Sex workers’ accounts of effective condom use/News roundup

Patients denied access to sexual health clinics
People seeking contraceptive care, health screening, or STI testing could be experiencing reductions to choice and care. New research published by the Faculty of Family Planning and Reproductive Health Care (FFPRHC) highlights disinvestment by PCTs, poor IT systems and lack of training for health professionals. The results of the Faculty’s Community Contraceptive Services Questionnaire (which gathered information from 129/207 service leads of community contraceptive services in the UK) highlight cuts to out-of-hours services and recruitment freezes, which are contributing to a reduction in patient access, choice and convenience. This is despite the Government’s insistence that sexual health care is a priority.

The main findings of the research, which was carried out within community sexual and reproductive health (SRH) services, and in conjunction with the Department of Health’s own mapping exercise of contraceptive services, state:

- 40% of SRH clinics are having to reduce services, either by closing walk-in sessions when full, accepting only a fixed number of patients or seeing people with urgent problems.
- Only 4/129 services reported increased funding available to implement long-acting reversible contraception (LARC) provision, despite the NICE clinical guideline on LARC, which promotes choice for women through increasing access to quality services providing LARC methods.
- Only 5% of community service leads reported computerised data collection across all clinic sites when asked about data and IT systems. This exposes failures within the NHS to monitor work being done within community SRH services, which is inconsistent with the Government’s Payment By Results scheme.
- The Community Contraceptive Services Questionnaire can be accessed on the Faculty’s website at www.ffprhc.org.uk.

Look after your bones
Protecting your bones isn’t just about checking your calcium levels. There are many other factors that put you at risk of osteoporosis, including your vitamin D intake and exercise pattern. What is most important is that your overall lifestyle is a bone-friendly one. In the Winter 2006/7 issue of The Menopause Exchange Newsletter, registered dietitian Tanya Haffner has plenty of advice on leading a bone-friendly lifestyle. In her article she covers various topics including calcium, vitamin D and vitamin K, healthy eating, phytoestrogens and suitable forms of exercise.

For more information contact The Menopause Exchange, PO Box 205, Bushhey, Herts WD23 1ZS, UK. Tel: +44 (0)20 8420 7245. E-mail: norma@menopause-exchange.co.uk.

Clinical review of HPV
The website http://www.medscape.com provides information and self-test questions on a range of topics. It is free to register, and it currently has a series of topics on HPV.

- A clinical review on best practices in diagnosis and management of HPV and genital warts.
- News item on HPV vaccination and vulval cancer.
- Interactive case on different perspectives in HPV management.
- Article on cervical HPV screening among older women.

Reported by Henrietta Hughes, MBChB, DFFP
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“Patients prefer Dream Doctors – we don’t practice, we get it right first time.”

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