



From Research to Practice: Postgraduate Training in Sexual health

A new area of work for RHR

Adriane Martin Hilber
15 February 2005



Defining sexual health

World Health Organization Department of Reproductive Health and Research



WHO and Sexual Health

- 1974 Meeting on Education and Treatment of human sexuality: the Training of health professionals
- 1983 European Regional meeting on sexual health
- 2000 PAHO meeting on promoting sexual health
- 2002 WHO Technical Consultation on Sexual Health
- 2003 RHR creates a unit of work on Sexual Health



Sexual Health

Sexual health is a state of physical, emotional, mental, and social well being related to sexuality; it is not merely the absence of disease, dysfunction or infirmity. Sexual health requires a positive and respectful approach to sexuality and sexual relationships, as well as the possibility of having pleasurable and safe sexual experiences, free of coercion, discrimination and violence. For sexual health to be attained and maintained, the sexual rights of all persons must be respected, protected and fulfilled.



The Public Health Challenge

World Health Organization Department of Reproductive Health and Research



Global summary of the HIV/AIDS epidemic, December 2004

Number of people living with HIV/AIDS	Total	39.4 million	←
	Adults	37.2 million	
	Women	17.6 million	←
	Children under 15 years	2.2 million	
People newly infected with HIV in 2004	Total	4.9 million	←
	Adults	4.3 million	
	Women	1.8 million	
	Children under 15 years	640,000	
AIDS deaths in 2004	Total	3.1 million	←
	Adults	2.6 million	
	Women	1.1 million	
	Children under 15 years	510,000	

World Health Organization Department of Reproductive Health and Research



Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS

UNAIDS

UNICEF • UNDP • UNFPA • UNDCP
ILO • UNESCO • WHO • WORLD BANK



Feminization of HIV

- **Globally just under half of all people living with HIV are female (estimated 17.6 million globally)**
- **In sub-Saharan Africa women and girls make up almost 57% of all people infected with HIV**
- **Of the 57%, 76% are young people age 15-24 years.**



An estimated 340 million new cases
of curable Sexually Transmitted
Infections
(STIs) in adults have occurred
throughout the world in 1999.

Global Prevalence and Incidence of Selected Curable Sexually
Transmitted Infections: Overview and Estimates

World Health Organization (2001), p. 1

World Health Organization Department of Reproductive Health and Research



In developing countries, STIs and their complications rank in the top five disease categories for which adults seek health care.

Global Prevalence and Incidence of Selected Curable Sexually
Transmitted Infections: Overview and Estimates
World Health Organization (2001), p. 6

World Health Organization Department of Reproductive Health and Research



Infertility

- Major cause of infertility is STI/RTI infection (especially the sequellae of chlamydia and gonorrhoea infection)
- Also caused by endocrine, metabolic, environmental, immune problems, obstructions of the genital track
- A major health cost for society - but equally important -- its devastating personal costs



Unintended Pregnancy, Early Childbirth and Abortion

- Each year, 15 million women under age 20 give birth (1/5 of all births worldwide); many of these unintended.
- Birth between the ages of 15-17 is more common in the developing world.
- 5 million of the 20 million women having unsafe abortions are adolescents.
- Unsafe abortion leads to a myriad of health consequences including RTIs, infertility, chronic pelvic pain, pelvic inflammatory disease, and death.



Risks of Early Childbirth

- Girls aged 15-19 are twice as likely to die in childbirth than women in their 20's -- and so are their children.
- Young mothers are at increased risk of cephalopelvic disproportion because the birth canal does not complete its bone growth until several years after puberty.



Every year, an estimated 515,000
women
die of complications of pregnancy
and childbirth

Advancing Safe
Motherhood
Through Human
Rights, 2001

World Health Organization Department of Reproductive Health and Research



Sexual Dysfunctions and Disorders

- Low Sexual Desire
- Male Erectile Dysfunction
- Orgasmic Disorder
- Premature Ejaculation
- Dyspareunia
- Vaginismus
- Paraphilias
- Non-paraphilic compulsive sexual behavior
- Gender identity disorders (transsexualism)

World Health Organization Department of Reproductive Health and Research



Sexual Violence

- Rape and domestic violence account for an estimated 5-16% of the healthy years of life lost to women of reproductive age.
- Populations-based studies report between 12 and 25% of women have experienced attempted or completed forced sex by an intimate partner at some time in their lives.

WHO. Violence against women. Fact sheet No 239.

2000



Magnitude of sexual violence

- Studies from different parts of the world have found that 7–36% of girls and 3–29% of boys suffer from sexual abuse in childhood, with a majority of studies reporting 1.5–3 times more sexual violence against girls than boys.
- The percentage of adolescents who have been coerced into sex can range from approximately 7% to 46% of females and 3% to 20% of males, depending on the country.
- Population-based studies report that between 6% and 46% of women have experienced attempted or completed forced sex by an intimate partner or ex-partner at some time in their life.
- Rape and domestic violence account for an estimated 5–16% of healthy years of life lost in women of reproductive age.

WHO *World Report on Violence*. Geneva: WHO, 2002.

World Health Organization Department of Reproductive Health and Research



Violence against sexual minorities

- Negative attitudes lead to violence
- Verbal and physical harassment common
- Increased incidence of depression and suicide - particularly among adolescents
- Stigmatization leads to self-hatred, risky sexual behavior and poor health



Physical Disabilities

- Spinal cord injury
- Stroke
- Multiple sclerosis
- Traumatic brain injury
- Cerebral palsy
- Profound effect on gender identity and role, self esteem, and interpersonal relationships
- Sexuality needs often ignored, exploited or abused



Mental Health

- Mental health and sexual health closely linked
- Mental and behavioural disorders account for 12% of the burden of disease
- Interference in making informed decisions, observe protective and preventative practices, control aggressive or abuse sexual actions, to seek health, the ability to care or love.



Improving sexual health requires addressing sexuality



Healthy Sexuality

Includes (for example):

- Healthy sexual functioning
- Capacity to give and receive erotic pleasure
- Self-esteem relating to one's sexuality
- Making voluntary sexual choices
- Being free of sexual coercion and discrimination because of one's sexuality
- Sexual development throughout the life cycle
- Physical and emotional aspects of sexuality
- Forms of sexual expression and preferences



Reducing risk behaviours and vulnerability

Provide condoms, counselling, STD services

PLACES

Context

Reduce stigma and discrimination, create enabling environment

Sexual ill-health

BEHAVIOURS

Increase skills, knowledge

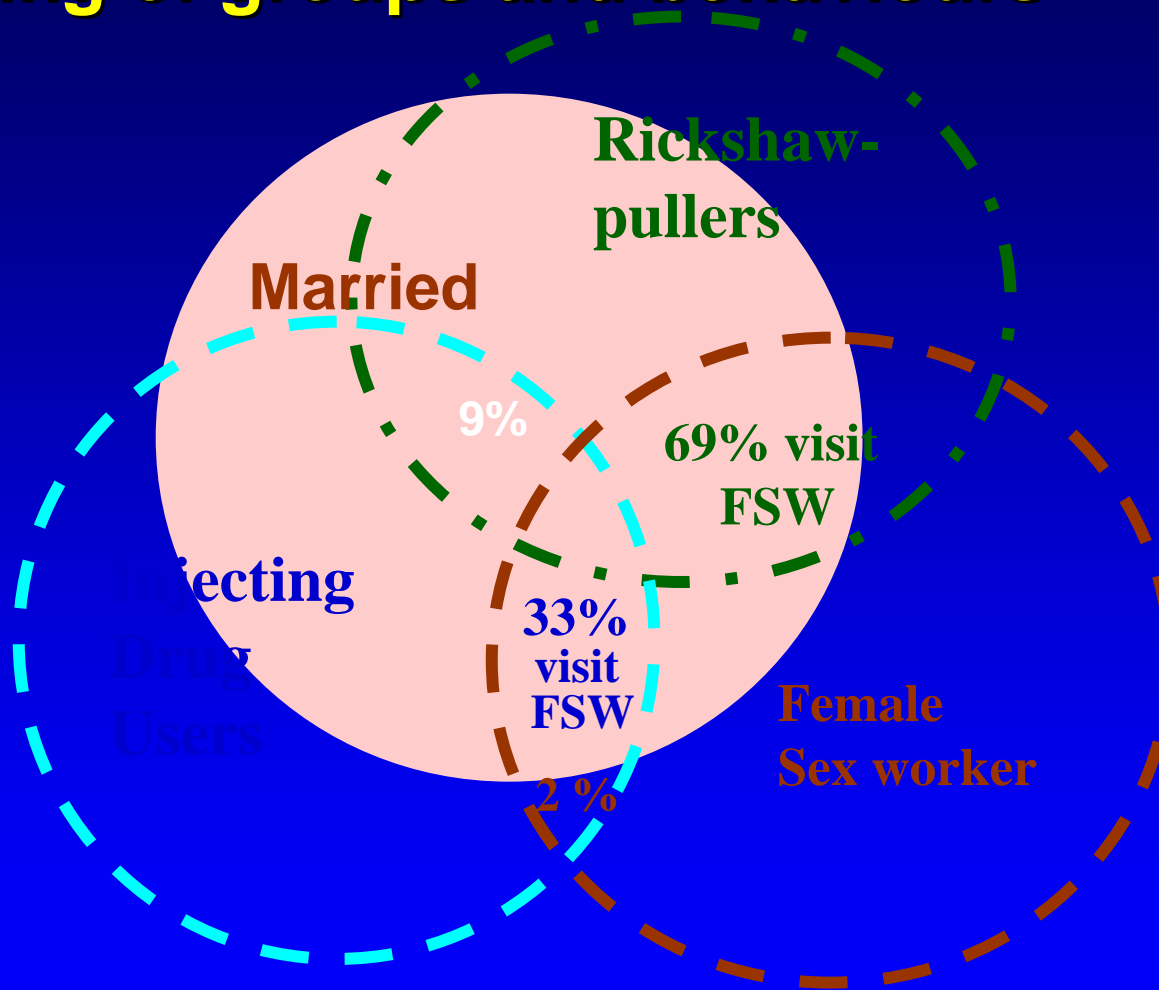
PEOPLE

Work with young people, women, migrants, etc



Example Bangladesh:

Mixing of groups and behaviours





Harmful Sexual Practices

What is the affect of:

- Genital cutting (including FGM)
- Penile Implants
- Use of drying agents and other aphrodisiacs
- Vaginal tightening surgery

Pleasure or Pain? Who decides?



How should we address sexuality reproductive health care programmes and services?

Should we integrate sexuality into existing services?

Should we integrate services such as STI prevention and treatment into FP and antenatal care?

What do we have the evidence to recommend?



Research and resource needs to promote integration of sexual health

- Discrimination and stigma associated with HIV and STI status by health workers
- Feasibility and effectiveness of including a sexuality focus in PHC and RH settings
- Best practices for how to reach adolescents
- Guidelines and services for addressing GBV
- Affect of FGM on sexual life
- Affects of harmful practices on STI/HIV susceptibility
- Scaling up of pilot projects

World Health Organization Department of Reproductive Health and Research



WHO and sexual health

- Adolescent sexuality and behaviour research
- Programming and technical support in adolescent sexual (and reproductive) health
- Family planning, sexuality counselling
- STI/RTIs
- HIV prevention (HIV/AIDS) – PMTCT, microbicides
- Men and sexual and reproductive health
- Female genital mutilation
- Sexual Violence

World Health Organization Department of Reproductive Health and Research



HRP UNDP/UNFPA/WHO/World Bank Special Programme of Research,
Development and Research Training in Human Reproduction

**Asking young people about sexual
and reproductive behaviours:**

Illustrative Core Instruments

John Cleland, Roger Ingham, Nicole Stone

HRP UNDP/UNFPA/WHO/World Bank Special Programme of Research,
Development and Research Training in Human Reproduction

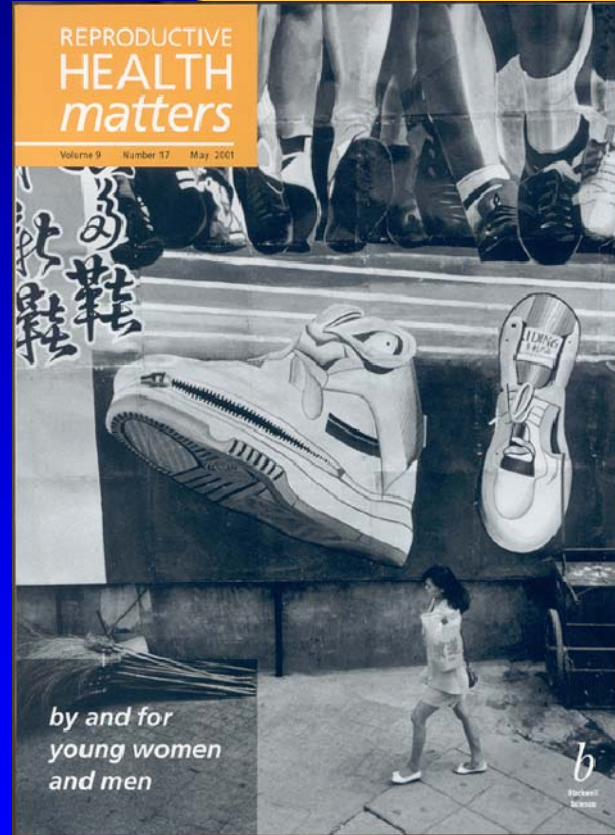
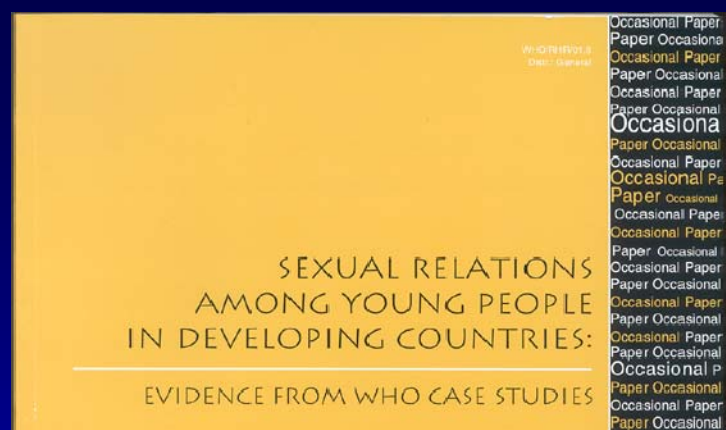
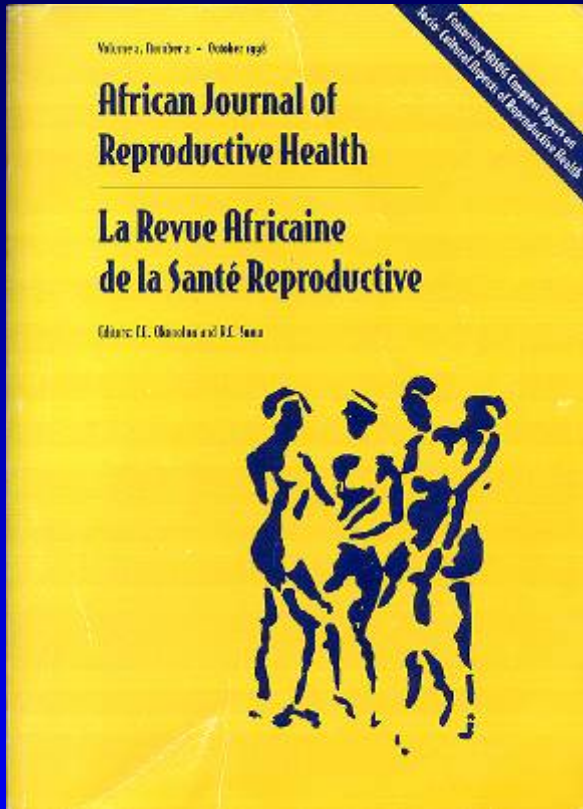
**Young people's sexual and
reproductive health:**

**Annotated bibliography
of available evidence**

Prepared by Cicely Marston for the
World Health Organization
February 2000

Also available on our website:

www.who.int/reproductive-health/adolescent



Reproductive Health and Research
and Community Health

4
nal
per
nal
per

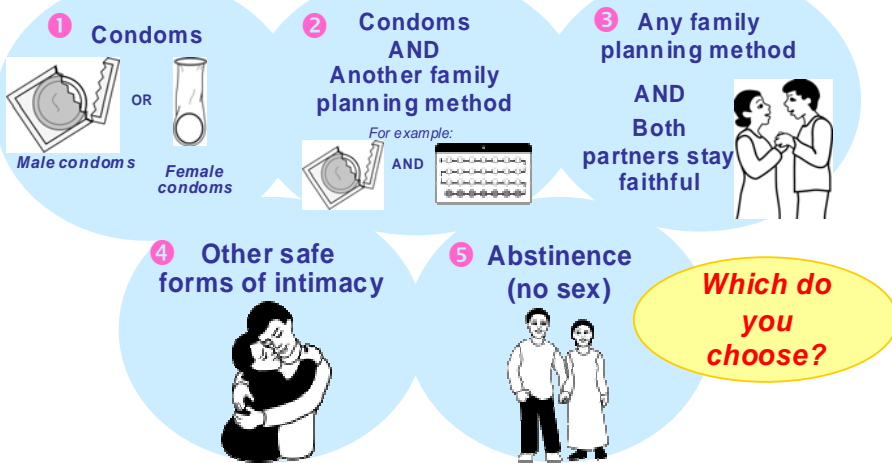


Dual Protection: Norms and Tools

The Family Planning Decision-making Tool



Protect against STIs / HIV & pregnancy: Your choices



Promotion of Dual Protection



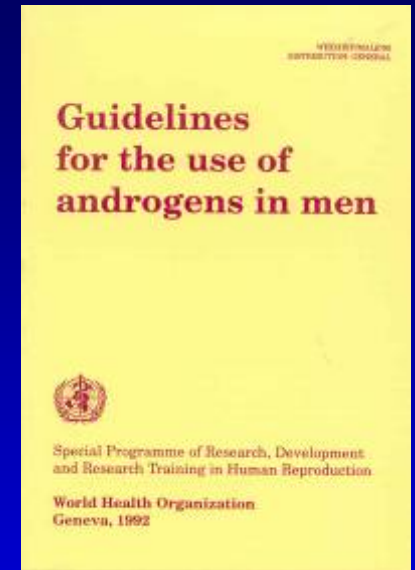
FGM and Sexual health

- Obstetric Sequelae
- Research on the socio-cultural determinants
 - FGM and Sexuality
 - FGM and decision making
 - Community based activities to eliminate FGM
- Advocacy



Clinical andrology research

- Phase III study of the contraceptive efficacy of injectable androgen testosterone undecanoate (TU) (China)
- Trial of a Progestogen and androgen combo to suppress sperm production (Indonesia)
- Study of the pharmacokinetics and pharmacodynamics of a novel formulation of TU (Planned for China)





Sexual Health

2004-2009

- Promotion of sexual health: Building the evidence for addressing key sexual health issues
- Review of global initiatives on sexual rights
- Research and guidance tools on FGM
- Research on harmful sexual practices in specific populations with high STI/HIV prevalence
- Investigating the Global Burden of Disease and sexual ill-health
- Tools for curricula development on addressing sexuality for allied health workers