



WORLD HEALTH ORGANISATION

Focus : Teenage Sexuality



INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF
GYNECOLOGY AND OBSTETRICS (FIGO)

In many countries teenagers beginning sexual relationships outside marriage are on their own. Family planning services are closed to them, and the chance that they have received little, if any, formal sex education is very high.

By and large the attitude is : sex is for adults and sex is private. Few societies have been prepared to look dispassionately at the sexuality of young people and to provide comprehensive services to meet their needs. But it is becoming urgent to do so.

Though knowledge about premarital sexual activity is very limited, there are indications that it is increasing among teenagers in many parts of the world - with or without their elders' approval, and with or without a realistic view of the consequences.

Surveys among students, for example, bear this out. In developed and developing countries, births to unmarried teenagers appear to be on the increase, while the proportion of teenage women among abortion-seekers is high rising in many places.

Even in countries where teenage marriage is the custom, adolescent pregnancy has serious implications. Because she is not fully physically developed, a teenage mother is at greater risk of complications during pregnancy than a woman of 20-24 years, and is several times more likely to die as a result. A very young mother is also more likely to

bear an underweight baby which has a lesser chance of survival.

For the unmarried teenage mother there are additional, social risks. A student or schoolgirl may be forced to give up her education, and many find herself subsequently trapped in poverty with limited scope for earning a living, and perhaps little social support.

Changes in sexual behaviour may be the result of rapid urbanization which has loosened social and parental control over the young: it may be the influence of the mass media with their images of sexual freedom without consequences; or it may be the experience of wars or revolution which break the social mold and precipitate the young into adulthood.

Given the myriad social pressures of today and the challenge of traditional values, it is extremely important that taboos which foster dangerous myths and ignorance about sex be overcome.

Young people need sex education to teach them the facts about sexual development, planned parenthood, relationships, sexual intercourse, pregnancy and contraception. They need to know about sexually transmitted diseases, particularly Aids. They need to know about abstinence and how to resist social pressures with confidence. And they need ready access to contraception and reproductive health services.

To deny young people these things on any grounds is to deprive them of the wherewithal to make responsible decisions about their sex lives.

* Issued by the Joint WHO/FIGO Task Force on Maternal and Child Health/Family Planning in Primary Health Care. For further information contact FIGO Secretariat, 27 Sussex Place, Regents Park, London NW1 4RG, UK

constitution, and giving a status of permanent seat for FOGSI in FIGO Executive Board right from the beginning which continued for considerable time. He represented FOGSI on FIGO Executive Board for several years, and then became Vice-President. He was the only Indian so far who had the unique distinction of being elected as President of FIGO for the period 1973-76. He also played an active role in Asia and Oceania Federation of Obstetrics and Gynaecology and was its Vice-President. He was conferred Hon. Fellowship of AOFOG in 1987.

He was felicitated by FOGSI and his friends and admirers all over India, at a special befitting function held in Bombay on his completion of 75 years in year 1986.

After his failing health for last few months he breathed his last on Saturday 10th November, 1990.

In the death of Dr. B. N. Purandare, World has lost one of the most renowned Obstetrician and Gynaecologist.

He was an excellent teacher, and a very fine surgeon, both in abdominal and vaginal surgery. He was a very fast, neat, skillful, cool and calm surgeon. He had innovated many operations like Vaginal Hysterectomy, Vaginal Sterilisation, Tuboplasty, Abdominal Cervicopexy for nulliparous prolapse etc. He also invented many Surgical instruments. He was very famous in the World for his Vaginal Hysterectomy.

He was very receptive with ideas and suggestions from his colleagues.

He was an eminent educationist and research worker too.

He was a very able organiser as well as an administrator not only in various Medical Institutions and Hospitals but also in various Obstetric and Gynaecologi-

cal and Medical Associations, Social, Religious and Educational Institutions. He used to give inspiring leadership in all these Institutions and Organisations.

He was also responsible for founding the Rural Medical College at Loni, Pravaranagar, Ahmednagar District, Maharashtra State in 1984.

He had also deep interest in Music, dramatics, astrology, palmistry, aviation, social services, philosophy, framing and had written some medical and non-medical books, and composed some poems too.

In India, he was one of the pioneers in Rural Health Camps, General Surgical Camps, and Family Planning Surgical Camps. He will always be remembered for these forever in our country.

In spite of being such a great, talented man with all-round distinguished achievements, he was very simple, modest, humble, and unassuming. He was really a man of simple living and high thinking.

He has trained generations of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists who are spread all over the world, as well as he rendered medical helps to thousands of patients.

His death has created a great void in the field of Obstetrics and Gynaecology, Medical Education, and Social and Humanitarian Service which is very difficult to fill up.

He has left behind near and dear ones, numerous friends and admirers.

His teachings and guidance will always remain as treasurable memories for his innumerable students.

Though Dr. B. N. Purandare is no longer with us, his spirit will always inspire and guide us and the future generations of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists to come.

Dr. R. D. Pandit