



WORLD CONTRACEPTION DAY 2009
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New multi-national youth survey begs the question why are the Y generation failing to 'talk contraception'?

International organizations with an interest in sexual health, actors, musicians, TV presenters and bloggers* are uniting on World Contraception Day to encourage open, accurate conversations about sex and contraception amongst young people

Berlin, September 26 2009: On World Contraception Day 2009, a coalition of ten international organizations with an interest in sexual health and the Youth Task Force*, launch one of the first ever multi-national surveys exploring young people's attitudes towards sex and contraception. Results show that young people across Asia Pacific, Europe and North America are not communicating effectively about contraception. More than one in three (36%) have unprotected sex, which can lead to unplanned pregnancies and sexually transmitted infections (STI's).¹ Over one third are not talking contraception with their current sexual partner before having sex (35%), over one third believe highly unreliable contraceptive methods – such as the 'withdrawal method' – are effective (36%), and one in five are using unreliable contraceptive methods (19%), across the three regions.¹

The new multi-national survey, entitled: '*Talking Sex and Contraception: What Young People Around the World Told Us*' assessed how communication amongst 15-24 year olds and those around them impacts their sexual activity and their understanding and usage of contraception and was carried out in two parts. The first part involved 15 countries and 3,230 young people in Asia Pacific, Europe and North America.¹ The second part was carried out in three Latin American countries and involved 2,956 young people.²

Jennifer Woodside, International Planned Parenthood Federation, supporting World Contraception Day, said "These results are alarming. They paint the real picture of what's happening in young people's lives, and are a necessary wake up call to us all. Many young people say they are too self-conscious, embarrassed or concerned they will appear promiscuous if they talk about sex and contraception, and consequently are making decisions based on inaccurate information and 'guess work'. Breaking the silence on sex and contraception is so critical to shattering myths and enabling young people to make informed choices about their individual needs."

*A group of well known young actors, musicians, TV presenters and bloggers from around the world have come together as a Youth Task Force to encourage young people to talk to people they trust about contraception

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The key multi-national results show that across Asia and Australia over one third (37%) of young people reported that they did not talk about contraception with their first sexual partner before having sex for the first time. This trend continued with current sexual partners – 39% did not talk about contraception before sex. Nearly one in 10 respondents said this was because they didn't know enough about contraception. As many as 45% of young people in Asia Pacific admitted to having had sex without contraception.¹

Whilst more than half of the young people in Europe surveyed say they feel well informed about contraception, as many as 35% believe that withdrawing the penis before ejaculation – the 'withdrawal method' – is an effective method of contraception, when in reality it is highly unreliable. In the real world, amongst those having sex, 79% are using a condom, 40% are using the contraceptive pill and more than one in seven (16%) are using the 'withdrawal method'.¹

In North America, whilst nearly half (44%) of young people surveyed know a close friend or family member who has had an unplanned pregnancy, as many as 38% report to have had sex without using contraception, and 29% of males are currently using the withdrawal method as a contraceptive option. Interestingly, although American females say they feel more informed about contraception than males (58% versus 43% respectively), they are less likely to talk about it with their partner before having sex for the first time (35% versus 29%) respectively.¹

As many as 67% of young Latin Americans report to have had sex without contraception. In addition over half of the young people surveyed feel there is no need for contraception when they are having "sporadic sexual relations". When asked why people do not always talk about contraception before having sex for the first time, 57 % said it was because they assumed their partner had arranged contraception and 23% said they felt "too intimidated".²

Mia Lee, video blogger, journalist and member of the World Contraception Day Youth Task Force said: "We have to get young people talking about sex and contraception to make sense of it. They should talk to people they trust so they feel well-informed and confident to raise the topic before they have sex. I am working with the other members of the Youth Task Force to create a global online conversation on Your-Life.com about topics like contraception, using social media such as Facebook, Twitter and YouTube. Hopefully this way we can really change things".

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These findings support recent research showing that female adolescents are more likely to have unpredictable and irregular sexual activity than adult women, and are generally less knowledgeable about how to use contraceptive methods effectively.³

World Contraception Day 2009, under the motto 'Your life, Your voice: Talk contraception', focuses on the need to encourage young people to talk to people they trust, so they have all the information they need to prevent an unplanned pregnancy or sexually transmitted infection (STI).

The '*Talking Sex and Contraception: What Young People Around the World Told Us*' survey was carried out in two parts. TNS Healthcare carried out the first part of the research, involving 3,230 young people across 15 countries in Asia Pacific, Europe and North America, using online questionnaires. The second part of the survey, which involved 2,956 young people across three countries in Latin America, was conducted by MTV using MySpace and a TV debate centered around the sexual behavior in those regions.

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For further information, please visit <http://press.your-life.com> or contact:

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Notes to editors:

Youth Task Force

The 'Youth Task Force' (YTF), has come together for the first time to encourage young people to talk to people they trust about sex and contraception. The YTF has been established to provide a 'credible' and 'trusted' voice to speak to young people and is made up of well known, passionate and open-minded young people from around the world, specifically selected because they already inspire young people.

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The Youth Task Force members are listed below. For further information about individual members, please refer to the Youth Task Force media backgrounder.

- *Brooke Brodack, video blogger, USA*
- *Claire Oelkers, actress and TV presenter, Germany*
- *Denise Keller, TV presenter, Singapore*
- *Diana Angel, actress and singer, Colombia*
- *Mia Lee, video blogger, China*
- *Phelipe Cruz, journalist and blogger, Brazil*
- *Stuart Heritage, blogger, UK*

The global online community is hosted on the World Contraception Day website, Your Life www.Your-life.com

World Contraception Day

World Contraception Day takes place on September 26 every year. The annual worldwide campaign centers around a vision for **a world where every pregnancy is wanted**.

Launched in 2007, WCD's mission is to improve awareness of contraception to enable young people to make informed decisions on their sexual and reproductive health.

Under the motto 'Your Life, Your Voice: Talk Contraception', the aim of the 2009 WCD campaign is to encourage young people to talk to people they trust so they have all the information they need to prevent an unplanned pregnancy or sexually transmitted infection (STI). The campaign is aimed at young people, as they are often the most inexperienced in using contraception.

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WCD is supported by a coalition of 10 international NGOs and scientific and medical societies with an interest in sexual health and is sponsored by Bayer Schering Pharma. The NGOs and societies involved in WCD are:

- Asian Pacific Council on Contraception (APCOC)
- Centro Latinoamericano Salud y Mujer (CELSAM)
- European Society of Contraception and Reproductive Health (ESC)
- German Foundation for World Population (DSW)
- International Federation of Pediatric and Adolescent Gynecology (FIGIJ)
- International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF)
- Marie Stopes International (MSI)
- Pan American Health and Education Foundation (PAHEF)
- The Population Council
- The United States Agency for International Development (USAID)

Bayer Schering Pharma AG

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References

- ¹ Bayer Schering Pharma. Data on file. Talking Sex and Contraception Survey. TNS Healthcare. July 2009
- ² Bayer Schering Pharma. Data on file. Usage and Knowledge about Contraceptives. MTV. March - June 2009
- ³ Blanc A et al. Patterns and Trends in Adolescents' Contraceptive Use and Discontinuation in Developing Countries and Comparisons with Adult Women. *International Perspectives on Sexual and Reproductive Health*, 2009; 35(2):63-71

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