

Ugandan study shows no link between coercion and HIV

A study of HIV infection and female coercion in Uganda found no difference in HIV prevalence between men and women reporting coercion and those who did not.

And neither the men nor women interviewed appear to be changing their habits because of AIDS.

“The fear of HIV does not appear to play a role either in men’s likelihood [to coerce], or in women’s likelihood of refusing sex,” Lynn Paxton of the Rakai Project told an oral session yesterday.

Almost a quarter of the 5,000 women interviewed said they had been coerced to have sex. Around 10% of the 4,000 men in the study said they had coerced their partners. Most coercive relationships were reported between spouses, rape being considered something done primarily by “strangers.”

Paxton says she was herself surprised by the absence of a link between coercion and HIV. But she notes that the high incidence of coercion reflects women’s lower status and calls for efforts to change beliefs. “Culture

can and does change all the time,” she stresses. “When it comes to sexual and physical coercion, this is both a desirable and reachable goal.”

Ana Maria Pluciennik of Sao Paulo Health Services reported that Brazilian women are increasingly vulnerable to HIV. In 1983, cases among men outnumbered women 16 to one; in 1996, the ratio was three to one.

Her study recommended training courses for maternity clinic staff, to help them diagnose, treat and prevent STDs. It also stressed dissemination of information on family planning, adequate prenatal and delivery care, and distribution of educational materials and condoms.

Participants also heard about a study of mothers and daughters in Puerto Rico, where AIDS is the lead-

ing cause of death among women aged 20-39, and where 20% of live births are born to mothers in their teens. The research revealed a lack of knowledge about STDs and HIV, as well as an absence of communication on sexual matters.

“The girls expressed an ideal of open communication which is far from reality,” said panellist Ruth Nina-Estrella.

Condom use soars after intervention, China

Efforts to increase knowledge and awareness of AIDS and STDs and increase the rate of condom use among female sex workers in Yunan, China have been extremely successful.

In an oral presentation yesterday, Dr. Zunyou Wu of the Yunan AIDS Centre said these results were achieved after repeated discussions with female sex workers, production of video and audio tapes, and distribution of educational materials and condoms in

the towns of Chengjiang, Ruili and Longchuan.

Among 297 sex workers taking part in Wu’s research, knowledge about the routes of HIV transmission increased from 18% to 98% in Chengjiang, from 44% to 80% in Ruili, and from 0% to 59% in Longchuan.

Awareness that condoms reduce the risk of HIV/STD infection skyrocketed from 58% to 99% in Chengjiang, 55% to 91% in Ruili, and 55 to 90% in Longchuan. The result was that condom use by sex workers in-

creased from 31% to 77% in Chengjiang, 51% to 75% in Ruili and 39 to 41% in Longchuan.

Wu explains that the Yunan AIDS Centre prefers to use health workers and establishment (brothel) owners to conduct awareness programmes because of the “high mobility and low respectability” of female sex workers. Female sex workers tend to migrate from town to town after stays of between two days to two months, and it is difficult to enlist them in peer education programmes.

Satellite meetings

COMMERCIAL

Wednesday, July 1

Interferon
06.30–08.30
Natural Alpha Interferons:
A Multi-Functioned Cytokine
Session Hall IV

BTG
06.30–08.30
Next Generation Care of
HIV/AIDS Patients: Combating the
Effects of HIV-Associated Weight
Loss with Anabolic Agents
Session Hall III

Cedars-Sinai Medical Center
06.30–08.30
New Directions in HIV Therapy and
Quality Survival
Session Hall V

Triangle Pharmaceuticals
06.30–08.30
Clinical Horizons: New Approaches
to the Pharmacotherapy of HIV and
HBV Disease
Hotel Noga-Hilton

Gilead Sciences
17.30–20.00
New Options for HIV Therapy
Satellite Hall 2000

Thursday, July 2

Genentech
06.00–08.30
Peripheral Neuropathies in HIV
Disease
Session Hall III

Immune Response Corporation
06.30–08.30
State of the Art in HIV-Specific
Immune-Based Therapy
Session Hall IV

Abbott International
17.30–20.00
Evolving Strategies in Protease
Inhibitor Therapy
Satellite Hall 2000

NON-COMMERCIAL

Wednesday, July 1

US Dept. of Health and Human
Services
07.45–08.45
Women and HIV/AIDS:
Public Health Interventions
Room D

UK Coalition of People living with
HIV/AIDS
17.30–20.00

The Global Dialogue on HIV/AIDS:
End of Life
Session Hall V

Midwest AIDS Training and Educa-
tion Partners Hektoen Institute for
Medical Research
18.15–22.00

MATEP Adherence Initiative: Achie-
ving Adherence to HIV Therapies
Session Hall VI

Medical College of Ohio
18.30–20.30

Incorporating HIV/AIDS Courses in
the Medical Curriculum
Room D

Positive Action
20.30–22.30
Positive Action Against the Global
HIV/AIDS Epidemic
Session Hall V

Thursday, July 2

R.O.W. Sciences
06.30–08.30
Panel on Clinical Practices for Treat-
ment of HIV Infection Antiretroviral
Working Group
Room E

US Dept. of Health and Human
Services
07.45–08.45

Women and HIV/AIDS: Clinical
Strategies and Community Interven-
tions
Room D

Joint Meeting ICW & IAS Women’s
Caucus
17.30–20.30

The Role of Global Networking and
Regional Organising Among Women
to Address Issues Arising from
HIV/AIDS – Part 2
Session Hall IV

US Dept. of Health and Human
Services
18.30–20.00

Women and HIV/AIDS: Building
the Bridge over the Gap
Room D

Saturday, July 4

Children and AIDS International
NGO Network (CAINN)
08.30–17.00

Children, Young People, Families
and HIV/AIDS: Promoting a Global
Response