

A Congressional Briefing

Lost In Translation: Public Health Implications of Sexual Health Research

March 5, 2004
2168 Rayburn House Office Building
10:00 am - 12:00 pm

Healthy sexuality is a fundamental part of human life. Sexual health not only includes reproduction and the absence of disease or dysfunction, but also the “ability to understand and weigh the risks, responsibilities, outcomes and impacts of sexual actions and to practice abstinence when appropriate.” It includes “freedom from sexual abuse and discrimination and the ability of individuals to integrate their sexuality into their lives.” The 2001 Surgeon General’s (SG) *Call to Action to Promote Sexual Health and Responsible Sexual Behavior* recognizes that the “United States faces a significant challenge related to the sexual health of its citizens;” STDs (sexually transmitted diseases), infertility and cancer resulting from STDs, HIV/AIDS, sexual abuse, coercion and prejudice, unintended pregnancy, and abortion. Most importantly, the SG’s report recognizes that “sexual health is inextricably bound to both physical and mental health.”

- Five of the ten (10) most commonly reported infectious diseases in the U.S. are STDs.
- An estimated 800,000 to 900,000 persons are living with HIV in the U.S., with approximately 40,000 new HIV infections occurring every year. An estimated one-third of infected Americans has not been tested and is unaware of their status.
- The AIDS epidemic is shifting toward women. Since 1985, the proportion of all AIDS cases reported among adult and adolescent women has more than tripled, from 7 percent in 1985 to 25 percent in 1999. The epidemic has increased most dramatically among women of color.
- Nearly one-half of all pregnancies in the U.S. are unintended and therefore socially costly: out-of-wedlock births, reduced educational attainment and employment opportunity, increased welfare dependency, and later child abuse and neglect.
- Each year, more than 43 percent of women and 31 percent of men experience sexual dysfunction, one of the least understood areas of human psychophysiology.
- The National Violence Against Women Survey found that 1 in 6 women and 1 in 33 men in the United States has experienced an attempted or completed rape at some time in their lives.

The following distinguished scientists will discuss the public health implications of sexual health research.

John Bancroft, MD, Director, Kinsey Institute, Indiana University
“Psycho-Biological Factors In Human Sexuality And Their Relevance To Health”

Tom Coates, Ph.D., Professor of Medicine in the Division of Infectious Diseases at the David Geffen School of Medicine at UCLA
“HIV and STD Prevention: Sexual Behavior Research Successes”

Janet Hyde, Ph.D., Helen Thompson Woolley Professor of Psychology, University of Wisconsin -- Madison
“Sexuality in Marriage”

Alan Leshner, Ph.D., Chief Executive Officer, American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS), and Executive Publisher, *Science*, -- Moderator

Sponsored by: The Decade of Behavior (www.decadeofbehavior.org)
and
The Coalition to Protect Research (www.cossa.org/CPR/cpr.html)

**Positive RSVPs only by March 3 to Sara Robinson at 202/336-5935
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The Coalition to Protect Research is a coalition of organizations interested in promoting public health through research.