

Community Program Helps Combat Adolescent Sexually Transmitted Disease Epidemic

- Nearly Half the New Cases of STDs Occur in Young Adults(1) -

Nearly half of the 18.9 million new cases of sexually transmitted diseases (STD) occur in young adults 15 to 24 years of age each year in the United States, according to recent Centers for Disease Control (CDC) incidence and prevalence estimates.

"Recent estimates showing that nearly half of all new STD cases occur among the younger age group - 15 to 24 years of age - of America's sexually active population underscores the urgent need for increased STD awareness through education," said Dr. John Toney, medical director, Florida Sexually Transmitted Diseases - Human Immunodeficiency Virus Prevention Training Center, which is a part of the CDC National Network of STD/HIV Prevention Training Centers.

The most commonly acquired conditions are human papillomavirus (HPV), trichomoniasis and chlamydia(1). Genital HPV is the virus that causes external genital warts, and as many as 1 million new cases of external genital warts are diagnosed in the United States each year, according to the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases(2). Left untreated, genital warts can be more readily transmitted to sexual partners.

In response to a lack of HPV education and awareness, 3M Pharmaceuticals has designed the It Doesn't Discriminate program. This program was developed to enhance communication between health care providers and patients by addressing the signs, symptoms, causes and treatments of HPV and external genital warts. The It Doesn't Discriminate program will be presented at select national and regional nurse practitioner meetings throughout 2004.

Every nurse practitioner who participates in an It Doesn't Discriminate program receives an adaptable informational toolkit, which is used to educate their local communities about HPV and external genital warts. Health care providers who would like to present the program in their local communities can request the toolkit toll free at 877-856-6397 or IDD@KPRNY.com. It is important that consumers encourage their community centers and/or health clinics to incorporate this valuable program into their education agenda.

"The It Doesn't Discriminate program provides the framework for nurse practitioners to discuss these increasingly widespread conditions with their patients, so they can better care for their health," says Anne Moore, RNC, MSN, professor of nursing at Vanderbilt University, member of the American Academy of Nurse Practitioners (AANP), and board member of the National Association of Nurse Practitioners in Women's Health (NPWH).

There is no cure for the virus that causes external genital warts; however, treatment can eradicate external warts. Traditional treatments include surgical, laser or chemical techniques performed in the physician's office that involve tissue destruction. External genital warts can appear as small growths or bumps that may be raised or flat and can appear in a cluster with a cauliflower-like appearance.

About Patient-Applied Aldara (imiquimod) Cream, 5%

Aldara (imiquimod) cream, 5% is in a class of drugs referred to as immune response modifiers (IRM). Available by prescription only, Aldara cream is the only patient-applied cream approved by the FDA for the treatment of external genital and perianal warts. Aldara cream works by inducing the local production of specific cytokines which activate the body's immune system to clear the genital warts while reducing the level of HPV in the body.

Patient-applied Aldara cream provides patients with a treatment choice that eliminates the need for chemical treatments or surgical removal of external genital warts.

In clinical trials most local skin reactions were mild to moderate and included erythema, erosion, flaking, edema, scabbing and induration at the wart site. Most common application-site reactions were itching (26 percent), burning (16 percent) and pain (4 percent) at the wart site. Application-site pigmentation changes have also been reported.

New warts may develop during treatment. The effect of Aldara Cream on the transmission of genital warts is unknown. Aldara Cream may weaken condoms and diaphragms. Sexual contact should be avoided while the cream is on the skin.

For more information about Aldara Cream, genital warts, or HPV, visit the 3M Pharmaceuticals web site at www.3m.com/aldara.

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(1) Weinstock, H., Berman, S., Kates, Jr. W. (2000). Sexually Transmitted Diseases Among Youth: Incidence and Prevalence Estimates. Perspectives on Sexual and Reproductive Health, Vol. 36, 1, Jan/Feb 2004.

(2) Borucki, M. (1992). Overshadowed by AIDS, Other STDs Continue to Skyrocket. The DO, August 1992.

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