

ON GAYS AND HEALTH

"Gays and Health" was the topic at the February CGA meeting. An internist, a nurse, and a psychologist talked about various aspects of physical and mental health.

Dr. Henry Lesesne, a liver specialist at North Carolina Memorial Hospital, talked in general about hepatitis, with a special emphasis on its possible transmission as a sexually transmissible disease. There are several kinds of infectious hepatitis, but there is only a laboratory test specific for hepatitis B, formerly known as serum hepatitis. In general all kinds can be transmitted to varying degrees by exposure to contaminated food, water, feces, and blood. The incidence is higher in gay men than in female prostitutes.

Mr. Allen Gray, an instructor at UNC School of Nursing and a volunteer counselor at Human Sexuality Information and Counseling Service, discussed syphilis and gonorrhea. He spoke of the symptoms, laboratory tests, and treatment of both. He pointed out that there is almost an epidemic of GC today, while cases of syphilis remain at a rather constant lower rate. The incidence of both of these diseases is higher in gay men for several reasons, including lack of prophylaxis (using rubbers) and ignorance and anxiety on the part of patients and health care providers. He made available at the end of his presentation two booklets from Human Sexuality Information and Counseling Service, Gay V.D. and The V.D. Handbook.

Dr. William Anderson, assistant professor of Clinical Psychology at UNC, spoke about gays and mental health. He emphasized that some persons, regardless of their sexual orientation, may need professional help in dealing with their problems. One may need to "shop around" for a therapist who does not view one's sexual "deviation" as the root cause of all problems.

Dr. Anderson also pointed out that the originator and main proponent of aversion therapy to "treat" homosexuality has in the past few years re-examined his goals and methods for the treatment of gays. This re-examination has stemmed mainly from the pressure brought to bear by outside "radical" gays and inside established gay psychologists. This therapist has now announced that he no longer advocates this modality of therapy for gay persons.

-Dan Leonard

TALF - CGA OUTREACHES

TALF and CGA have scheduled lots of Outreaches for March and April, which means a lot of opportunities to help contact gays and straights at the University and throughout the Triangle area and the state.

If you want to do Outreaches, you are encouraged to attend one or two as a participant-observer first. There is no pressure to jump in and do panels right at the beginning. Anyone is invited to come along, whether simply out of personal curiosity or a desire to answer questions or give critique to panel members.

If you want to answer questions, suggested background readings are: Society and the Healthy Homosexual by George Weinberg, and Sappho Was a Right-On Woman by Sidney Abbott and Barbara Love.

Contact Susan Johnston (942-7076) or Allan Brown (967-6791) or Howard Fradkin (942-2039) if you are interested in participating or need a ride to observe.