

Series to focus on women's health

By JACKIE KLEIN

"Women and Health Problems" will be the topic of a series sponsored by the Oakland-Livingston Human Service Agency. Discussions will be Wednesdays, May 5, 12 and 19 from 7:30-8:30 p.m. in Webb Junior High School, 2200 Woodward Heights (Nine and a half Mile), one block west of I-75 in Ferndale. Admission is free. Dr. Jerrold Weinberg, Southfield gynecologist-obstetrician, will lead the discussions. The agency, formerly Office of Economic Opportunity, is concerned with health as

it affects all socio-economic classes, according to field service coordinator Carol Anthony.

"WE'RE A COMMUNITY action agency that does more than serve low-income persons," she said. "We're providing these informal educational programs because we believe women's health problems affect their ability to work and function according to their potential."

The May 5 discussion will focus on depression and menopause. Family planning methods will be the May 12 topic and the May 19 session will deal with diseases that affect women, including menstrual disorders. Moderator will be Rose Ellen Fenster of Southfield.

These informal sessions assure women that their female health problems aren't unique. Accurate information dispels myths," said Weinberg. "Change of life is really an inappropriate term for menopause. Depression doesn't have to be an integral part of that state."

"WOMEN IN THEIR 40s and 50s feel like empty nesters whose children have flown the coop and mother... Their husbands joke about being married to granddaughters and that makes women feel even older. The fact that they no longer get menstrual periods is another grim reminder." Hormones play some role in the menopausal cycle—alleged side effects of depression, emotional disturbance and weight gain are old wives' tales Weinberg said. Mrs. Fenster, a professional in the field of women's health care and a volunteer at Planned Parenthood League of Detroit, said educating women about their bodies allows them to be more active in sexual and family planning roles.

"I PARTICIPATED in a series of discussions sponsored by the agency, the Oakland County Public Health Department

"Sources of information on sex, pregnancy, birth control and menopause are inadequate and these sessions help bridge the gap."

—Dr. Jerrold Weinberg

and Threshold this winter and the response was tremendous," she said. "We talked about male menopause, pros and cons of hormone shots, family planning methods and related subjects."

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It's impossible for doctors to spend the time required to explain women's health problems to individual patients, Weinberg said. Articles in publications are often misleading and data on scientific studies is generally taken out of context, he said.

There's no exchange of information in media communications, and when an article appears or a television program focuses on certain physical problems, doctors anticipate a rash of calls from their patients the next day.

"If one or two words are omitted in the communication, it can change the whole meaning. Incomplete, preliminary studies are interpreted as fact and everybody identifies. The human service agency's seminar provides a forum for thorough explanations, unencumbered and not out of context."

MRS. FENSTER said medical jargon is interpreted in lay terms to dispel fears and myths. She said it's important to get accurate information. Ms. Anthony referred to the series as "large rap sessions" which reassure women their problems and fears are similar. Women discover it isn't unhealthy to fantasize sexually, or to have ambivalent feelings. They tend to admit these emotions in a group of their peers, she said. Mrs. Fenster said a wide range of pertinent subjects will be discussed and questions will be answered. To avoid embarrassment, questions can be written on cards. For information, phone 339-2880.

See related story, 'Human services' on page 6A



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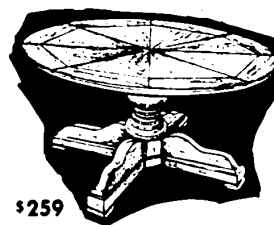
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