

College students most likely to acquire sexually transmitted diseases

By Shawn Black Snider
Staff Reporter

The average aged college student falls within a specific group of individuals which has been shown to be the most likely candidates to acquire a sexually transmitted disease (STD). Of this group, which ranges from 15 to 24 years old, there is a morbidity rate of 70 percent.

"These figures," said Harvey Felix public health advisor for the Center for Disease Control (CDC), "suggest that there needs to be a more concerted effort, not only on campus, but everywhere, for individuals to practice safe sex."

"Although we are seeing a drop in some STD's, through education and treatment," said Felix, "others are now on the rise."

The term STD is a blanket term used to refer to diseases that are transmitted through sexual intercourse. These include acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS), herpes, chlamydia, gonorrhea and syphilis.

While AIDS and herpes have gotten a lot of media attention recently and the information and therapy for syphilis and gonorrhea have already been firmly established in our educational system, the seriousness of the chlamydia infection has only recently gained some notoriety and

become a public issue.

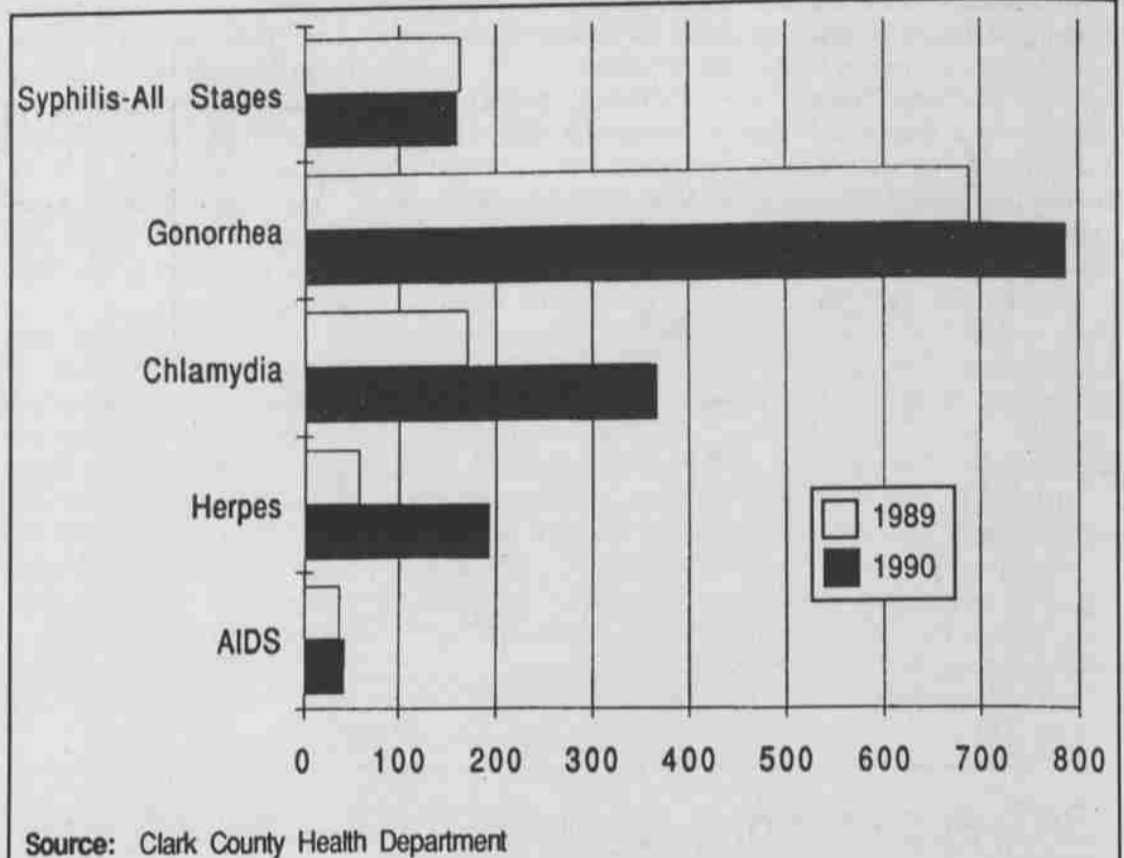
The fact that chlamydia is most often asymptomatic, in that its symptoms are not usually noticeable, makes it a more formidable enemy, Felix said. Nationally 3 to 4 million new cases a year are reported, with the majority of them seen in women under 35 years of age.

He also points out that although chlamydia is most often associated with women and the link they have to pelvic inflammatory disease (PID) and infertility, men should be just as concerned regarding their fertility and related complications.

The CDC suggests that testing for STD's be done periodically and as often as every three to six months if you have more than one sex partner. A past history of STD's or any unusual symptoms can also indicate a need to be tested.

A strain of gonorrhea, PPNG which came from the Far East, has until recently been resistant to all treatments, and said Felix, herpes and AIDS as yet have no cure. These factors he pointed out, lend a seriousness to the situation that cannot be understated.

The current practices for diagnosis and medical treatment for gonorrhea and syphilis encompass a simultaneous treatment for ch-



lamydia as well as stressing care for all partners.

The Journal of American Medical Association (JAMA) reports that when dealing with any STD the same concerns should be used as are bestowed upon their more publicized member (AIDS) by emphasizing education, prevention and treatment.

Some recently released sta-

tistics from the Clark County Health Department (CCHD) show that from Jan. to April of this year there have been 364 cases of chlamydia reported. This is opposed to 171 for the same time last year. AIDS and herpes have also experienced dramatic increases over last year.

Felix, who is in Las Vegas to help coordinate the epidemiologic

portion of the STD program at the CCHD, stresses the need for prevention and education and encourages any one who might be concerned to get tested immediately.

Quick and inexpensive testing is available through the CCHD or at UNLV's Student Health Center.

Student health insurance

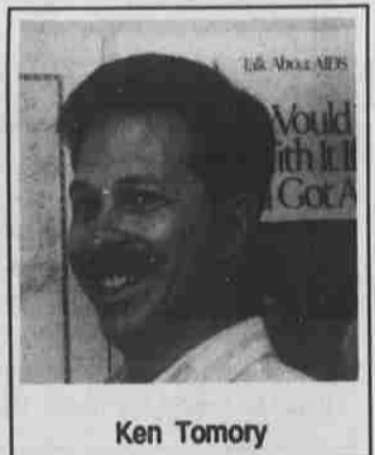
By Kara Kelley
Staff Reporter

Student Health Insurance (SHI), a plan designed especially for students, is offered to any UNLV student who is enrolled in a minimum of seven credit hours (six for graduate students). SHI can be purchased through the registrar's office by the last day of class registration. The cost of the insurance for the student is \$140 per semester. Additional premiums are added if coverage of a spouse or child is desired.

"The SHI is offered as an excess plan to cover major medical expenses a student may encounter," said Ken Tomory chair of the Student Health Advisory Committee. Students with another source of insurance would have to file a claim with that source first.

Tomory pointed out that out-of-state students who have another source of insurance need to ask certain questions of that insurance company.

"The students should find out if their primary source of insurance is valid in another state, and verify that their doctor in Nevada will accept that insurance," said



Ken Tomory

Tomory.

Services of the Student Health Center are offered free to all enrolled students whether they purchase SHI or not, according to Tomory.

"Our services include the treatment of minor illnesses and injury, family planning and birth control, pregnancy testing, allergy shots, basic prescriptions, lab tests and hearing and vision screening," said Tomory.

Students interested in SHI can pick up a brochure that explains coverage, eligibility, benefits, and policy exclusions in the Claude I. Howard Student Health Center.

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