

NEED FOR UPDATING AND INDIVIDUALIZATION IN THE FIGHT AGAINST SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED INFECTIONS

NECESSIDADE DE ATUALIZAÇÃO E INDIVIDUALIZAÇÃO NA LUTA CONTRA INFECÇÕES SEXUALMENTE TRANSMISSÍVEIS

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The means of interpersonal relationships are not static and are constantly adapting to habits and changes in life.

I have recently assisted a 92-year-old patient, who tested positive for VDRL upon neurological investigation, with 1/256 titration. He reported being a widower for 15 years and was accompanied by his worried daughter, who reported he had neurosyphilis.

The patient walked in with the help of a stick and his daughter. He was well oriented, cooperative, and when I asked if he had had any recent sexual intercourse, I got the answer: "I had four girlfriends in the last few months."

His daughter immediately said there was a couple of girls who visited him just for a chat. The patient soon replied that they would kiss, using the expression "I suck their tongues." Then, I interrupted that spontaneous report, because I realized he met the requirements for risk of syphilis, and asked them if it was possible to bring these "partners" for a consultation.

Their response was negative, as the patient stated that two of them had been murdered. In view of his multiple relationships' history, I prescribed treatment for late latent syphilis, since the encounters had been happening for more than two years.

That patient, who was born in the first half of the last century, with habits and ethical values very different of those of current days, has now a way of relationship that would horrify the most progressive of individuals. Sexual intercourse occurs without emotional

involvement, being nowadays practiced as a kind of "test", to check if it is worth investing in a more serious relationship. Therefore, sex comes first, and starting a relationship comes after.

It is imperative that the ways to prevent, fight and treat diseases evolve. We must invest in resources to discover new ways to fight sexually transmitted infections (STI).

We cannot continue to focus only on one way, which was conceived back in the Roman Empire Era. Acknowledging that condoms are an effective protection method and accepting modern changes in sexual behavior, as observed with this 92-year-old patient, leads to the need of adapting and modernizing the methods of combating STIs.

Actually, I am not quite sure how. We have to think and use the arsenal we know. Perhaps the development of rapid and inexpensive tests on saliva, oral mucosa or urine for STI diagnosis that could be conducted by partners while having a beer, or a coffee before sex.

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Received on: 12/19/2018

Approved on: 01/24/2019

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