

World AIDS Day finds black Americans still in trouble

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good decision making, leaving people more prone to engage in HIV risk behaviors, including risky sexual behavior and none adherence to HIV treatment. Second, drug abuse adversely affects health and may exacerbate disease progression. Third, and most important, because of these linkages, we must recognize that drug abuse treatment is HIV prevention."

Cindy Miner, deputy director of the office of science policy at NIDA, stresses that the

report is not just about needles.

"We're talking about all drugs. Not just intravenous, but the use of alcohol and the use of other drugs that will cause kids to do things that they otherwise wouldn't do," she says. "They can truly make poor decisions that lead to risky behaviors such as unprotected sex or probably do something or engage in these behaviors with somebody that they might otherwise wouldn't. We need a lot of dialog centered around this problem, an area that has

really been ignored.

Intravenous drug users alongside male homosexuals have been among the highest risk categories for HIV/AIDS, but expanding the drug connection to risky behavior is relatively new, Miner points out.

"I think the people are talking about drugs. But, they're not talking about the consequences of drugs and certainly one of the consequences is HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases."

The NIDA report, released at a Washington, D.C. press

conference, comes on the heels of a recent announcement by the CDC that the number of newly-diagnosed HIV infections among African-Americans has declined an average of 5 percent a year for the past three years, although blacks are still 40 percent of AIDS cases diagnosed while only 12.3 percent of the U. S. population.

The disproportionate number of black teenagers and young adults with HIV is not new. According to CDC data reported through December

2001, African-Americans were the largest group of youth affected by HIV. They accounted for 56 percent of all HIV infections ever reported among those aged 13-24. But, it hasn't been reported enough, the NID says.

The public service announcement, featuring two teenage actresses, Mahbi and Rebecca Hollingsworth, also a Duke Ellington student, will also be publicly aired on videos in some chain stores such as Circuit City, Best Buy, Cosco, and Sears in observance of World AIDS

Day. World AIDS Day Observers will wear red ribbons to call attention to the pandemic of HIV/AIDS around the world.

Mahbi, 16, describes the PSA as an accurate depiction of real life and says she hopes teenagers will get the bottom line about HIV and apply it to themselves: It's not slowing down. It's not stopping anywhere."

The Charlotte Post

Stay-home dads overcome stigma

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working wives who occasionally command higher pay than their husbands, prompted families such as the Kellermans, Schifferlis and former Prescott residents Karl and Mary Magel to reverse traditional parenting roles.

The three fathers—all college graduates who have worked full-time in the past—said that they talked with their wives about child rearing before they became parents.

"Our decision was somebody was going to quit (work) to stay home with the kids," said Magel, a father of four ranging in age from 1 to 7.

When the Magels became parents, Mary was not the breadwinner in the family, said Karl, who worked in irrigation supply for 15 years before he became a full-time "house dad." They left their

home of 10 years in Prescott in September because Mary accepted a promotion as general manager of Costco in Chandler.

Both Mary Magel and Mardi Kellerman have worked in their fields for more than 20 years, their husbands said. Mardi stayed home with Hannah for the first six months of the girl's life, and for a time both parents worked, Edd said.

However, Mardi constantly worried about Hannah, Edd recalled. Edd agreed to stay

home with the girl because Mardi had stable employment with good benefits at a job where she could not break away easily for potential emergencies involving Hannah.

Kellerman, Magel and Schifferli acknowledged that they face a social stigma while their wives work. They have endured offhand remarks and teasing.

Magel and Schifferli, both 41, said other men mistakenly believe that the stay-at-home dads lead easy lives.

Black Holiday Barbie

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two Holiday dolls is that the jewelry on the burgundy version features green faux gem accents, while the doll wearing green includes magenta-hued faux gems.

A Mattel spokeswoman said "Collector Edition Barbie dolls are designed for collecting and displaying. Most dolls come in showcase packaging that includes a doll stand and a Certificate of Authenticity. Both little girls and adults love the doll."

Expecting benefits from medicine helps with the healing process

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nerve cells—and the men felt better. To return to pre-placebo pain levels, scientists had to increase the salt-water pressure.

"Our brain really is on drugs when we get a placebo," says co-researcher Christian Stohler, now at the University of Maryland. More remarkable, some especially strong placebo responders suggest "many brains can actually stimulate that (pain-relief) system more."

Italy's Benedetti gave Parkinson's patients a placebo and measured the electrical activity of individual nerve cells in a movement-controlling part of the brain. Those neurons quieted down, a decrease in firing of about 40 percent that correlated with a reduction in patients' muscle

rigidity—they moved more easily.

To further prove the power of belief, Benedetti hooked pain patients to a computerized morphine injection system. Sometimes the computer administered a dose without them knowing it; sometimes a nurse pretended to give it. The morphine was up to 50 percent more effective when patients knew it was coming.

Likewise, Parkinson's patients moved much better when they were told that doctors had turned on a pace-maker-like implant in their brains, which blocks tremors, than when it was turned on covertly.

But in a similar experiment with Alzheimer's patients suffering pain, Benedetti found no difference between covert or expected dosing. The results are preliminary, he

cautioned a meeting of the Society for Neuroscience last month. But it appears that because Alzheimer's robs patients of the cognitive ability to expect a benefit, they need higher doses of painkillers to get as much relief as non-demented patients.

Placebos aren't a substitute for real medicine. But the research suggests maybe doctors should try to manipulate patients' treatment expectations, for at least some hard-to-treat conditions.

"The bigger question is how do we capitalize on the placebo effect," said Dr. Helen Mayberg of Emory University, whose studies suggest some antidepressants have a "placebo-plus" activity in the brain. "There may be a phenomenon we all have access to."

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