

POLICY & PRACTICE

HIV/AIDS Stigma Continues

Individuals continue to harbor negative opinions about women with HIV/AIDS, according to a survey from the Foundation for AIDS Research. For example, 57% of the respondents said they would be somewhat or not at all comfortable having a female physician who is HIV positive and 68% said they would be somewhat or not at all comfortable with an HIV-positive woman as their dentist. Only 14% of survey respondents said that HIV-positive women should have children. "These results should serve as a wake-up call for action across all sectors of society," Dr. Susan J. Blumenthal, senior policy and medical adviser to the Foundation for AIDS Research, said in a statement. "We need to intensify efforts for science-based education and policy, and shatter the stigma that has surrounded this disease for all too long." The online survey conducted by Harris Interactive surveyed nearly 5,000 men and women ages 18-44 years about attitudes toward HIV-positive women.

Ban on Abortion Data Surfing Dropped

The dean of the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health recently reversed the practice of restricting abortion searches on the POPLINE family planning database. In a statement issued last month, the dean, Dr. Michael J. Klag, said he immediately stopped the practice of blocking searches of the term "abortion" as soon as it came to his attention. Database administrators had temporarily restricted such searches after they uncovered opinion-based articles among the search results. Advocacy articles on abortion are not included in POPLINE because it is funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and is subject to a federal law that restricts the use of federal funds for abortion activities or supplies. "In my judgment, the decision to block the search term was an overreaction on the part of the POPLINE staff," Dr. Klag wrote. "Other measures are available to us for ensuring that items in the POPLINE database meet USAID guidelines."

Women Lack Breast Cancer Tx Info

Many women with breast cancer lack important information about their treatment options, according to a study published online in April in the journal *Health Services Research*. African American and Latina women had the greatest gaps in knowledge, the researchers found. When asked about 5-year survival rates for mastectomy versus lumpectomy with radiation, 49% did not know that the two procedures had equivalent survival rates. Younger women and women with higher levels of education were significantly more likely than their counterparts to have knowledge about survival rates. The survival knowledge findings are based on a survey of 1,132 women with breast cancer diagnosed in Detroit and Los Angeles.

AIDS Rx Wait Lists Nearly Clear

Waiting lists for the AIDS Drug Assistance Programs have been virtually eliminated for the first time in more than a decade, according to the 2008 National ADAP Monitoring Project report. As of

March, only Montana had a waiting list for services and only three patients were on the list. ADAPs are state-run, federally funded programs that provide HIV medications to low-income individuals with limited or no drug coverage. The near elimination of the waiting lists comes despite record caseload levels within the program, with 146,000 individuals enrolled in 2007. The improvements are likely due to a combination of factors, including increased funding from states and pharmaceutical drug rebate programs, a one-time infusion of funds from the federal gov-

ernment, and implementation of Medicare Part D. The National ADAP Monitoring Project report is released annually by the Kaiser Family Foundation and the National Alliance of State and Territorial AIDS Directors.

ACOG Joins E-Prescribing Coalition

The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, along with the Center for Improving Medication Management and several other medical societies, is launching a nationwide program to help physicians with electronic prescribing. The "Get Connected" program features a Web site (www.GetRxConnected.com) that can

assess a practice's readiness for e-prescribing and offer step-by-step tips on how to get started. The site also offers a listing of local pharmacies that can exchange prescription information electronically. The resources are designed to help physicians gear up for e-prescribing deadlines under Medicare. For example, beginning Jan. 1, 2009, computer-generated prescriptions for Medicare Part D patients will have to be sent electronically, instead of by computer-generated fax. Physicians who don't have the ability to send the prescriptions electronically will have to print them then fax them manually, according to ACOG.

—Mary Ellen Schneider

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