

Students in dark about birth control

It may seem unusual that for our first column I've decided to discuss a controversial issue like abortion. However, there may be reason for us working in the area of unplanned pregnancy counselling to show some concern. Recently we received information from Family Planning. The number of abortions for young women is on the increase in Toronto. Of all abortions performed on Toronto residents in 1978, 43% were on women 18-25. Young women also have the highest proportion of repeat abortions. For those women who do not choose to terminate pregnancy, a survey in Nova Scotia revealed that 44% of the pregnancies were reported as unwanted.

Unplanned pregnancy can result from improper use of Birth Control methods, a failure on the part of the method chosen, or just plain neglect to use any kind of protection. In two Canadian

studies on college students it was reported that 26% to 38% of the sample were unprotected at their first intercourse. Even more alarming, approximately 15% continued to risk conception by not using any birth control method.

Some of the factors affecting the use of contraception are as follows:

- 1) A hesitation on the part of younger women to seek family planning information from conventional sources because of the implications that may be drawn regarding their sexual activity.
- 2) Irregular coitus may decrease the motivation to choose and use birth control.
- 3) Because we are highly mobile, we may be unaware of local

sources of information or medical treatment.

4) Believe it or not, university students are not that well informed about basic birth control methods. In one study, 34% of the respondents had inadequate knowledge and among those with sufficient knowledge, 20% were unmotivated to use effective birth

control. Another study indicated a tremendous lack of knowledge about how specific methods worked.

5) Lack of experience and open discussion about the risks of pregnancy often result in inadequate use of birth control. 6) The tenuous nature of relationships within our age group does not lend itself to open discussion which is a

positive factor in the use of contraception.

Any birth control method that requires the assistance or advice of a doctor can be obtained on campus from Health Services, located on the second floor of Vanier residence. Information or referral to off-campus services can be obtained from The York Connection, located in 027 McLaughlin (phone 667-3509/3632). Our volunteers are also trained to discuss the pros and cons of the various birth control methods.

Should an unplanned pregnancy occur we are prepared to discuss the various options that are open to the individuals involved. The York Connection does not advocate abortion should an unplanned pregnancy occur. We are advocates of choice and will never advise a client to either continue or terminate a pregnancy. That decision is reserved for the individuals concerned.



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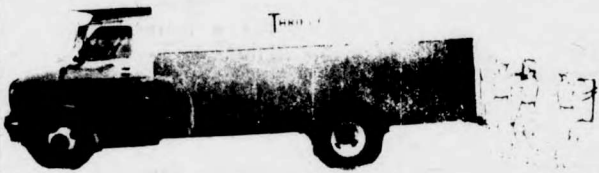
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