

# AIDS: Closing in on college campuses

## Two of every 1,000 might be HIV positive

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The Pendulum

**A**IDS is a disease someone else gets, at least that's what most college students think.

The statistics speak otherwise. Who is most at risk to get AIDS today?

"One of the latest statistics I saw was age group 13-23, heterosexual," said David Atkins, assistant dean of student affairs at Elon.

"One of the latest statistics is it's possible as many as two of every 1,000 college students nationwide may be HIV positive," Atkins said. "On some campuses they think it could be as high as 9 of 1,000."

If those numbers are related to Elon's campus, Elon could have from six to 27 students who are carriers of the AIDS virus and not even know it.

Atkins knows of two former Elon students who tested positive for AIDS after leaving campus. One is male, one is female.

"She's one of the ones that got it the same way anybody on this campus could get it, not thinking they're high risk," Atkins said.

Atkins works in conjunction with the United Way AIDS Task Force in Alamance County as a volunteer. He speaks to Elon 101 classes warning students of the potential risk of unprotected sex.

Atkins also counsels AIDS patients off campus twice a month.

"The only time you have symptoms (of AIDS) is when it becomes AIDS-related complex," Atkins said. "If you're just (HIV) infected, you may not ever show any signs. You may go five years and not have any signs whatsoever and be infectious the whole time."

According to *U.S. News and World Report*, estimates from the Center for Disease Control state that 75 percent of the 1 million to

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1.5 million HIV-infected persons in the United States do not know they are infected.

Last year, the Elon College Health Care Center distributed approximately 1,500 condoms according to nurse Mary Jane Salter. The condoms come three to a pack, so actually only 500 trips were made to Health Services for condoms last year.

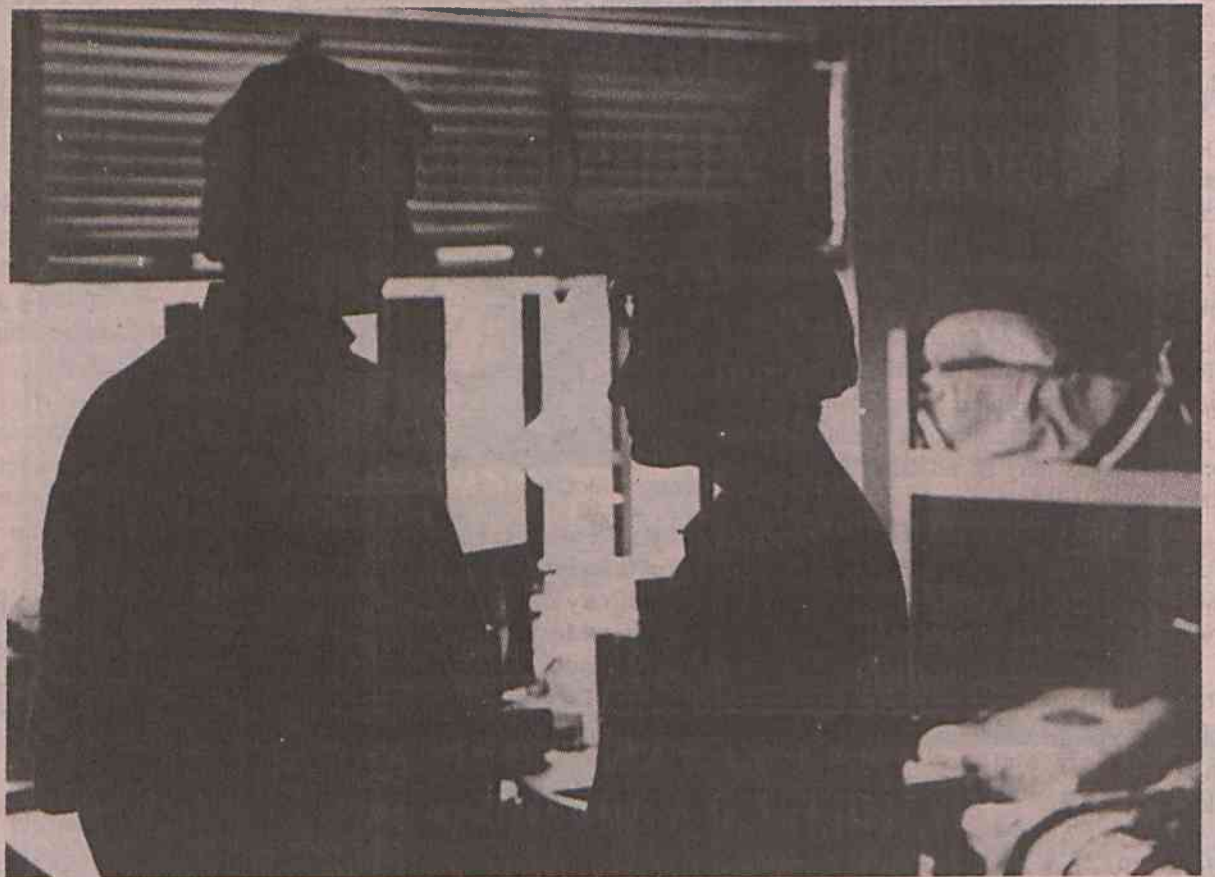
Despite the fact that national surveys show teens claim to use condoms more regularly today, the 1980's saw no change in the incidence of sexually transmitted diseases and teen pregnancy, according to *U.S. News*.

"What's happening is that people are forgetting that the problem is there," Atkins said.

In a June 17, 1991 interview with *U.S. News and World Report*, former Surgeon General C. Everett Koop said, "One of the things that frightens me more than anything else is the public belief that we have turned the corner on AIDS."

"The disease is still moving along relentlessly," Koop said. "Because of this attitude, we're unable to reach the people we need to reach. One group that worries me is 14-to-17-year-olds, who are sexually promiscuous. It gives teenagers a sense there's no problem at all."

"People really need to realize that it's everywhere and just because they think they're safe or they think they're in a safe haven doesn't necessarily mean they're safe," Atkins said. "And I can tell



you in most instances if someone really wants to go to bed with you, they're not going to tell you their sexual history. Especially if they don't have a condom with them."

Atkins also said that the introduction of alcohol into the picture makes it more difficult for students to protect themselves.

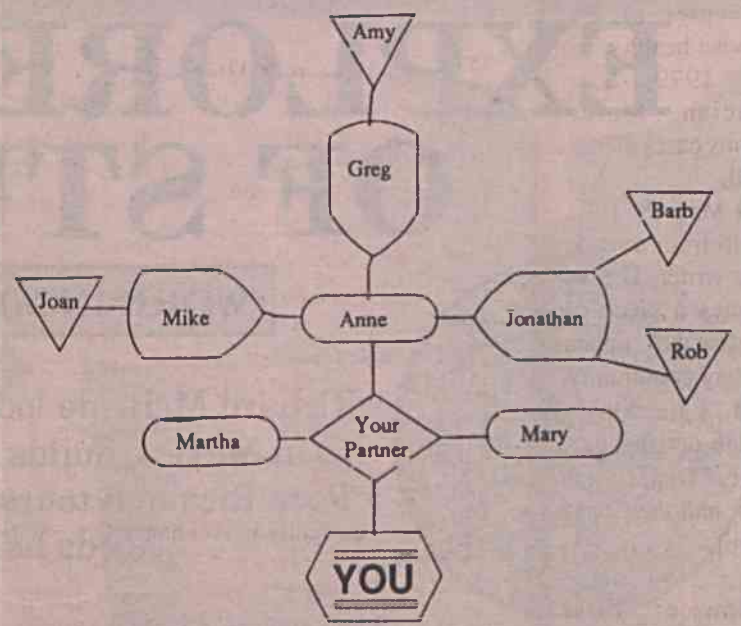
"When alcohol gets involved, I don't care what kind of moral values you've taught your child, if they get in a situation where they're drinking, sometimes those thought processes are not quite as clear as what they should be," Atkins said.

The best chance to prevent AIDS is to use a latex condom and the spermicide non-oxynol 9, Atkins said. Those condoms, coated with the spermicide are available free at the Health Center.

"Latex is absolutely essential," Atkins said. "Natural lambskin condom is not effective in preventing the AIDS virus. It's got natural pores in it just like your skin and it could actually leak through there."

If students are worried about encounters they have had in the past, Dr. Don Chaplin of Kernodle Clinic in Burlington suggests: "Anyone who may have had unprotected sex since 1978 should

### Sleeping with your partner's past



Unprotected sex exposes you to more than just your partner. It also includes anyone with whom your partner ever had sex -- and with all the partners they've had sex with.

consider having themselves tested for the (AIDS) virus."

A good way to look at the threat of AIDS is to remember that when a person has unprotected sex with someone, he/she is actually having sex with whomever his/her partner has ever had sex.

Guilford County Health

Department will do anonymous AIDS tests for free, that is, no form is required. Alamance County Health Department will do confidential AIDS tests for free, they require a form to be filled out, Dr. Chaplin said.

A person must wait six weeks after unprotected sex, and if

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