

HEALTH

Americans rank number one for safer sex

(NAPS)—A new global survey reveals that although Americans have the leading international reputation for practicing safer sex, we rank fourth in the actual use of condoms by those having casual sex. Americans were seen by 67 percent of their global counterparts as the nationality prepared for safer sex. In the global survey, commissioned by Durex, the only global condom brand, the French ranked second, the British third and the Germans fourth in people's perception worldwide of

nationalities that practice safer sex.

The survey, taken among 10,000 adults in 15 countries, is considered an international benchmark on sexual attitudes and behavior. Here are some of the results:

- The survey confirmed that women have fully embraced the sexual revolution. Not only are they as sexually active as men on average, but they are also more concerned about their own sexual needs.
- The most sexually active nation was America, with

Americans having 135 occasions of lovemaking each year, closely followed by the Russians, French, Germans and British. The least active nationalities were the Thais with 64 annual encounters and the Spanish with 71.

The international Gallic reputation for romance brought the French the title of the world's best lovers, followed by the Italians and Americans.

For more information about the global survey or about safer sex practices, call 1-404-875-1444, Ext. 239.

Mutilation

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Sometimes called a rite of passage.

That is why "to eliminate FGM, we must educate these people, including women, that they can give up a specific practice without giving up meaningful aspects of their own cultures," said Dr. John Nelson, a Salt Lake City gynecologist

and an AMA trustee.

As many as 6,000 young girls a day are mutilated with razor blades, scissors or glass, and in some regions with the teeth of the midwife, experts said.

"Discretion is essential when dealing with such strong beliefs," Nelson said.

"But FGM is a dangerous, deadly and psychologically

scarring procedure," he said.

Doctors point to numerous immediate and long-term complications which can develop from the procedure.

Assuming instruments were used on only one person, immediate complication can include shock, infection, damage to the urethra or anus, keloid scar formation, cysts or infection

A promising development offers new hope

(NAPS)—Recently published data from a clinical trial conducted in California and Nebraska provide hope that a vaccine to treat and prevent AIDS may finally be possible.

In the study five out of the five volunteers vaccinated with a new immunogen treatment showed significantly increased levels of protection against the AIDS virus.

Conducted at the University of Nebraska Medical Center, the study focused on the effects of HGP-30, an immunogen developed by the CEL-SCI Corporation of Alexandria, VA.

In the encouraging study, blood was taken from vaccinated

donors and injected into groups of SCID (Severe Combined Immunodeficient) mice, the best available animal model, which lack an immune system and therefore permit human cell growth. The mice were injected with HIV to determine whether the blood from vaccinated volunteers can prevent HIV infection.

Seventy-eight percent of mice given blood from vaccinated volunteers showed no HIV infection after being exposed to 10,000 times the amount of virus required to infect, compared to 13 percent of the mice given blood from unvaccinated donors.

Immunogens like HGP-30 represent an exciting new class of therapeutic agents designed to elicit or enhance HIV-specific immune responses in individuals already infected with HIV-1.

Immunogens are essentially vaccines: designed, synthesized and delivered in exactly the same way as vaccines. However, most investigators prefer to describe these agents as immunogens to distinguish between preventative vaccines and therapeutic vaccines.

The debut of this new HIV immunogen in clinical trials is an exciting new development. HIV infected individuals may be able to reap the benefits of a new class of agents designed to elicit an HIV-specific immune response, like a vaccine, by stimulating certain cells of the immune system to awaken, activate and redirect their forces to kill virus-infected cells.

Studies with HIV infected individuals are ongoing in collaboration with AIDS ReSEARCH Alliance. These will evaluate the safety and stimulation of immune responses with the promising vaccine.

CEL-SCI pioneered the development of Multikine for the treatment of cancer. It is currently also developing a vaccine for the prevention and treatment of tuberculosis.

Teens at risk in four health categories

HOUSTON—It's dangerous to be a teenager.

Four leading risk categories make the teen years especially fraught with hazards said an adolescent medicine expert at Baylor College of Medicine in Houston.

"Drinking alcohol while doing other activities, failure to use safety devices, access to firearms, and sports are the big four," said Dr. Albert C. Hergenroeder, chief of adolescent and sports medicine at Baylor College and Texas Children's Hospital.

Statistics seem to confirm what most of us already know — teenagers think they are immortal.

Consider that:

- Nineteen percent of teens rarely use a seatbelt.
- Forty percent fail to wear helmets while riding motorcycles; 95 percent don't use bicycle helmets.
- Twenty-two percent of teens carry weapons; nearly one-third are guns.
- Thirty percent of teens had at least five alcoholic drinks at one time recently, while 35 percent rode with a teen drinker.

Besides the risk for car accidents, teen drinkers are more prone to engage in unsafe sex and other dangerous behaviors.

• Seventy-two percent of all teen deaths are due to violence or accidents; 19 percent are murders, 11 percent are suicides, and 12 percent are from injuries.

"It really is frightening," said Hergenroeder, himself the father of pre-teenagers. "But I'm

surprised the statistics are not higher."

Hergenroeder partially blames a world that has become increasingly more violent.

In the 1940s, school "dangers" for teens included being caught chewing gum, running in the hallways or wearing improper clothing. Today's teen must contend with drug abuse, date rape, and assault.

What's a parent to do?

Talk, inquire and wait, suggests Hergenroeder.

"Don't wait for them to talk to you," he said. "Talk with them first. Many parents fall for the 'not my child' myth, and fail to

realize their teen could be engaging in risky behavior.

When talking, ask specific, sometimes blunt, questions: What do you do for fun? Do you drink and drive? Do your friends? If your teen's behavior is not risky, congratulate them.

Next, give it time. Behavior cannot be changed overnight. Also, don't try to solve the problem as it is occurring.

"Talking to your teen about the dangers of drinking when they are still drunk is useless. Approach them later," he said.

Hergenroeder urges parents not to give up.

"Even the best teenagers will do dangerous things," he said.

Rid the summer itch

A close friend dreaded winter because it meant months of painfully dry, itchy skin. She always looked forward to spring and summer. That is, until she moved into a new house and began clearing the yard. Her bare forearm had its second or third contact with a shrub and very quickly she realized something was wrong.

She had come in contact with the toxin of a poison ivy plant. There are actually some 60 plants that can cause severe allergic reactions. The most commonly known are poison oak, poison ivy, and poison sumac. They grow as shrubs or vines almost anywhere in the United States, and account for most cases of contact dermatitis in the country. Often, it's not the first contact with the sap of these plants that causes the problem. In most instances, the first encounter sensitizes one to the

allergen in the plant. It's the subsequent encounters that can be dangerous.

Handling garden equipment that has been in contact with the sap can cause problems. It's a good idea, therefore, to run a garden hose at least five minutes on the equipment to minimize the risk of making contact with any sap that may have adhered.

If you've stepped on a plant's leaves and picked up its sap on the sole of your shoe, even two months later, touching the sole can cause an allergic reaction. The shoe's soles should be wiped off with warm soapy water. Also launder any clothes that might have picked up some sap residue. And carefully wipe your pet's fur with warm water and soap if you suspect she's been in contact with a toxic plant.

If you have developed a reaction, ask your family doctor or dermatologist for medication.

or hemorrhage, the AMA report said.

"One of the most common problems with infibulated women is the retention of urine due to the pain of the wound and narrowly sewn introitus (entrance into a canal or hollow organ as in the vagina)," the report said. Chronic vaginal and uterine infections, "which can lead to sterility, urinary tract infections and increasingly difficult urination," are just a few of the long-term complications, experts said.

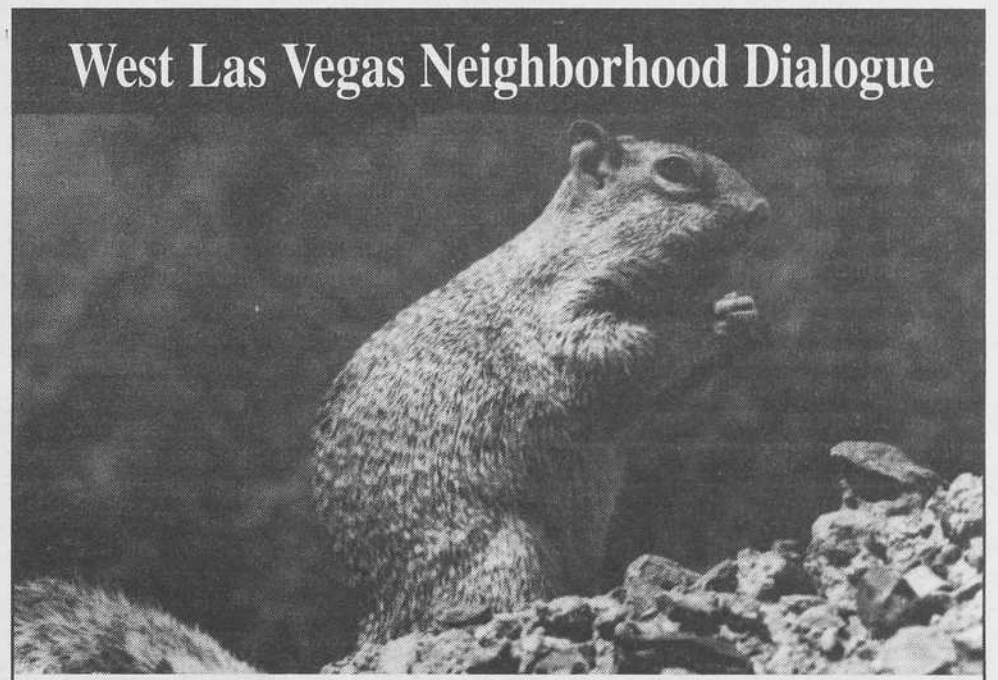
"Since tightly infibulated women can only urinate drop by

drop, their average time of urination is 10 to 15 minutes. Menstruation for the tightly infibulated women is painful and malodorous (smelly) enough for it to prevent some women from working," the AMA report said.

Ramsey began FORWARD USA, Against Genital Mutilation after seeing a circumcised 18-month-old baby at a California birthday party.

It didn't surprise me "this mutilation is still going on, what's more shocking is they (immigrants) brought it to the U.S.," she said.

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West Las Vegas Neighborhood Dialogue

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