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## CONTEMPORARY ISSUES IN WOMEN'S HEALTH

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The editors of Contemporary Issues in Women's Health solicit reporters and correspondents from throughout the world to make contributions to this section. Please feel free to email Doctor Richard Adanu at [rmadanu@yahoo.com](mailto:rmadanu@yahoo.com) or Doctor Maya Hammoud at [immaya@umich.edu](mailto:immaya@umich.edu) if you have reports or items that you would like included. We would be happy to attribute the items to those reporters and correspondents who give permission in their transmittal. Otherwise, we will share those reports that we think are of the greatest interest to our readership without attribution.

### Young people understand the importance of talking about sex

A survey of young people aged between 15 and 24 years conducted in the United Kingdom showed that the youth believe that talking about their sex lives with their partners is key to ensuring that the relationship will last for a long time. The findings come from a government-funded study that surveyed the opinions of 1200 young people.

The top 4 modern relationship milestones that were identified in the survey were:

- Talking about sexually transmitted infections and past sexual history (70%).
- Meeting the parents (66%).
- Not always having to wear make-up (47%).
- Meeting friends (40%).

Although the majority of the respondents saw openness about issues concerning sex as the most important predictor of a long-term relationship, a quarter of this majority stated that they felt embarrassed discussing these issues with a new partner. These respondents were embarrassed to talk about sexually transmitted infections, safe sex, and contraception. One conclusion to be drawn from these findings is that the apparent openness of modern society is not as great as many would like to believe. The topic of sex still appears to be a

taboo. Unwillingness of young people who are sexually active to talk openly about sex puts them at greater risk of sexually transmitted infections and HIV/AIDS.

People working in the area of adolescent health need to explore avenues to increase the confidence of young people to talk about issues regarding sex in their relationships.

### Reference

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/health/8549476.stm>.

### United Nations joint statement on the rights of adolescent girls

The United Nations Adolescent Girls Task Force has produced a statement reinforcing its continued commitment to improving the health of adolescent girls. The Task Force has pledged to intensify efforts to ensure that the human rights of adolescent girls are not abused. The group plans to spend the next 5 years supporting low-resource countries to advance policies and programs that will empower adolescent girls.

There are 600 million adolescent girls in low-resource nations, but many of them do not feel any positive impact of national policies or programs. These girls are subjected to gender discrimination and inequality, violence, abuse, and exploitation, such as child labor, child marriage, and other harmful practices.

The joint statement emphasizes that to achieve the Millennium Development Goals it is vital to ensure that adolescent girls are well educated and equipped with skills that they can use to earn an income. Efforts made to achieve this will result in girls staying longer in school, marrying later, delaying childbearing, having healthier children, and earning better incomes.

The 5 strategic priorities identified in the statement are:

- Education of adolescent girls.
- Improving adolescent girls' health.
- Keeping adolescent girls free from gender-based violence.
- Leadership development among adolescent girls.
- Using data on adolescent girls for advocacy and to develop and monitor policies.

The Task Force intends to work in a coordinated manner with other relevant global initiatives.

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## Reference

[http://www.who.int/mediacentre/news/statements/2010/joint\\_statement\\_20100303/en/print.html](http://www.who.int/mediacentre/news/statements/2010/joint_statement_20100303/en/print.html).

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### Guidelines for medicolegal care for victims of sexual violence

The Gender and Women's Health desk of the World Health Organization has published detailed guidelines on how to care for victims of sexual violence [1]. This publication is helpful for both medical and nonmedical personnel involved in the fight against gender-based violence.

The publication contains definitions of sexual violence, as well as a review of the global picture of sexual violence. It also addresses the logistic needs of caring for victims of sexual violence by outlining the requirements of a facility that provides such services. The importance of public policies and laws are highlighted.

There is a detailed description of how to assess victims, as well as the forensic samples that need to be taken. The type of treatment that

should be offered to victims is also discussed, in addition to follow-up care. The specialized topic of child sexual abuse is addressed with information on history-taking, examination, investigations, collection of forensic samples, and treatment.

These guidelines are needed to set the basic minimum required to care for people suffering from sexual violence. Health providers in women's health can study these guidelines and use them within the framework of local policies and laws.

The FIGO Working Group on Sexual Violence/HIV has recently published its guidelines for the management of female survivors of sexual assault [2].

## References

- [1] [www.who.int/violence\\_injury\\_prevention/publications/violence/med\\_leg\\_guidelines/en](http://www.who.int/violence_injury_prevention/publications/violence/med_leg_guidelines/en).
- [2] Jina R, Jewkes R, Munjanja SP, Ortiz Mariscal JD, Dartnall E, Gebrehiwot Y. Report of the FIGO Working Group on Sexual Violence/HIV: Guidelines for the management of female survivors of sexual assault. *Int J Gynecol Obstet* 2010;109(2).