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**Inadequate Sex Awareness Poses Adolescent Health Risk**

**By Billy I Ahmed**

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by: **Billy I Ahmed**

It is not uncommon, in a country like Bangladesh, that conversation about sexual issue remains a taboo. It is high time, that such taboo should be unshackled. Else, the ticking time bomb of HIV/AIDS could peter out risking 23percent adolescents of 130 million adolescents population of Bangladesh or face the supposedly sub-Saharan Africa's consequence- it is said, within a span of ten years millions of children's will vanish in the Sub-Saharan Africa, who are born with AID.

Recently, during a news briefing at Dhaka on 29 September 04, an official of UNFPA, said, poor knowledge of sex among adolescents poses a threat to their reproductive health. According, to Suneeta Mukerjee, the country director, Bangladesh UNFPA, "Parents must speak freely with their growing children about sex to ensure healthy living."

On 31 August 04, at Rangpur a town in Northern Bangladesh, 335 kilometers from Dhaka, the capital of Bangladesh, an advocacy meeting was arranged by Social Marketing Company (SMC).

Severe concern over the prevailing Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STD), Human Immune Defiance Virus (HIV) and Acquired Immune Syndrome (AIDS) in Bangladesh and in the surrounding countries was discussed in the meeting. The present number of 13,000 HIV positive patients in Bangladesh is not an accurate figure, the number is higher, reported the Non-Government Organisations (NGO).

Some NGO officials working in the field in Rangpur region said, the number of STD patients is alarmingly rising. The patients include even a large number of school going children from class eight up to university levels. They are taking all types of drug,

Adopting all means opening the huge door for HIV/AIDS vulnerability.

The advocacy meeting was participated by Government, NGO officials, physicians, journalists, Imams ( who leadprayers in the mosque, also it refers to titles of various Muslim religious leaders.)of different

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Mosques and the elites of the town.

Most opposition to sex education in Bangladesh is based on the assumption that knowledge is harmful. But research in this area reveals that ignorance and unresolved curiosity, not knowledge, are harmful. This issue was identified in a face to face interactive dialogue jointly organised by UNFPA (The United Nations Population Fund) and CWD (Concerned Women Development) in observance of "World AID Day" Participated by some twenty–four teens of both sexes from the country. The teens identified religious ignorance, absence of appropriate approach on sex education in the curricula at secondary level of education as impediment to organising effective programs against HIV/AIDS.

Recalling, what La Rochefoucauld, (French classical author) said, about youth—"youth is a perpetual intoxication; it is the fever of reason," it is this fever of reason, that is driving the adolescents who due to obscenity and ignorance indulge in early sex, being vulnerable to STD and AIDS infection. Our failure to tell children what they want and need to know is one reason why we have the out–of–wedlock

teen's pregnancy and abortion, even risk them to sexually transmitted diseases (STD) acquired immune deficiency (AID).

For parents of today, sex is a dirty word. They feel uncomfortable in discussing sex education with their children. But are we aware on an average a child is exposed to 9000 sexual scenes per year. These parents should know that sex is not always a dirty word. It is an important aspect of our life. The main reason parents do not or cannot discuss sex education with their children is because of the their cultural upbringing, their religious training. They are often brought up in a state of ignorance in regard to sex issues.

What is sex education and who should give it?

Is sex education about knowing the anatomy and physiology of the human body or about the act of sex or about reproduction and family life or about prevention of sexually transmitted diseases and unwanted pregnancy? The problem with this is that at the present time sex Ed taught is incomplete. It does not cover morality associated with sex, sexual dysfunction and deviations.

Who should teach sex?

With regard to the question that should teach sex education, I believe everyone has to play his or her role. Parents have to assume a more responsible role. A father has a duty to be able to answer his son's questions and a mother has the same duty to her daughter. We can hardly influence the sex Ed taught schools but we could supplement that with ethical and moral dimension adding family love and responsibility.

Hazards of early sex: A variety of injuries are possible and do happen when sex organs are not ready for sex in terms of full maturation. Some of these injuries have Cervical cancer has been thought to be related to sex at an early age and with multiple partners.

Why do children get involved in sex?

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There are many reasons why children get involved in sex. The most common reason, detachment from home can lead to attachment elsewhere.

Sexual pressure on them is everywhere, from the TV where about 20,000 sexual scenes are broadcasted in advertisement, soap operas, prime time shows and MTV. The hard core rock music nowadays fans the flames of sexual desires. Most parents do not know what kind of music their children are hearing. If they care and listen to rock songs like Eat Me Alive (Judas Priest), The Last American Virgin, (Tina Turner), Material Girl (Madonna), they will know that these songs have pornographic words and sentences which made Kandy Stroud, a former rock fan, begged parents to stop their children from listening to what she calls 'Pornographic Rock'. Six out of ten as young as eight years in Bangladesh watch Indian TV channels. These channels can be termed as sex stimulators, be it a music or a serial. Instead, the parents should encourage their kids to watch channels like Discovery, History and Animal Planet; they are both educative and entertaining.

Research shows music does affect sexual mood. It does so by activating melatonin, the hormone from the pineal gland in the brain, which is turned on by darkness and turned off by flashing lights. It is the same gland that has been thought to trigger puberty and affects the reproductive cycle and sex mood.

What is the role of parents?

Parents should control the music children are listening to or the TV program they are watching, the magazines they are reading, and the clothes they are wearing. Take the case of Phola Baisak, you find young girls attired in Holud Sari (Turmeric Colour) with matching bangles and Tip(a colourful spot) in the forehead not only they look graceful but reflects our cultural value and very next day back to jeans and tops– which may provokes desire amongst the young opposite sex.

About dating:

Many of the pregnancy occur at the end of the date and are not reported. According to a news agency in one it's write-up reports sex dating in Bangladesh is prevalent, however it mentions,"even though there is no reliable statistics, the incidence is growing, expert says." Few notorious cyber cafes are hub of porno with cozy coops ideal spot for "smooch dating!"

Anything which breaks down sexual inhibition and loss of self-control i.e. alcohol, drugs, petting or just being together for two member the opposite sex in a secluded place should not be allowed for teenagers. We must remember that, these young adolescents are a major segment of our population who will soon enter the reproductive and sexually active stage of life all potential target to STD and HIV. Therefore, before it is too late, the teaching of reproductive health to adolescents is basic life support. Parents act now!

In summary parents should teach their children that our values systems are different from western way of life. Having a feeling and love in your heart for someone of the opposite sex is different and beyond control, while \_expression of the same through sex is entirely different and should be under control.

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### **The Health Benefits of Sex**

**By Susie Michelle Cortright**

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by: **Susie Michelle Cortright** Quick quiz: Would you rather run 75 miles or have sex three times per week for a year? Research shows that both activities burn the same number of calories. (7,500, to be exact.)

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We often think that something that feels good can't possibly be good for us. Now it's time to think again.

Sex in a loving, intimate relationship has numerous health benefits. In women, for example, the sexual act triggers the release of oxytocin. Oxytocin promotes feelings of affection and triggers that nurturing instinct. In men, sex encourages the flow of testosterone, which strengthens bones and muscles and helps transport DHEA, a hormone that may be important in the function of the body's immune system.

Paul Pearsall, Ph.D., author of *Superimmunity*, also maintains that sex in a loving relationship helps the immune system by increasing the flow of certain chemicals in the body.

Hugh O'Neill, editor of *Men's Health* magazine, recently listed some health benefits of sex, as well. Regular sex is regular exercise and has similar benefits, including improved cholesterol levels and increased circulation. *Men's Health* also reported that men who have sex at least three times each week may have a decreased risk of developing prostate problems.

Sex, like exercise, releases endorphins. Endorphins contribute to the runner's high and diminishes pain levels.

An active sex life may help us live longer, too. Dr. David Weeks, a clinical neuropsychologist at Scotland's Royal Edinburgh Hospital, conducted a study of 3,500 people ranging in age from 18 to 102. Weeks concluded that sex actually slows the aging process.

Sexual therapists remind us that frequent sex is a form of exercise. And feeling secure in a relationship leads to feeling happier, which could lead to greater health—and a younger look.

In fact, these studies indicate that intimacy plays a key role in the health benefits of sex. A promiscuous sexual relationship may actually produce an opposite effect by introducing a sense of anxiety and fear.

In spite of all these health benefits and the sheer pleasure of the act, Americans may still need a boost. At least one-third of American couples report "inhibited sexual desire," according to The Masters and Johnson Institute.

Sex therapists say sex acts on the principal of "use it or lose it." So, for your heart, mind, and soul, the best advice may be to "Just do it!"

Susie Michelle Cortright is the author of several books for women, including *Rekindling Your Romance After Kids*, and founder of the award-winning *Momscape.com*, a website designed to help busy women find balance. Visit

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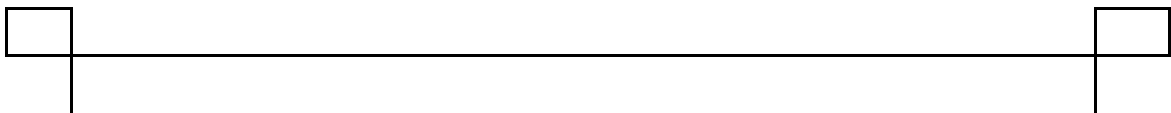
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