

# Sex ed classes don't teach what kids need to know

The birth rate in the United States may be on the decline, but pregnancies among unmarried teenagers are increasing steadily.

So says Sylvia S. Hacker, who studied the matter in her doctoral research at the University of Michigan.

"Sexual experimenting is becoming common, and at younger and younger age levels," she notes. "Birth control, however, is practiced inconsistently and ambivalently. There may be more sexual behavior, but there is no real increase in knowledge."

More than half the 21 million 15- to 19-year-olds in this country have had sexual intercourse, estimate researchers for the Planned Parenthood Federation of America. To Ms. Hacker, the more alarming fact is that each year more than one million become pregnant.

Of these, she said, 28 per cent are

married before conception and an additional 10 per cent get married before the baby arrives. Twenty-one per cent give birth out of wedlock, 14 per cent have miscarriages, and 27 per cent have abortions.

Why do so many unwanted pregnancies occur in this age of "sexual enlightenment?"

Because the teenagers are not enlightened, Hacker said. "Sex education classes in this country are a failure. The classes are dealing with anatomy and reproduction when what the kids really want to know about are human relationships. What will she think if I try something? How far should I let him go?"

In her research, Hacker said, she heard these concerns over and over during hundreds of in-depth interviews with 38 young people, aged 15 to 23, who had had sexual experiences with

and later without, contraceptives. "Other studies have also shown young people to be erratic in their use of birth control," she noted. "We wanted to find out why."

Ms. Hacker, who received her Ph.D. degree recently, now works as a health educator at the U-M Health Service.

The 18 youths in Ms. Hacker's doctoral study indicated a general desire to avoid pregnancy, but varying degrees of self-consciousness about contraceptives. "If you carry one with you," one girl remarked, "it's like you're asking for it." Many simply had inadequate information. The less they knew about birth control, the less likely they were to use it.

"Sex and contraception are still relatively taboo subjects in our post-Furber cultural culture," Ms. Hacker says. "Even the most liberal parents tend to view sex as a private matter and the schools treat it as a deviant academic subject. In addition, Michigan has a law against the teaching of birth control."

"As a result, the kids turn to their peers, where an enormous amount of mythology is still being perpetuated. For example, some believe you can't get pregnant the first time."

The belief that "almost everybody's doing it" does not erase the guilt, Ms. Hacker added. "This is the transitional generation. We have two moralities existing side by side. There is more sexual behavior, but no corresponding increase in comfort or knowledge."

The more uneasy or uninformed a boy or girl feels about sex, the less likely he or she is to use birth control.

Anxieties tend to be strongest in the early stages of the relationship, she found. Uncertain about each other's

feelings, they sense that they will feel less guilty if the sexual experience is "spontaneous." They often have a few drinks to further reduce their guilt and inhibitions.

The combination in young people of high sexual anxiety, limited social judgment and alcohol, create strong odds against either partner using birth control, Hacker says.

Couples with an ongoing relationship are more likely to talk openly about birth control, Ms. Hacker found, and are more apt to use it regularly. "However, even when going steady, the subject of contraception is not thoroughly discussed."

"Communication is probably the single most important factor leading to teenagers' use or non-use of birth control," Ms. Hacker concluded. "Birth control was most consistently practiced within the context of a strong relationship with both partners able to communicate openly and share responsibility for using some method."

SHE SEES WAYS by which the situation could be changed.

"The first step," she said, "is for adults to acknowledge sex as a legitimate natural function and learn to discuss it comfortably with young people. State health departments should allot funding to train parents, teachers, counselors and other helping professionals to deal with their questions."

"Ideally, sex education classes should help youngsters get in touch with their own feelings and values. This is not easy at an age when most youths still want their parents' approval, but are under pressure to follow the crowd."

"However if they were presented the opportunity to weigh values and

assess the risks, they would learn that they have choices. They have the privilege of saying no as well as yes," Hacker pointed out.

Sex should be recognized as a natural part of life, she concluded. "Responsible sex is acceptable, but irresponsible parenthood is unacceptable."

## Sports prepares women for later confrontations

Women who consider themselves liberated and want to bring up their daughters with a sense of social equality and personal assertiveness would do well to get them into contact sports during junior and senior high school.

"Young women who have been on basketball and other school teams," said Mary Pollock, director of women's programs at Michigan State University, "are much more comfortable when they find themselves in the inevitable kinds of confrontations which occur in the world of work."

Assertiveness is necessary in the career world, Pollock said, and it comes easier when competitiveness

and competitiveness have been given early encouragement.

Otherwise, she said, when women want some kind of change made in the shape of their domestic or professional lives, they are afraid of direct confrontations, of speaking up. Instead, they avoid a rational discussion of the desired change, and often limit their activities to complaints to other women friends, none of whom can do a thing about accomplishing the sought-after change.

Men, too, she said, "have difficulties in confrontations with women peers at work, and chiefly because they are not used to having women raise issues."

## U-M sets working women conference

"New Research on Women III: Work, Family Roles and Support Systems," will be the subject of a conference from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Jan. 17. The meeting is sponsored by the Center for the Continuing Education of Women at the University of Michigan, and will be held in the Rackham Building on the Ann Arbor campus.

During the morning session, panelists will present papers looking at working women from five diverse perspectives: internal influences on women's career goals; racial differences in why women work; and how work and family roles are integrated.

age and class differences as related to the kinds of jobs women obtain; and differences in values and social competence across three generations of women.

The morning speakers are Jacqueline Parsons, developmental psychologist; Karen Paige, social psychologist; Joyce Beckett of the School of Social Work; Mary Corcoran, political scientist; Greg Duncan, economist; and Toni Antonucci, developmental psychologist.

The conference is free and open to the public. For further information, contact Susan Golden at CEW, (313) 764-6535.

**Older & Wiser**

Complete Banquet Facilities Available Parties of 20 to 200

• Reception • Meetings • Banquets • Buffets • Social Parties • Reception • Meetings • Banquets • Buffets • Social Parties

FROM \$6.95

**Cordoba**

2200 West Washtenaw Ave. at Ann Arbor, Michigan 48106 477-2686

**Pesos to \$**

The origin of the dollar sign might be the first and last letters of the Spanish word "pesos" (meaning dollar) written one over the other.

Complete Banquet Facilities Available Parties of 20 to 200

• Reception • Meetings • Banquets • Buffets • Social Parties • Reception • Meetings • Banquets • Buffets • Social Parties

FROM \$6.95

**Cordoba**

2200 West Washtenaw Ave. at Ann Arbor, Michigan 48106 477-2686

**SEMI ANNUAL Sale**

FLAIR CHAIR (#50458) Your choice of over 100 fabrics. Reg. \$495.00 ONLY \$319.99

Everything in the studio! 10% - 15% off all select items! 10% - 15% off all special orders!

**Sherwood Studios**

Fine furniture and draperies made in our own workshops for over 50 years

BEN and MARK MORGANROTH Professional Members ASD

354-9060 10-9 Mon-Sat

12 Mile Telegraph Master Charge • Visa • Our own revolving charge

**Atlantic Drapery Shoppe**

**DRAPERY SALE**

Labor \$5.00 per panel

Custom Spreads

Labor Special on Custom Slipcovers

Special price available on Drapery, Slipcover and Upholstery fabrics. Longest selection of fabrics, fringes, tassels and trims in Michigan.

**Chair - \$37.90 — Sofa - \$47.90**

360 E. Maple, Birmingham 647-2020 647-0721

**We will purchase your fine Jewelry and Diamonds**

In highest confidence, we shall be pleased to appraise and buy your fine jewelry and diamonds for immediate cash. Expert counsel given to individuals, banks and attorneys.

**GREENSTONE'S**

Jewelry For Over Half a Century

125 Fisher Bld. Detroit, Mich. 48202

Call 875-7372 for appointment

**CLEARANCE SALE**

**SAVE 30%**

on our entire stock of Winter

• SNOWSUITS • COATS • JACKETS

• SNOWMOBILE SUITS

**20% OFF**

FALL AND WINTER CLOTHING

Including

• SKIRTS • TOPS • DRESSES • SHIRTS • GIRLS' SLACKS • SLEEPWEAR • BOYS' CORDUOYS • DRESS OUTFITS

Childers FASHION SHOPS

LIVONIA MALL 7 MILE & MIDDLEBELT

MACOMB MALL GRATTY & MASONIC

WONDERLAND PLYMOUTH & MIDDLEBELT

BRIARWOOD ANN ARBOR

**Casual Dining**

Delightful, durable wrought iron by Lynn Shaw perfect for today's casual dining or tomorrow's outdoor living. Now on sale at Jimmies.

42" 5 piece set Sale \$209

30" 3 piece set Sale \$119

**Jimmies Rustics**

LIVONIA 29500 W. Six Mile (Just W. of Middlebelt) 522-9220 Daily 9:30-5:30 Mon. Thurs & Fri. 10-9 p.m. Use your Mastercard or Visa

BIRMINGHAM 221 Hamilton (IN. at 15 Mile E. of Woodward) 844-1919 Daily 9:30-5:30 Thurs & Fri. 10-9 p.m. Also available at Jimmies Rustics: Bar stools, fireplace tools, screens & accessories.

**STOREWIDE WINTER SALE**

15% to 50% off CONTEMPORARY SCANDINAVIAN & DOMESTIC FURNITURE INCLUDING SPECIAL ORDERS!

**bransch interiors**

5100 W. Washtenaw - 3375 Orchard Lake Road - 624-3771 Open daily 10-6 Mon-Sat 10-5 Sun, 12-5 Mon-Sat 12-5 Sun

**Lazares Furs**

In Windsor since 1925

**JANUARY FUR SALE**

**SAVE 10% to 50%**

Included are fabulous creations of WORLD FAMOUS DESIGNERS ... many at CLEARANCE PRICES

Our exciting collection represents the latest in fashions, new silhouettes, new lengths, new colorings, impeccable workmanship, luxury and sophistication-practical for day or evening.

FULL PREMIUM ON YOUR U.S. DOLLAR DUTY AND SALES TAX REFUNDED

**Lazares Furs**

498 Ouellette, Windsor 1-519-253-2418

Hours: 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. Daily Friday till 9 p.m. Saturdays to 6 p.m. • FREE PARKING