

HEALTH BRIEFS

Virginity back in fashion

Being a virgin until marriage is back in fashion for both boys and girls in Uganda.

Members of the Young Christian Students of Kampala's Catholic Diocese decided at a recent AIDS seminar not to have sex before marriage. Faced with ever increasing cases of HIV/AIDS, a growing number of parents in Uganda are also advising their children to remain virgins until they get married.

Can't get contraceptives

Many married women in developing countries want to plan their families but are unable to do so, says the *International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF)*. For example, 21 percent of Nigerian women and 40 percent of women in Togo want to use contraceptives but can't get them.

STD's trap teens

In recent years, the number of teenagers suffering from sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) has increased. The World Health Organisation reports that one in every 20 teenagers gets an STD every year. In Brazil, about two percent of the 24 million children who live or work on the streets are believed to be infected with HIV.

Unwanted pregnancies

Teenage pregnancies are often unplanned and unwanted. In Algeria and Morocco, for example, 2 000 unwanted babies are abandoned every year by young unmarried mothers. Many young women turn to abortion to avoid being forced out of school or even out of their homes. At the Kenyatta National Hospital in Nairobi, 60 percent of abortion patients are either school girls or unemployed young women. In many developing countries

where safe, legal abortion is not available, the results can be bad. Young women often go for unsafe abortions which result in serious bleeding, pelvic infection, infertility and even death.

The Pill for men?

An abortion pill, called RU-486, which is available in Europe, is being studied as a possible contraceptive for men. New research showed it stops sperm from fertilising eggs. RU-486 is commonly known as the morning after pill. It produces a complete abortion in 85 percent of women who use it within three weeks after their last menstrual period.

