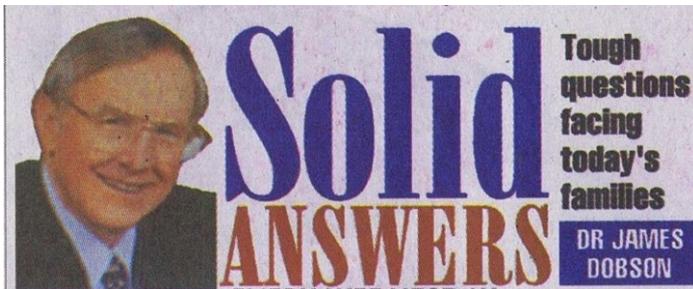


Headline	Solid ANSWERS		
MediaTitle	Daily Express (KK)		
Date	16 Jul 2012	Color	Full Color
Section	Nation	Circulation	30,557
Page No	I-24	Readership	97,836
Language	English	ArticleSize	438 cm ²
Journalist	N/A	AdValue	RM 2,256
Frequency	Daily (EM)	PR Value	RM 6,768



Safe sex message is a lie

Q: Why are young people so oblivious to danger? Why do they put themselves at such risk?

A: For one thing, their idols in movies, television, and rock music tell them absolutely everyone is having sex. Unfortunately, these voices from the culture never reveal what it's like to have herpes or HPV or the other incurable viruses that are at epidemic proportions today. Also the safe-sex gurus have convinced kids that these terrible diseases can be prevented with the simple use of condom. So why not?

Thank goodness for a few physicians who are sounding the alarm and trying to get the uncensored facts to our kids. They don't get much press, but someday they will be vindicated. One of the most vocal of these concerned doctors is my good friend Dr. Joe McIlhaney, an obstetrician-gynecologist who heads and organization called Medical Institute for Sexual Health (MISH). A frequent Focus on the Family broadcast guest, he talked about the fallacy of "safe sex" on a recent program: "What you hear mostly from the press is what science is going to do for people who have a sexually transmitted disease (STD), how science is going to come up with a vaccine or treatment for AIDS, how antibiotics will kill gonorrhea and chlamydia. What is not discussed is how these STDs leave women's pelvic structures scarred for life, and they end up infertile or having to do expensive procedures to get pregnant later on.

I could name patient after patient in the twenty-two years I've been in practice where I've had to perform a hysterectomy before a woman had the children she wanted because of pelvic inflammatory disease, which is caused by chlamydia and gonorrhea. The public announcements about "safe sex" infuriate me, because what they're saying is that you can safely have sex outside of marriage if you use condoms, and you don't have to worry about getting an STD. The message is a lie. The failure rate of condoms is extremely high, and that's why married people don't use them."

He went on to say, "I see the examples of these failures in my office every day. These include victims of chlamydia, probably the most prevalent STD, and of human papilloma virus (HPV), which can cause a lasting irritation of the female organs, as well as cancer of the vulva, vagina, and cervix. It is one of the most difficult diseases to treat and kills more than 4,800 women a year. I also see victims of herpes, which some studies indicate is present in up to 30-40 percent of single, sexually active people, as well as victims of syphilis, which is at a forty-year high."

Rather than expecting science to solve our problems, Dr McIlhaney said better solution involves a return to spiritual and moral guidelines that have been with us for thousands of years. Dr McIlhaney concluded, "The people who made my automobile know how it works best and what I need to do to avoid car problems. They tell me that in my Ford manual.

Likewise, God knows how we work best and gave us 'owner manual's" for the human race: The Holy Book said. In it, He tells us not to have sex until we are married; not to have sex with anybody other than the one man/one women to whom we are married; and to stay married the rest of our lives. That's the one and only prescription for safe sex."

HPV is as deadly as AIDS

Q: We've all become aware of the AIDS epidemic, but I recently heard that a college friend of mine who used to sleep around has been diagnosed with something called HPV. I'm not exactly sure what it is, but it sounded serious. Are you familiar with this disease?

A: Yes, I am – and I'm afraid it's very serious. You've heard that HIV is deadly because it leads to AIDS, but the human papilloma virus (HPV) causes far more deaths among women in the U.S. each year. Thousands of American women die from it. It causes genital warts, and in some patients, leads to cancer of the cervix. In fact, it is estimated that 90 percent of cervical cancer cases are caused by HPV, and the virus itself cannot be eradicated once it is in the system.

A medical investigation of this virus was conducted at the University of California at Berkeley in 1992. Averaging 21 years of age, all the young women coming to the campus health center for routine gynecological examinations for one year were tested for HPV. Would you believe that 47 percent of these female students were found to carry this virus? Some will die of cervical and uterine cancer.

The most disturbing news is that HPV can be transmitted while the male is wearing a condom. The virus lurks around the portion of the genitalia that is not covered by the condom. This is one of the reasons some of us object strenuously to the campaign to get young people to have "protected sex". It gives them a false sense of security. There is not such thing as safe sex when it occurs promiscuously and outside the marital relationship. Abstinence before marriage is the only safe way to go.

HPV can cause cervical cancer

Q: This information about HPV is alarming. If there are really thousands of women dying every year from cancer of the cervix caused by this virus, it seems unconscionable that it isn't being talked about in schools and on today's TV talk shows.

A: I heartily agree, and I can assure you that the victims of HPV feel the same. Let me share a letter that I received from a woman who has the virus but doesn't yet have cervical cancer. She makes the case very dramatically and asked me to share her story with as many people as possible.

Dear Dr Dobson,

In one of your radio broadcasts you covered the fact that it (HPV) can cause cervical dysplasia leading to cancer of the cervix. Certainly, that's tragic. But it has many other effects that I have not read anything about.

Let me tell you about this disease and what it's done to my life. I'm a twenty-five-year-old college graduate. I've remained single and childless. That singleness is imposed on me by my physical condition. The last four years of my life have been lived with chronic pain, two outpatient surgeries, multiple office biopsies, thousands of dollars in prescriptions, and no hope. The effect of this problem is one of severe relentless infection. This condition can be so severe that the pain is almost unbearable. A sexual relationship, or the possibility of

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marriage, is out of the question.

The isolation is like a knife that cuts my heart out daily. Depression, rage, and hopelessness, and drastically affected social and religious life are the result. Physicians say they are seeing this condition more commonly. Females are being sentenced to a life of watching others live, marry, and have babies. Please take what I have written to the airwaves.

Thank you for listening, Dr Dobson, This obstacle has been the one that I cannot gain victory over.