

PRESS INFORMATION

Sexual Health Needs Recognition

Obsolete attitudes to sexual health prevail. Absence of sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) is assumed to be sexually healthy and public policies only manage the provision of STDs clinics. Both individuals and society do not recognize the importance of ideal sexual health.

Sexual health is a part of health. In the Constitution of the World Health Organization, health is defined as “a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.” Health also encompasses the development of individuals’ potential, the right to choose, freedom of thought and the ability to help others to live a life of fullness.

Therefore, being sexually healthy is not merely having no STDs or sexual disorders, sexual health includes sexual well-being, sexual rights and choices.

Diversification of Sexual Health Problems

Problems of sexual health can be divided into 8 categories: (1) sexual dysfunction, (2) mood problems related to sex, (3) sexual compulsion, (4) problems with sexual or gender identity, (5) sexual violence, (6) infertility, (7) sexually transmitted diseases and (8) sex complications of other illnesses.

STDs like AIDS are of public concern. And some people with sexual disorders like sexual variation and sexual dysfunction have to seek professional assistance.

A national study conducted in China in 1989 revealed that, nearly 60% of married people were not satisfied with their sexual lives. Different studies in the US also indicated that about 50% of married people encountered sexual dysfunctions.

Sexual Health should be Identified as a Goal

Sexual health as an ideal is difficult to be reached but should be identified as a goal of pursuit. Therefore, both individuals and society need to recognize the significance of sexual health. Individuals need to prevent from being infected by STDs. With increased knowledge of the sexual self, individuals can then properly develop their own sexual interests.

At the societal level, health services should include not only STDs treatments, but also sex education. It could be provided formally and informally as public education and be recognized as life-long education.

However, there are still doubts about the need of sex education in Hong Kong, as some people think that it would lead to more serious social problems, such as unmarried mothers and abortion, and this type of idea is actually the chief obstacle of the local development of sex education.

HKU Provides Sex Education Courses

The School of Professional and Continuing Education (SPACE), The University of Hong Kong, has tailor-made sex education courses for health professionals, lawyers, social workers, psychologists, the police and teachers.

Also, SPACE has been providing distance education courses in sex education since 2001. Through internet teaching and learning, overseas professionals are invited to teach, which promotes cultural exchange. The University of Hong Kong is now planning for a joint Professional Diploma programme with Peking University and a joint Master programme with Shu-Te University in Kaohsiung, Taiwan, using the internet as a teaching medium.

Individuals and Society should Pursue Sexual Health

In 1999, the World Association for Sexology announced the Declaration of Sexual Rights whereby she added sexual rights to the concept of human rights, with the aim to promote sexual freedom and equality. In 2002, the Pan American Health Organization and the World Health Organization also decided to include sexual rights as an essential mean to achieve sexual health.

Sex is a basic need. Sex is necessary for the continuation of human species. Individuals need to develop their own sexual potentials and at the same time respect others' sexual rights and freedom. Resources should be allocated to prevent STDs and family violence and to sex education.

Should you have any questions, please contact Miss Janet Yeung (Tel: 2819-9987/9107-1676) or Miss Addie Yiu (Tel: 2819-9995/9670-5920) of Faculty of Medicine, the University of Hong Kong for enquires.

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