

How to keep killer at bay ignored

ing her body and by intention ability to avoid this deadly

the very essence of woman- in a Kenyan or African con- is undermined by the killer

the advice given to women Aids is that they should becoming pregnant.

pregnancy for a woman with carries a double risk. The first risk is that she is likely to develop full blown when she is pregnant than if

being that there is per cent chance that: by before or during birth. men also bear greater social a when they are found to Aids.

en if they have contracted virus from their husbands, ty is always eager to apor- the blame to the woman by ring to her with the famous malaya - prostitute.

where ignorance abounds, woe er if she develops the symp- of Aids before her husband

espite their disadvantaged ion, women hold the key to stemming of this epidemic. en have some of the best in- ation dissemination struc-

tures in the country through the women groups.

Women can help change risky attitudes which is so important if a reasonable dent is to be made on the problem of Aids. Women bring up our children and if they are armed with the right information they can have a positive influence on the generation to come.

In Kenya, health workers and educators will have to come up with very specific strategies to meet the needs of women who in some parts of the country form the higher percentage of illiterates and have little time to acquire health education and information through listening to the radio, watching television, films, and above all reading newspapers and other publications.

There is thus a major need to make women take greater control over their health including practical aspects of practising safer sex.

Women attracted to prostitution for economic reasons live with the constant threat of infection from their male customers especially if their partners insist on not using condoms.

Women can play an effective role in controlling the disease.

This means that medical authorities need to strengthen ma-

ternal child health programmes to include protection, prevention and coping with Aids.

It is important for mothers to know that even if their children have Aids there is still need for immunisation. Immunisation helps to keep at bay child killers such as diarrhoea or measles which are even greater dangers to an HIV infected baby.

There is need for breastfeeding and better nutrition. There is also need to include Aids awareness in all family planning activities and all primary health care programme.

In Kenya, the problem of intravenous drug usage is not so serious but lately the country has become a major transit point for drug smugglers and the issue therefore should not be assumed non-existent.

There is a need for elimination of stereotypes and improved counselling which is still inadequate.

Screening of transfusion blood must on the other be maintained while the use of sterilised needles and other equipment should continue to be encouraged in all health facilities.

It is important for all of us to remember that although Aids poses a special problem to women, efforts to help our women

protect themselves against the infection will in the end save families, communities and the whole country from the final devastating impact of the killer virus.

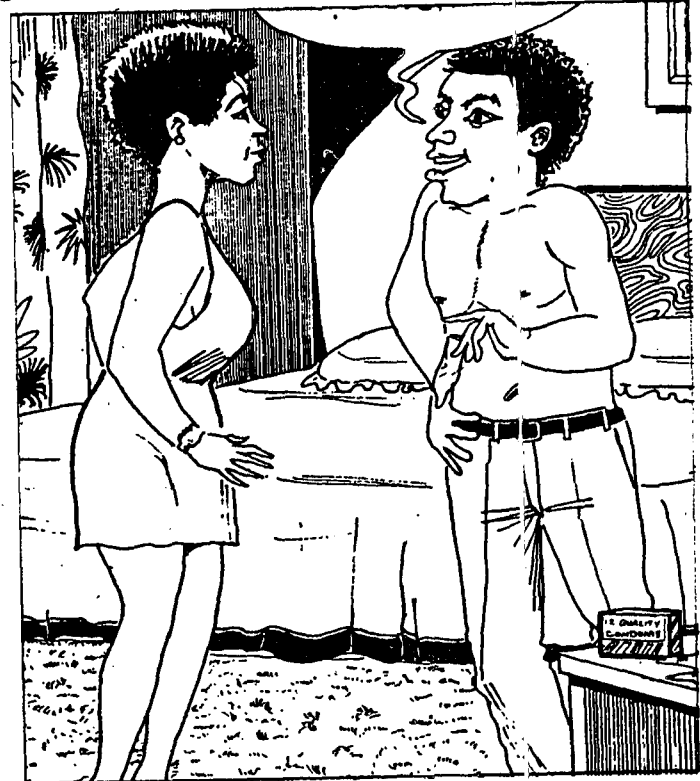
Indeed this year the theme of World Aids Day - Aids and women - should result in greater awareness and increased actions to protect our women from the killer disease.

The first World Aids Day which was held in 1988 highlighted the role of communication in the global monilisation against Aids while last year the theme dealt with the problem faced by youth in combating Aids and the important role which they can play in the war against the disease.

According to the WHO director-general Dr Hiroshi Nakajima women have an important role in the health for all by the year 2000 and their role in curbing Aids can not be ignored.

The World Aids Day should therefore serve as an eye opener to the problem of Aids through creating awareness.

Only through this greater awareness of the Aids epidemic brought about by a free flow and exchange of information and facts on Aids will truly conquer the epidemic.



Honey, don't be embarrassed. Tomorrow we will have no regrets. It is better to bear embarrassment than to bear Aids.

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