

# Myths, misconceptions prevail

Contraceptive use implies sexual activity?

by Carolin Bakewell  
Staff Writer

Although approximately two per cent of UNC's coeds become pregnant each year, Dr. Donald E. Harris, education director of the student infirmary, recently said lack of contraceptive information is not a major cause.

"Something prevents the woman from using the information she has," he said. The pregnancy rate on campus represents the failure of some women to accept the responsibility of sexual relations.

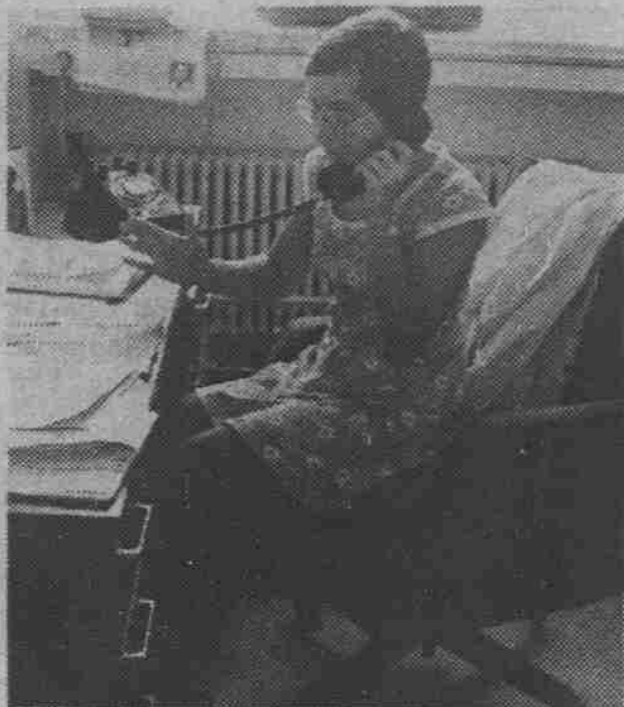
"We've found the level of awareness here is good," he said. "But there's still a long way to go. Many myths and misconceptions still prevail." Many women will not use effective contraception because using contraception implies sexual activity, he said.

"Another myth many women believe is the effectiveness of withdrawal as a method of contraception."

One reason the awareness of methods is good among UNC coeds is the Women's Health Clinic, which offers free contraceptive counseling and gynecological examinations to women students.

The clinic has set up a two-part contraceptive information program, consisting of a discussion session every Tuesday night with examinations the following Thursday afternoon. In order to receive treatment in the Thursday sessions, coeds must attend the discussion session.

"We want to assure some degree of uniformity and have some way of insuring that the patient can make an informed decision about contraceptive methods," Harris said.



Staff photo by Gary Lohrke  
**Dr. Mary Susan Fulghum, resident gynecologist at the Student Health Service.**

The new clinics were begun although routine contraceptive service and gynecological examinations will continue to be given by the Student Health Service during regular hours.

"We wanted to provide an alternative type of educational approach to contraceptives," Harris said, explaining the reasoning behind the clinics. "There was a need for group experience."

The most important change in the Women's Health Clinic this fall is the arrival of a gynecologist, Dr. Mary Susan Fulghum, Harris said. Fulghum will be splitting her time between the Student Health Service,

where she will treat referral patients, and the biweekly Women's Health Clinic sessions.

"I want to emphasize that the clinics are educational sessions," Harris said. "I think every woman on campus could benefit from it. It in no way labels a woman as sexually active."

The Tuesday meetings, which last about an hour, begin with a short film, and are followed by discussion of contraceptives and other sex-related topics.

Gynecology residents and a nurse-midwife will be on hand for the Thursday afternoon sessions to aid Fulghum in giving tests and prescribing contraceptives.

Various methods of birth control are available through the Women's Health Clinic, including "morning after" pills, as well as birth control pills, IUDs and diaphragms.

Pregnancy tests, VD treatment, pelvic examinations and counseling services are free, Harris said. Students pay only for medication, Pap smears, IUDs and diaphragms.

All information of a student's visit is confidential. "It's important to stress that," Harris said. "Some women are afraid to come here... but the records are very guarded."

Harris said he is pleased with the clinic's work and feels that although approximately two per cent of UNC's coeds get pregnant each year, lack of information is not a major cause.

The clinics are limited now to women students only, but plans have been made to set up separate sessions for couples, Harris said. "It just depends on our limitations of time, space and volunteers."

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