What is Sexual Health?

Promotion of Sexual Health as a HIV Prevention Strategy for MSM

_Eli Coleman, Ph.D_

Academic Chair in Sexual Health
Professor and Director
Program in Human Sexuality
Department of Family Medicine and Community Health
University of Minnesota Medical School
colem001@umn.edu
Importance of Definitions
The construct of sexual health is just that – a construct – and its definition is often a product of a particular socio-cultural, historical, and political climate.
Education and Treatment in Human Sexuality: the Training of Health Professionals

Report of a WHO Meeting

Technical Report Series
572

World Health Organization, Geneva 1975
Sexual Health

Sexual health is the integration of the somatic, emotional, intellectual and social aspects of sexual being, in ways that are positively enriching and that enhance personality, communication and love.
Fundamental to this concept are the right to sexual information and the right to pleasure.
Sexual Health

- A capacity to enjoy and control sexual and reproductive behavior in accordance with a social and personal ethic;
- Freedom from fear, shame, guilt, false beliefs and other psychological factors inhibiting sexual response and impairing sexual relationship;
- Freedom from organic disorders, diseases, and deficiencies that interfere with sexual and reproductive functions.
Thus the notion of sexual health implies a positive approach to human sexuality, and the purpose of sexual health care should be the enhancement of life and personal relationships and not merely counseling and care related to procreation or sexuality transmitted diseases.
In 1999, at a global level, the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) created the Programme for Action (POA) in Cairo. This was adopted by 184 countries. The POA provided governments guidance for addressing the sexual and reproductive health of their populations in a comprehensive, integrated manner.
Pan American Health Organization
Pan American Sanitary Bureau,
Regional Office of the
World Health Organization

in Collaboration with the
World Association for Sexology

Promotion of Sexual Health
Recommendations for Action

PROCEEDINGS OF A REGIONAL CONSULTATION • ANTIGUA GUATEMALA, GUATEMALA • MAY 2000
The PAHO definition of sexual health also reasserted the point made in the 1975 document which recognized that sexual rights were an essential condition to achieve sexual health, but had not been explicitly stated as part of the definition.
Asserted that sexual health was contingent upon society’s efforts to protect, promote, and preserve the sexual rights of every citizen.
Developing National Strategies to Promote Sexual Health

- In the case of Australia and the United Kingdom, the strategies to promote sexual health were more specifically tied to HIV prevention.

- However, the US strategy was a broader sexual health strategy to address a myriad of sexual health problems and promote sexual health.

http://www.surgeongeneral.gov/library/sexual_health
WHO held an international consultation to discuss approaches and strategies for promoting sexual health:

- To elaborate new working definitions of sex, sexuality, sexual health and sexual rights;
- To serve as a basis for countries to develop their own strategies

Geneva, January 28-31, 2002
Defining sexual health
Report of a technical consultation on sexual health
Sexual health is a state of physical, emotional, mental and social well-being related to sexuality; it is not merely the absence of disease, dysfunction or infirmity. Sexual health requires a positive and respectful approach to sexuality and sexual relationships, as well as the possibility of having pleasurable and safe sexual experiences, free of coercion, discrimination and violence. For sexual health to be attained and maintained, the sexual rights of all persons must be respected, protected and fulfilled.

http://www.who.int/reproductivehealth/topics/gender_rights/defining_sexual_health.pdf
Sexual Health as the Overarching Framework of HIV Prevention/Reproductive Health Promotion
Sexualized HIV Prevention
De-sexualized HIV-Prevention
Sexualized Prevention

- Using approaches that amplify the sexual strengths of people
Components of Sexual Health

1. Ability to talk about sex and sexuality.
2. Culture and sexual identity.
3. Sexual anatomy and functioning.
4. Sexual health care and safer sex.
5. Awareness of sexual health barriers.
7. Masturbation and fantasy.
9. Intimacy and relationships.
10. Spirituality and Integration
Rekindling HIV prevention: An opportunity to promote Sexual Health in Latin America and the Caribbean

On August 1\textsuperscript{st}, 2008, in Mexico City a group of ministers of health and education gathered to review the situation of HIV in the LAC Region.

They issued a Declaration that calls for intensified efforts in providing access to comprehensive sexuality education and SRH services by youth.

It was approved by acclamation;

It makes explicit reference to the core elements of sexuality and therefore of sexual health;

It underscores the importance of social inclusion and reduction of discrimination;

It proposes targets in terms of closing of gaps
HIV and Men who have Sex with Men in Asia and the Pacific

UNAIDS BEST PRACTICE COLLECTION

September, 2006
WH0/UNAIDS 1st International Consultation on HIV among MSM

- On September 15-17, 2008, WHO in collaboration with UNAIDS held its first international expert consultation on HIV among MSM, transgender people, and their sexual partners.
- Follow up regional meetings have been held in Asia and Latin America
- Final meeting in Latin America for the Region of the Americas held in Panama in July, 2009
Blueprint for the Provision of Comprehensive Care to Gay Men and Other Men Who Have Sex with Men (MSM) in Latin America and the Caribbean

Based on Recommendations from a Group of Experts Convened for a "Regional Consultation on Health Promotion and the Provision of Care to Men Who Have Sex with Men (MSM) in Latin America and the Caribbean" held July 14-16, 2009, in Panama City, Panama
Sexuality: A Missing Dimension in Development
Promoting Sexual Health

- Create better climates for discussion of sexuality
- Ensure access to information and education about sexuality
- Develop prevention strategies to include community-based interventions
- Provide access to care for sexually related concerns,
- Promote more research in human sexuality and evaluation of programs designed to promote sexual health and responsible sexual behavior.

Basic Ingredients of an Individual’s Sexual Health

- Healthy physical and mental development
- Development of a positive sexual identity
- Development of the capacity for intimacy
- Environment that promotes sexual health
- Recognition of sexual health and a basic human right