

# RHRP NEWSLETTER



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## Welcome to the November issue of the RHRP newsletter!

We have once again heard a lot about the great work you are doing. Congratulations! We have even started to have requests from non-participating schools in the area to be included in the program. It is clear that your hard work is being noticed by the community and is stimulating conversations about these important subjects! In this issue, we are covering some details about STIs and some questions you may face from students. Please remember to contact Jessica or Catherine to pass on any questions or suggestions for focus topics.



## NOTES FROM DR. JEFF

Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs) is the phrase for the various diseases that can be spread by sexual contact. Sexually transmitted disease (STD) is another term that is commonly used. There are a large number of STIs that are transmitted between people and some are life threatening, such as HIV/AIDS, hepatitis and syphilis, among others. They can threaten health in other ways such as causing organ damage, infertility, death of a fetus during pregnancy or serious illness or death of babies born to a mother with an STI. Most STIs are treatable, but some are not.

In this newsletter, we will give an overview of just two of the many STIs that people are exposed to with unprotected sex. Remember that the use of a condom during sex greatly reduces the chances of becoming infected with an STI. Other forms of contraception such as pills, IUD, injections, implants or sterilization prevent pregnancy, but do nothing to protect against the transmission of an STI during sexual relations. We will address a few other STIs in future newsletters.

# FOCUS SECTION:

## Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs)

We want to focus on one topic each issue to provide additional information. These are picked at random, but if you have a request, please contact Jessica.

An STI can be passed from one person to another through sexual contact, including vaginal, anal and oral sex. STIs can pass between men and women, and from women to women and men to men. Many STIs can be cured with antibiotics. Some, such as HIV and genital herpes, have no cure, but can be treated to prevent them getting worse. You cannot tell by looking at someone (including yourself) whether they have an infection or not, so it's important to be evaluated by a healthcare provider if you have had unprotected sex or think you might be at risk. Some infections have symptoms, but many do not. If left untreated, many sexually transmitted infections can be painful or uncomfortable, can permanently damage your health and fertility, and can be passed on to someone else.

Most STIs are caused by bacteria. Chlamydia is one of the most common STIs caused by bacteria. The particular bacteria, *Chlamydia trachomatis*, is passed through semen, vaginal fluids, or anal mucus. The bacteria can infect a woman's cervix, and can affect the urethra (urine tube), uterus, and fallopian tubes. The bacteria can also infect the men's urethra and occasionally can affect the epididymis in the testicles. Some studies suggest that only 10% of men have symptoms and as few as 5% of women have symptoms. However, Chlamydia can cause infertility, as well as long-term pain. A study based in Mwanza found that 11% of adolescent girls tested had chlamydia (Hokororo et al, 2015).

More common than Chlamydia in this study was HSV-2, otherwise known as genital herpes, which had a rate of 34.5% of girls tested. This is an infection caused by the herpes simplex virus. A virus cannot be cured with antibiotics. This virus is passed through contact with mucus membranes (moist linings) which includes the vagina and anus. The virus passes from one person to another during sexual activity and travels further into the body thereafter, often lying dormant (asleep) in the center of the body.

The virus later travels back to the moist linings and causes sores (lesions). However, the virus can still be passed on even if there are no lesions visible. Also, it's important to note, the lesions are often very high up the vagina or anus and therefore not visible except during an examination by a healthcare provider.

Once infected, a person will always have the virus. A person can prevent passing the virus to another person by using condoms with all sexual activity. Also, if an infected person is in a long-term relationship with a non-infected person, there are medications that a non-infected person can take to avoid getting the infection from their partner. This should be discussed with a health care provider. Some STIs do have symptoms, so everyone should be aware to seek medical help if there is abnormal discharge from the vagina or penis, burning on urination, bleeding during or after sex, testicle pain, itches, rashes or sores in the genital area.

# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS...

## Q: How will I know when it is the right time to have sex?

A: Each person is different and there's no correct age or time to begin having a sexual relationship. Many people choose to wait until marriage as it is a stable relationship with someone they feel comfortable with and any consequences, such as pregnancy, will be shared by both partners.

If you are considering having sex before marriage, you need to consider what is best for you. It's better to have an embarrassing talk about sex than to have an embarrassing sexual experience or to become pregnant or infected with a sexually-transmitted disease. Have you considered all the possible outcomes, such as how will you feel if you break up after? Have you considered how to protect yourself from STIs/HIV or pregnancy? How will you feel if other people find out about your sexual relationship?

Sex can be a wonderful experience for a couple who care for each other and who both want to be closer. However, it can also be an experience which causes a lot of hurt and damage if not considered fully. Take time. Talk about it with your partner. And if you feel pressured in any way, either by your partner or your friends, then it's probably not the right time for a sexual relationship and you should walk away.



## Q: How can I stop a boy from bothering me?

A: If it is a boy that likes you and you don't like him back, there are some ways to let him know. If this is the case, be honest and say you're not interested in him. You don't need to give a reason why. Being indirect in your position will only confuse the situation. If he is texting or phoning you too much and you have already told him to stop, just stop answering. Don't respond. While this may hurt his feelings, his feelings would only be hurt later anyway when he realises you don't like him. Try to be kind to each other. He may be very nervous about telling you that he likes you, so don't make fun of him or tell everyone else about the situation. However, if his behaviour escalates and becomes harassment then your responses need to escalate. Firstly, if his behaviour is threatening you in any way, then seek help from a trusted adult or contact the police. No one should ever feel threatened. Never be afraid to 'make a scene' if you need to shout, scream and run.

If you are being harassed, use direct language such as 'do not speak to me in that way'. Do not use insults since that may escalate the situation. After that, don't continue a conversation or interact with the harasser, just walk away.

# SPOTLIGHT:

We want to know about you!  
We would like to include a  
spotlight section on someone  
new each month. Send us  
your stories of teaching the  
sessions and a little bit about  
you ... you could see yourself  
here next issue!



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# Early Pregnancy

*A student poem prepared by Madam Sada Kimbengele,  
Kibacha Secondary School*

1. Today I hold a pen, a few things you should know  
Children are precious, they should be taken care of  
Not to leave them, to take care for themselves  
We can prevent it, these early pregnancies.
2. Hormone changes, should not affect feelings  
to avoid influence, attitude too and intent  
in sex to indulge, desires will lure them
3. Reproductive health, too, it's a whole plan  
Youth to teach, education to understand  
Relationship certainly, not to rush into
4. Relationships exist, but with love  
It is not a malady one, that destroys children  
And not to kill dreams, to do bad things for them
5. Emotion is normal, don't you understand children?  
Self-control is a reward, till you're grown up  
Don't rush for sex, miss your education
6. To protect them, for more development  
Parents, community, too, is good to understand  
Let us protect them evenly, and not discriminate against them
7. Let's stop stigma, Aids is not for one  
Refuse abuse, violence also  
Let's be one of the kind, diseases to avoid
8. Associate with your colleagues, respect your role  
Puberty is not an obstacle, to contempt your colleagues  
Your cooperation, will build your reputation
9. Make your own decisions, build your Nation  
avoid influence, endure your shield  
don't sit back, to limit your rights
10. It's not like I'm finished, I have a lot to write  
Society, also parents, this lesson to understand  
to increase their awareness, and teachers as well  
**REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH PROGRAM, SHOULD LAST, ALWAYS FORWARD**

# MEET THE TEAM

In this part of the newsletter, we would like to introduce you to the team, one person at a time.



## FAUDHIA BADDY MNYONE

My name is Faudhia Baddy Mnyone and I am a teacher at Sabasaba Primary School located in Same District. I graduated from Mtwara Teaching College. I thank God I am a nurturing teacher, but also a mother and friend to my students. I sincerely thank Empower Tanzania for enabling me to participate in the Reproductive Health and Relationships Program for our young youth in schools.

After training I have been able to stand in a different perspective. In helping our children on their journey to adulthood, the biggest thing is to talking to them gently, humbly and making them friends and feeling safe in right hands for them to be able to express their things to the right person.

I call on parents/ guardians, education stakeholders and government as a whole to work together to support the VISION of Empower Tanzania in building a nation of healthy of self-aware and professional people.

LETS HELP THEM to achieve their goals and not become thorns by thwarting their dreams, LETS TAKE CARE, LOVE, RESPECT AND VALUE THEM...OUR CHILDREN, OUR VALUE, AND OUR HERITAGE.

If If you have a comment or suggestion about the newsletter, please email Jessica at [jhaw1@gmail.com](mailto:jhaw1@gmail.com) with the subject title "Newsletter." If you need any help with a teaching issue, please contact Catherine at [catherinewales17@gmail.com](mailto:catherinewales17@gmail.com) or Yoeza at [yoeza1mnzava@gmail.com](mailto:yoeza1mnzava@gmail.com)