad, full-time or part-time, international or domestic, you are eligible. So that means if you have a short or long term cost you can't cover and it will impact your ability to study at Otago you should apply!

To commemorate this issue's theme, here are some of my memorable menstruation moments under lockdown.

Best moment: Finally trying out my new Wā cup (\$20 at the OUSA reception), good for my bank account and papatūānuku.

Worst/funniest moment: PMS kicking in hard when I cried over my mum eating the garlic naan I was saving for lunch, follow @silenceboomer on tiktok to see the evidence.

Student Support is online <https://ousasupporthub.org.nz/> and open in Level 2.

Aroha nui,
Michaela x

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HOROSCOPES



Aquarius Jan 20 – Feb 18

While you lay in bed looking out the window, the moon will tell you that your next period will be extremely heavy as punishment for being you.

The duration of your menstrual bleeding: Five days, but they will be hell.



Pisces Feb 19 – Mar 20

Get in touch with your emotions this cycle. Get your palms read, read Michelle Obama's book, and most importantly, put a crystal in your vagina.

The duration of your menstrual bleeding: Three days of light bleeding.



Aries Mar 21 – Apr 19

You will find yourself craving period sex, regardless if you had the experience before. The moon wants what it wants. Lay a towel down and find someone who's into it.

The duration of your menstrual bleeding: Six days, with two days off and on.



Taurus Apr 20 – May 20

Your period will come late, and you will go crazy. Did you have unprotected lockdown sex at any point? Go in a spa pool? Can a ghost impregnate you?

The duration of your menstrual bleeding: Two days, just as a sign.



Gemini May 21 – Jun 20

Your period is as irregular as your attendance to lectures. Not only will you have severe back pain, but the bloat will be pretty bad too. Stock up on pads, tampons, moon-cups, and stay in bed.

The duration of your menstrual bleeding: Non-stop for two months.



Cancer Jun 21 – Jul 22

Cope with your cycle by listening to Lewis Capaldi and drinking five litres of Milo. Lock the doors, turn the lights off and wrap yourself in your blanket. It's gonna be a long week.

The duration of your menstrual bleeding: Exactly seven days.



Leo Jul 23 – Aug 22

You're on contraceptives and haven't had your period for a while. You will also decide to not have your period this week, for convenience. Denim jeans are being worn this week, baby.

The duration of your menstrual bleeding: 0 days but you'll still be bloated.



Virgo Aug 23 – Sep 22

Your organisation and perfectionism will be put to the test this week. Your period will be especially messy, leak through two pairs of good underwear a day, and have a ridiculous amount of clots.

The duration of your menstrual bleeding: Four long days.



Libra Sep 23 – Oct 22

Good news! You're pregnant. Bad news, no more white wine Wednesdays.

The duration of your menstrual bleeding: A whole child.



Scorpio Oct 23 – Nov 21

Your heavy flow will leave you completely unphased as you continue your day with a heat pack strapped to your gut. A bad bitch slows down for no one, not even your eggs.

The duration of your menstrual bleeding: Six productive days.



Sagittarius Nov 22 – Dec 21

Your period won't come this week, but don't be alarmed. She's gone on holiday. Perhaps to Bora Bora, or France. Either way, your uterus is unaffected by the pull of the moon.

The duration of your menstrual bleeding: Maybe next month.



Capricorn Dec 22 – Jan 19

Free bleed in your bed and save the hassle of putting in a cup or polluting with pads. Use those undies at the bottom of your drawer, lay out a towel, and put on your favourite show with seven seasons. It's called self care.

The duration of your menstrual bleeding: 168 half hour episodes.



BOOZE REVIEW: RABBIT RANCH

BY SINKPISS PLATH

When esteemed Dunedin South (now Taieri) electorate member of parliament, Clare Curran, came to Critic for an intense debate, she brought wine along with her. She brought Rabbit Ranch, a fruity sav that tingles the throat with every sip. Nice attempt to intimidate us Clare, but we deal with Harlene Hayne on a weekly basis. Critic tried to track down that exact wine, but the lockdown had clearly gotten to the Maori Hill housewives and Sauvignon Blanc was sold out. Pinot Gris would have to suffice. "Not the best but ok," Clare commented of the replacement. Same.

The flavour is sweet, but underwhelming, much like Labour's policies. Is it basically just overpriced goon? Maybe. But good for Clare Curran that she can afford \$20 wine, especially now that she's close to retirement. Save your money for a kitchen renovation, babe. Especially if you're splashing out on \$50 fines for majiruana possession, in this economic climate.

Buying a wine called The Rabbit Ranch basically is a bat signal to the world that you're horny. If you like vibrators, you won't like this wine, it just won't pleasure you in the same way. I could feel my clitoris physically shrinking with every sip. But if you're still in denial that female masturbation exists, drink up. God knows you'll need it.

Taste rating: 6.9/10

Pairs well with: Strawberry lubricated ass.

Tasting notes: Privilege

Froth level: Finding out the the government isn't implementing a UBI in the midst of a recession

bone apple teeth

with
**Caroline Moratti
& Alice Jones**

TACOS: For a Celebration

Everyone loves tacos. There's a reason that the humble dish appeases both the fiercest of enemies, the basic white girl and the hipster. Tacos are juicy, spicy, comforting and the meal I would reach for to celebrate the end of a devastatingly long lockdown. It's the end of Autumn so, fair warning, avocados and tomatoes aren't at their cheapest right now. But soon those beautiful fruits will leave us and our supermarket shelves, so best just to say fuck it and buy a \$3 avocado. Time and money isn't real. I don't know what day it is or when I last showered. All I know is that I crave crunchy, salty foods after so many of my parents' bland curries and this, my darlings, will set your heart on fire. The recipe below is for beef tacos, but really you could put chicken, tofu or weed in and it doesn't really matter. Only guac matters, in the end.

Method

1. Always prepare fresh ingredients first, start by chopping up the lettuce into strips. If you have a sad-looking cucumber in your fridge, here's your chance to get it involved.
2. Guac time. Spoon out a whole avocado into a small bowl. Add diced red onion and tomato along with a generous handful of salt. Basically just mash it the fuck up boys. If you have lemon/lime or cilantro feel free to add some, but no pressure, you're doing great.

Cayenne pepper is good for a little rub down. You can't go wrong with some garlic and chilli seasoning during these trying times.

3. Salt the uncooked beef with a generous sprinkle, crank that black pepper in there, too. Cayenne pepper is good for a little rub down. You can't go wrong with some garlic and chilli seasoning during these trying times.
4. Drop the beef in hot oil, cook on one side for 5-7 minutes. You'll know when to flip when it's caramelised and releases from the pan easily. Cook the other side for 2-3 minutes. Put it on a chopping board and rest the meat for 5-10 minutes before you cut them into strips.
5. Heat up those tortillas. If you've opted for hard tortillas, chuck 'em in the oven for 5 minutes, or chuck the soft ones in a pan for a quick dry fry.
6. Get the store-bought salsa out of the fridge. Lol.
7. Plate up time. Layer that lettuce, beef, guac and salsa all up in that taco's business. Take a deep breath and devour. Everything's going to be alright.

Ingredients

(Serves 6 Tacos)

6 tortillas, either hard or soft (go for the smaller ones, they're much less likely to collapse, unlike our economy)
1 avocado
1/4 of a red onion
1 tomato
1/4 lettuce head
500 grams of shit beef (NOT mince, I swear to god)
Cupboard seasoning
Salsa





MOANINGFUL CONFESSIONS

Alright lads, I've got a problem. I don't know if it's something developmental, or if it's just that I've been shackled up for six weeks without a shag, but I've had more wet dreams during the lockdown than I've had in my entire life.

I'd be lying if I said I was complaining - it's not like there's anyone here to be embarrassed in front of, and I've had some pretty vivid dreams about some pretty stellar sex. I'm mostly just confused as to if this is a problem for more people than just me. I'm not a chronic masturbator or anything, I wasn't having all that much sex before lockdown either, and I assume the same is true for the majority of you. So what gives?

At this point I think I've had at least one wet dream per week. It's gotten to the point where I'm waking up right at climax, which means half the time I can keep it together and half the time I just sit there with a head full of steam as I soil my pants, which seems like a waste. Also, the dreams are starting to get a little weird, and I'm getting a bit concerned. I don't wanna take too deep a dive into my psyche, but I gotta say, some of these dreams are starting to get a little weird: one time I was sucking my own

dick. I woke up from that one.

These days I have daytime pants and nighttime pants, just in case. I ended up soiling one of my favorite pairs in the first week of lockdown, and while it washes out really easy, it felt a bit blasphemous. There's nothing like cumming in a sentimental pair of undies.

I really hope this isn't just a me problem, so I'm putting this out there in case anybody is suffering in a similar way. I'm wondering if this will go away once I can get a root in, because if it doesn't, I'm gonna be terrified about spending a night anywhere but my own bed. What happens if I'm on the piss and pass out at a mate's and cum on his couch?

Obviously I haven't told the boys about this, and there isn't a bird in sight to tell about it either, so I'm reaching out to Critic. I'd like to say that although this is definitely weird, I've been able to have better sex in my sleep than I've had awake. If I can figure out how to control these dreams I could be keen to keep having them, but for the time being I feel like I'm getting fucked by my brain more than me fucking my brain.

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