

## Harbinger's column

### All you didn't want to know about VD

Venereal disease is a term which simply means a variety of sexually transmitted infections, the most common of which are gonorrhoea and syphilis. Any discharges, ulcers or sores on the genitals can be symptoms of VD in people who have had sexual contact, including, but not restricted to intercourse.

If a sexual contact develops VD, it is important to be tested even if no symptoms are present. This is especially true for women who often show no symptoms of VD and can only know of its presence if told by their contact.

VD can be dangerous to women because it is often not detected in the early stages and thus it can often lead to sterility or serious pelvic diseases. If you think you may have VD, contact a VD clinic immediately (Harbinger has lists of them). Also, tell your sexual contacts so that they can go for testing and treatment if necessary.

#### GONORRHEA

The symptoms of gonorrhoea in men are discharge from the penis and a burning sensation during urination. The symptoms in women may be discharge from the vagina, or a burning sensation. But sometimes women exhibit no symptoms at all.

To test a man for the presence of gonorrhoea, a sample of discharge is taken from the tip of the penis, also from the anus and the throat when necessary. For women, a sample of discharge is taken from the cervix (mouth of the uterus), from the urethra (opening to the bladder) and from the anus and throat when necessary.

Gonorrhoea is largely centralized in the reproductive system, but the danger in women of the infection spreading up into the fallopian tubes and ovaries can produce

irreversible damage such as sterility.

The disease syphilis is ultimately spread through the bloodstream, enabling the infection to spread to the body's vital organs (heart, brain, etc.) and cause irreversible damage or death. Syphilis shows different symptoms in each of its three stages.

#### SYPHILIS

The first stage of the infection is primary syphilis. The symptoms of this stage are small open sores on the genitals. In women, this sore may be inside the vagina and not visible without an internal examination. The sore is painless but highly infectious, and will go away in about a week. This does not, however, mean that the disease has gone away; only that it has gone inside the body and has entered the bloodstream.

The symptoms of secondary syphilis include a variety of skin rashes on the hands and feet as well as a possible sore throat and fever. These symptoms may last a year or so, then disappear, leaving the infection, in the bloodstream and internal organs.

The third or tertiary syphilis involves damage to the internal organs, and may result in brain infection and mental illness. Spinal cord damage may result in crippling, blindness, heart disease and death.

Syphilis is diagnosed by a blood test. This test is usually not accurate until three to six weeks after the initial appearance of a sore.

As with gonorrhoea penicillin is the preferred treatment for syphilis. The important thing to remember is that any appearance of genital sores should be examined and any possible contact with someone who may have syphilis should be tested immediately.

## Boredom plagues Western U.

LONDON (CUP) — Students have been complaining about it for years but the University of Western Ontario Senate may be the first to realize something has to be done.

The problem? Boring classes and poor teaching in first year university courses.

#### INARTICULATE TEACHERS

A report prepared by the Senate Committee on Admissions and Academic Programs Policy (SCAAP) says first-year students are complaining of "prolonged and unmitigated boredom". At the same time many faculty who teach first-year courses say it's "the academic equivalent of a labor camp in Solshenitsyn's Gulag Archipelago".

The report detailed student

complaints of inarticulate and unprepared teachers and arbitrary marking in assignments and tests.

SCAAP chairperson E.H. Redekop said courses where students were most dissatisfied were ones where professors did not appear to be interested and were generally inaccessible.

He added that in faculties "where you have a tremendous emphasis on research and publication first-year teaching can become a low-priority."

The report said faculty promotion and tenure committees do not, on the whole, reward good teaching in the first year.

It added that some departments have been content to assign mediocre teachers to first year

classes because they think first year students are not clever or sophisticated enough to recognize good teaching.

However, the report is not without its bad points. While recommending that first year courses become top priority, it also suggests that students should pass both term and exam work to pass a course; that exams make up at least 30 per cent of final grades and that common exams must be held in all courses with multiple sections.

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