

ETHICS FORUM

A FORUM TO BRING AND DISCUSS LIVING ETHICS IN THE WORLD

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HIV and Condom Use: Deceiving the People?

Much has been talked about the “great” benefit of condom use to prevent transmission of HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases. However, experimental collection of data seems to show that this strategy is not preventing it.

The United Nations has proven that all condom promotion has failed to prevent HIV to keep spreading in Africa. In fact, the only country that had a significant reduction was promoting abstinence and monogamy “the Uganda miracle” though condoms were also available. They had been available but were not able to stop HIV spread without adding policies that foster abstinence and promote monogamy. Both are behavioral means solutions.

The reason of the condom failure to protect against HIV infection is not behavioral or sociological but mathematical or statistical: condoms have a failure rate different than zero. Therefore its repetitive use will eventually lead to transmission of the infective agent. Condoms may delay an individual's chance of infection, but that is all, a delay. The statistical approach is similar to crossing the street without looking whether cars are coming or not: you may get away the first time, the second time but eventually (as you accumulate repetitions) you will be hit by a car. You will transmit the virus or will get infected.

There is evidence of the above. Condoms are not able to prevent pregnancy. Even with their used in wide combination with other contraception techniques, undesired pregnancies do happen. Condoms are not able to prevent unwanted pregnancies, thus abortion remains. The hard evidence of this events is that countries like US and Europe where plenty of condoms and contraception methods are available are unable to prevent unwanted pregnancies. Then, why should we think that condoms will protect from transmission of HIV in sexual intercourse? Why are there organizations that make us to believe so?

If condom use is not able to prevent HIV infection, why is it promoted? The answer seems to be to satisfy short-term policy goals. With the introduction of condom promotion policies Governments hope for delay in new infections to claim success in controlling HIV spread and acquire some international recognition. However, this policy also provokes a promotion of casual sex and social effects. In a deeper analysis, we cannot but think that the promotion of condoms does not seem to seek protection from sexually transmitted diseases, as evidence shows the contrary. It looks like it seeks to promote, encourage and perpetuate a life style based on self-satisfaction and non-commitment, seeking only the physical sexual pleasure that each one can provide to the other within a purely transient relationship--a weekend, a night or a few years until the divorce clause is executed.

Condom use and promotion perpetuates a life style which avoids taking responsibilities for actions: sex without commitment, sex without love but physical pleasure. It, ultimately, promotes promiscuity and the

dehumanization of the sexual partner. It promotes abortion and contraception: A culture or death.

It is a fact that today there are not effective drugs against HIV infection, nor its cure. The only way that infection can really be prevented is by avoiding exposure to the infecting agent. This can only be done through long term social education policies that (1) encourage having sexual relationships only with the spouse, (2) foster monogamy and discouraging divorce and (3) abstaining from casual sex prior to civil or religious marriage. All these actions are possible, and have shown success. However, they demand loyalty and fidelity to each other-- the very opposite of casual sex.

If the Health Authorities of any country were really committed to HIV transmission eradication, they would learn from the failures in other countries. Governments would foster long term policies that seek behavioral changes in society through appropriate person-centered, parent-sponsored sexual education. Governments would not focus on short term policies that generate false hope.

It is not ethical to continue a "*condom promotion*" policy due to its proven failure.

It is a lie.

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