

Cover Story

College Students And AIDS Education; A Lot Is Left To Learn

H I V - H u m a n Immunodeficiency Virus. AIDS - Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome. These acronyms have, unfortunately, been in the American vocabulary for a decade now. The number of people dead (118,411 as of August 1991) is staggering to behold. The number possibly infected (1 million) is numbing. There are 1925 reported cases of AIDS in North Carolina alone.

There is an increasing need, an urgency, to insure that preventative information reaches and is comprehended by as many people

as possible. There is the need and hope for a cure that can only be obtained through extensive

research, which requires a great deal of money and time. There is also the responsibility of taking care of those who are already diagnosed with AIDS and instilling hope in those infected with the virus.

Tax dollars are currently allocated to research and prevention of HIV and AIDS. However, like so many areas that require the funds of the government, there have been cutbacks and a decrease in pertinent funding. Although the Centers for Disease Control continues to be the primary center for research, they do virtually nothing to care for the many who are dying or those who need medical treatment to stave off the numerous opportunistic infections that are indicative of HIV infection. You have a right to demand that tax monies be spent wisely and

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lovingly. It is ludicrous to allocate more funds for more patriots missiles when American citizens and soldiers (yes, there are military personnel who have HIV and AIDS) - patriots in their own right - are dying.

Everyone holds a responsibility in fighting this horrific disease. To do less than educating the ignorant is to fail one's humanity. The Voice will do its part in keeping you up to date on the disease. For this issue, we felt it necessary to remind college students that they, too, are at risk of the virus, the disease, and worst of all, ignorance. The time to learn is not when you or someone you love is diagnosed with HIV/AIDS, the time is now!

Fred Sapp is the coordinator for the Wellness and Human Sexuality Program at FSU. He believes that college students still have a great deal to learn about AIDS and its related issues. He stresses that there should be no limit to what can be done to educate young people about this virus.

BV: What are some of the problems facing AIDS education on college campuses today?

FS: One of the things you need is a receptive audience on a college campus. It's difficult to find a receptive audience. First, college kids are usually young and they think of themselves as invincible. Secondly, we're still working with a group of people who believe the AIDS stereotype of white, gay males being the only ones susceptible to the disease. Third, there is the difficulty in showing a relationship between AIDS and drugs, including alcohol use.

BV: Do you think there's a particular difficulty due to race?

FS: In the Afro-American community at large? Yes. I'd like to think there's a difference on college campuses. However, whether white or black, college students react the same way.

BV: Do you think music, videos and other forms of popular entertainment used to spread AIDS information are helpful?

FS: Yes, I think it helps because of the heavy reliance on popular culture. Young people are into music, videos, and that type of thing.

BV: Women and people of color have begun to raise their voices in protest over the scientific community's lack of diversity in research. Do you think more research should be conducted in the college communities?

FS: Yes. Because college students fall into the level of the highest incidents of AIDS. In many instances, students don't get information about AIDS and prevention until college.

BV: How does alcohol use affect AIDS and prevention?

FS: Alcohol use mainly effects the use of preventive methods, specifically condoms. We have found that males and females are already reluctant to use condoms. Even though studies seem to indicate that people are purchasing more condoms, males are still reluctant to put them on and females are reluctant to require males to use them. Alcohol and drugs tend to effect judgement and perception. Teenagers forget or don't believe that anyone could have AIDS. People who would, under ordinary circumstances, use condoms, do not when impaired by drugs and alcohol. They are much more likely to participate in unsafe sex.

BV: How explicit are you willing to be to get the information out there?

FS: We get the folks from the Health Department - Troy Williams from Mental Health Center, Willie Snipes, Rita Starks, Barbara Carraway - They have hit the female and male resident halls. They've discussed condoms -all types- dental dams, you name it. They went through all the explanations. The point is not explicitness, but giving the whole picture of AIDS. We don't worry about explicitness. We worried about getting the point across.

Those same people have come to do birth control lectures and discussions and AIDS information is distributed there.

BV: What is your biggest hurdle?

FS: Our hurdles have been for people not to stereotype AIDS. We've been trying to get culture specific information - in video form and handout form.

- Text and interview conducted by Barbara Beebe

Thank You For
**NOT Using
Condoms**



**Your Local
Undertaker**