

Features

Sexually Transmitted Diseases: Are We Being Sure?

By Rondolyn Hickman
STAFF WRITER

Sexually transmitted diseases are a serious problem at Winston-Salem State University and other college campuses, according to public health officials, and there is evidence that few students are addressing the problem.

Dr. Robert Wooten, an assistant physician with the Forsyth County Health Department, said in a recent interview that about half of the patients with sexually transmitted diseases treated at the county public health clinic are students at local colleges.

"There are approximately 100 new cases of sexually transmitted diseases reported each week, and 80 percent of them are between 15 and 25 years of age," Wooten said. "Out of this percentage it is reported that a significant number of these cases are students."

In a society that provides free literature, free birth control and protection, along with counseling, why don't people protect themselves? Why are so many new cases of sexually transmitted diseases reported each year? If college students are in an environment of learning and knowledge, why do they fall victim to this problem?

One reason may be that people in our society are too naive when it comes

to sex with their partners. All too often people think about the pleasure and not the pain that can result from unprotected sex. AIDS (Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome) is no longer the most-talked-about disease. Others such as gonorrhea, chlamydia, non-gonococcal urethritis (NGU), syphilis and trichomonas are hitting people hard. Myths are another problem concerning sexually transmitted diseases.

Lacey Ann Dohlar, an educator with the Forsyth County Health Department, said, "People think they can look at a person and tell whether they are clean or not, but you can't tell just by looking at them what is in that person's bloodstream." She said that the biggest reasons for the spread of sexually transmitted diseases are carelessness and not being informed on the issues.

And it is a big problem on the campus of WSSU. Many students are not aware of the seriousness of sexual diseases and are not informed.

A seminar on "Love, Sex and You" was offered April 20 in Pegram Hall. Sexual diseases were discussed by a public health official, who gave out free condoms along with advice on how to use them.

Only two students showed up.

There are free pamphlets in the infirmary that hardly anyone reads. Free

protection is offered in the WSSU infirmary, but few people take advantage of it.

Recently 30 people on campus were asked if they knew that the WSSU infirmary dispenses free condoms. Only fourteen said they knew that. The nurses at the infirmary said that only about seven students per month ask for condoms.

True, this small survey may not be a representative of the whole student body, but it does say something. Either students at WSSU are not having sex, or they're not protecting themselves. Which do you think is the case?

If information and protection are being offered free of charge, it is up to the individual to take advantage of it, especially if he or she has more than one sexual partner on a regular basis.

One complicated problem often arises between couples concerning sexual diseases. This is the matter of trust. There are couples who love each other and trust each other (which is wonderful for them), but when it comes to your health and well-being you have to put trust aside.

Some women feel if they ask a partner to wear a condom he will become upset and say she doesn't trust him. Some men feel that asking them to wear condoms is like telling them they're

being unfaithful.

The plain and simple fact of the matter is, sexual diseases are a serious problem in our society. People need to put their egos aside and be cautious and careful. There are many women now who carry condoms with them, and there are even condoms made for women.

A recent report released by the Surgeon General states, when you have sex with someone, you are sleeping with everyone that person has slept with for the past seven years. Think about it; that's a lot of people. If a person chooses to have intercourse with someone, especially if a person has more than one regular partner, they should use a condom. If they do not want to use a condom, they should abstain from sexual intercourse -- or ask for a medical record.

Sexually transmitted diseases are affecting college-age people. It is the obligation of individuals to protect themselves. These diseases are serious and can often result in dangerous health tissue scarring in women, infertility in men and women, and even death.

Remember, it's your life. Think about how your decisions are going to affect you and your health for the rest of your life. It is up to us to protect ourselves.

Date Rape: Why It Happens, What You Can Do

By Lisa Stewart
STAFF WRITER

Some people believe campus living to be an environment where, for the most part, students are set off from the outside world. Usually students feel safe in these surroundings because the faces they see everyday do not pose a threat to them. What would happen to this community if, for instance, one of these familiar faces suddenly became a violent attacker or, to be more specific, a rapist?

Every six minutes a woman is raped in the United States. Children as young as three and women as old as 85 have been victims of this type of sexual assault. Almost half of all reported rapes and those that go unreported are acquaintance or date rapes, committed

by someone the victim knew.

Experts say there are a lot of misconceptions when dealing with date rape. For instance, the woman's dress or behavior impels the man to rape. This, like many statements dealing with date rape, is false. Statistics show almost 60% of individual rapes and 90% of group rapes are planned!

What gives men the right to sexually assert themselves on unwilling women? Do men who commit date rape consider themselves rapists at all? Is a date with a woman an automatic agreement on her part for sexual activity?

Carol Williams of the Rape Response Center says there are many excuses men use for rape: the majority of all causes are based on myth. Date

rape, according to Williams, usually happens when the couple is going out for the first time. In general, the victims are college students and people who aren't dating are considered fair game for the date rapist.

Williams says sometimes the attacker may misread the women's signals. It is important to stress to the person before going out on a date exactly what your intentions are. If the woman does not plan to have sexual intercourse, this needs to be discussed.

Another way to help prevent date rape, says Williams, is to check the guy out. Find out from people who have dated him what he's like.

If the situation has already begun to get out of hand, there are some active as

well as passive techniques that might prevent a date rape. Williams says a few of the passive techniques are to try and talk the man out of raping you. Reasoning may seem a far fetched idea at the time, but it just might work.

More active ways to prevent a rape would be screaming or throwing whatever is available at the rapist.

The victims of date rape are more likely to be between the ages of 16 and 24. However, date rape can happen to anyone in a dating situation at any age.

Unfortunately, there are many perpetrators of this crime going free because of unreported incidents. According to Carol Williams, the victims of date rape usually blame themselves.

Ram Fest

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doesn't sponsor a spring festival, she replied, "We have two weeks instead of two days."

State has a Greek Week, followed by a Student Appreciation Week, filled with activities for students. This year Greek

Week was from April 17 to April 22. Omegas and Deltas, Kappas, Alphas and AKAs, Zetas and Sigmas, and Sigma Gamma Rho each had a day set aside for them to give students a peek into their organizations.

Friday night, April 21, the Greeks were hosts of a step show in the Kenneth R. Williams Auditorium. Saturday, April 22, the Student Government Association

sponsored a group trip to King's Dominion. When asked if they were going on the Dominion trip, most students replied that they would be at Aggie Fest.

Students feel a sense of disappointment that State's No. 1 rival has a tradition, the Aggie Fest, that brings guys and girls from high schools and colleges all over North Carolina and Virginia.

"Ram Fest. Don't even talk about a

Ram Fest. We'll never have one," says one State sophomore. "Besides, everyone will be at Aggie Fest."

Frank Gaffney, a second-year student at Forsyth Technical College, remarked that "if they could get somebody like Prince or Guy, they'd rival Aggie Fest."

Everyone may not agree on these particular artists, but they are in agreement that a Ram Fest is wanted.