

Looking at Aids Prevention with New Concepts

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Today is the 19th "World Aids Day". This year the theme is: "Stop Aids. Keep the Promise". While the theme has not changed, a number of new things have appeared – for example, we have moved away from our ignorance of Aids prevention, and people have begun to look more openly at Aids and this special group. Of course, the struggle between ignorance and general knowledge goes on as ever in our country, and the outcome of this [struggle] will impact the social management concepts used [in China to combat Aids].

Measured by traditional concepts, the examples below are perhaps rebellions against orthodoxy: On October 11, 50 female sex workers in the city of Harbin received education on Aids prevention and the use of condoms openly and publicly for the first time, making clear their identities and profession; Guangzhou has officially opened a "Work Team for Aids At-risk Groups", which not only has held more than 30 free Aids education events, giving out more than 30,000 free condoms, but has also offered training to those managing people working in the sex industry (性从人的管理者).

[History of illegal blood selling in China and "Aids villages"]

Aids poses a risk to all humankind, and governments bear responsibility for prevention, opening up attitudes, gathering resources and changing management mindsets. First it requires the media disseminating information to the people about Aids and accepting people with Aids. Next it requires creating a comprehensive and efficient national network for monitoring and preventing the illegal selling of blood products. Thirdly, it requires strengthening the system of public monitoring, taking action strictly against blood stations, putting an end to illegal blood selling. Fourth, we must face head on those groups most at risk, using effective means of lowering their risk of contracting Aids. On this "World Aids Day" we need not just to ensure the health of our own bodies, but also need to cure those diseases of thought, using an attitude of light (阳光的度) to face the risks of the spread of epidemic disease, treating those with Aids and their families with kindness, and in this way building a new social management system appropriate to the situation we face to create warmth for those with Aids and open a new chapter in social health.

Another story on page 3, below the story about the Aids mother, refers to a study of 423 gay men in Guangzhou that found 7 infected with HIV, an infection rate of 1.65 percent. The report said Guangdong province would launch a program of education and free condom distribution among high-risk groups in 2007, including drug users, sex workers, migrant laborers and college students. The report said Guangdong had reported an 8 percent rise in Aids cases during the first 10 months of this year.

At Southern Metropolis Daily, a commercial spin-off of Nanfang Daily much further along the commercial spectrum than The Beijing Times, World Aids Day gets major play, including a prominent image on the front page. Of the first nine pages of the newspaper, five pages focus on Aids and four are advertisements. The newspaper includes a full 25 articles dealing with Aids in nearly all sections of the paper, with a total of nearly 25,000 words of coverage (more than three times that of The Beijing Times).

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