

Organized by the Geneva Foundation for Medical Education & Research (WHO Collaborating Centre in Education & Research in Human Reproduction) and the Fonds Universitaire Maurice Chalmieu with the WHO Department of Reproductive Health & Research, the Department of Health of Canton Geneva, the Faculty of Medicine of Geneva University and the Geneva Medical Association

Sexual Health Research Methods Training Course 2008

Concepts and methods in sexual health research

Robert Thomson

Sexuality research agenda in public health

- Identify biomedical and psychological developmental tasks to be achieved in childhood, adolescence, adulthood on the way to human sexual and erotic maturity.
- Recognize **heteronormativity** and its (*limiting*) effects on research, health programming and clinical outcomes

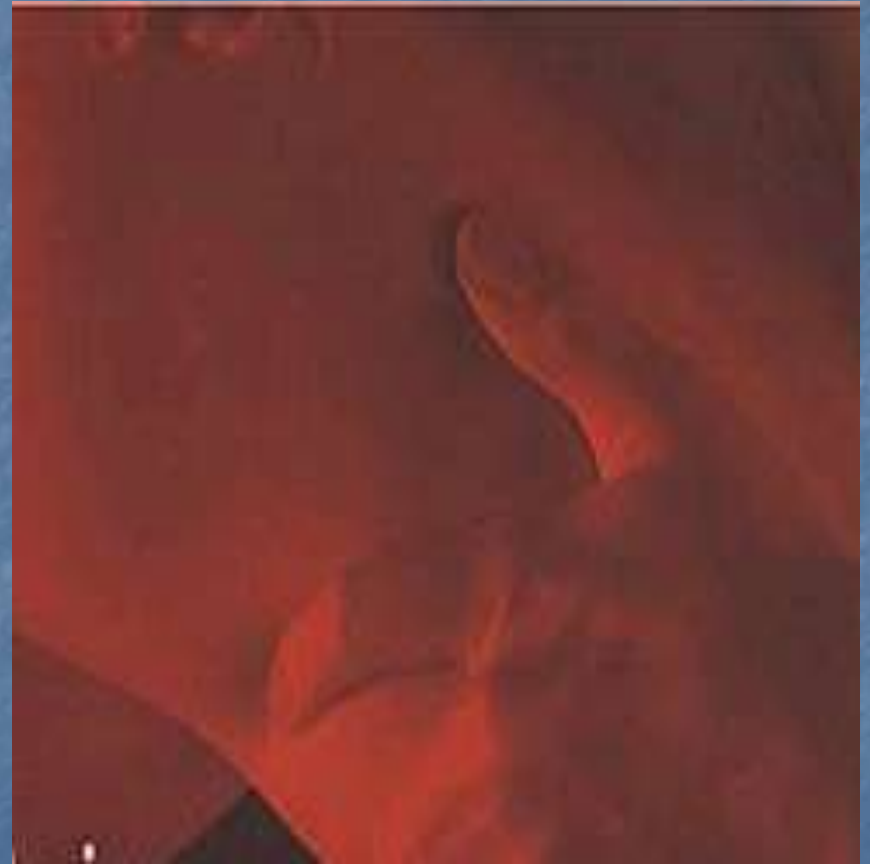
Status and usefulness of definitions and frameworks

Drawn from international human rights instruments:

- International Conference on Population & Development 1994
- World Conference on Women 1995
- World Health Organization, International Classification of Diseases 10 and *attempted* definitions of sexual health
- World Association of Sexology -> WASH
- American Psychiatric Association, Diagnostic & Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders 4
- Kinsey Institute

Definitions of what?

- Sex
- Sexual health
- Sexuality
- Reproductive health, rights associated with it
- Sexual identity and its orientation
- Gender identity and its disorders
- Puberty and adolescence
- Psychopathologies of sex
- Sexual dysfunction



Historical-cultural representations I

Perceptions and constructions of:

- Sex, gender, love, body image, affection, friendship, erotic love, divine love
- Greco-roman, Judeo-Christian, Arabo-Islamic norms
- Power and sexuality models (middle-eastern, Victorian/Freudian) cult of (female) virginity, ideals of chastity
- Sense and sensibility models (exoticism, esotericism, orientalism)

Perceptions and constructions

- **Lest ye corrupt yourselves, and make you a graven image, the similitude of any figure, the likeness of male or female"**

Deuteronomy 4:16



Historical-cultural representations II

- Dissemination of culture-specific sexual constructs
- Historical and current colonial attitudes
- Indigenous practices and rites

Historical-cultural representations III

- Scripture record of human sexuality and eroticism
- Allegory for divine-human interaction, good gift, curse, duty
- Verification in faith-based values

Uses and (human rights) abuses

- Sex in poverty, conflict, captivity, exile
- Prostitution, commercial sex work and sex for favours
- Pornography and use of sexual imagery in advertising
- New information and communications technologies, Internet and mediatisation of sex

Historical-cultural representations IV

- Views of health, illness, death and dying associated with sex (*Thanatos* and *Eros*)

Programme implications

- Comprehensive sex education as moral, parental, community or religious obligation
- Social duty in delivery of care for the sick
- Sexually transmitted infections, HIV/AIDS
- Associated understanding of sexual therapy, counselling, guidance and reconciliation

Specificity of sexuality

- In adolescence
- In disability
- In older age
- In relation to gender
- In race and ethnicity
- In patients
- In oneself

Uses and (human) abuses



- Desire
- Relationship with Self and other
- Perception of reality and influence of the virtual
- Place of physical encounter

Research Processes

- Identification of coordinator, principal investigator, research assistant and local investigators (month 1)
- Assess Costs (month1)
- Literature survey (month 1)
- Protocol write-up (month 1)
- Development of research tools (month 2)
- Training of local investigators (month 5)
- Data collection (month 5-8)
- Data input (month 5-8)
- Data analysis (month 5-9)
- Report writing (month 9)

Research Costs

- Honorarium Coordinator 1xUSD500 (USD500)
- Honorarium Principal Investigator 1xUSD500 (USD500)
- Research Assistant 1xUSD500x4months (USD2000)
- Honorarium local investigators 4xUSD200 (USD800)
- Data collection 600 guided questionnaires, 8 focus groups*, 300 hours (USD3500)
- Data input and analysis (USD1000)
- Report dissemination and workshop (USD1000)

* Rural/urban, male/female/mixed, in-school/youth centre sets