FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS ON AIDS

TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

Session I
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PERSONS WITH SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED DISEASES

SYLVIE COHEN

Consultant
EUROPEAN ECONOMIC COMMISSION

Group moderator
EARL THORNE
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AIDS GROUP SESSION NO: 1

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We welcome you to a group session on Aids, the Trinidad and Tobago Government Team. The idea of this session is to formulate an educational programme on Aids. Presently, an Aids Programme started in this country in 1983 and was not getting through to the public so with the assistance of PAHO/WHO.

The Aids Programme is very expensive and education wise and blood tested. Countries in the world cannot afford such a programme so these two organizations assist underdeveloped countries formulating these programmes.

The idea of this group is to get a spectrum of ideas, your opinions and feelings about the whole aspect of Aids in Trinidad and Tobago, the purpose of this is, we will be discussing your beliefs, knowledge of Aids, the perception of Aids and the sort of changes it could create in your life. We are interested in all your ideas and comments, feel free to say anything, there are really no rights and wrongs in what you say, we accept anything. All ideas either positive or negative are accepted, we will be viewing a video tape afterwards, this video tape was produced by Gayelle and shown by Trinidad and Tobago Television.

QUESTION: Have you ever seen any films on Aids?

ANSWER: No.

Now we will have a little discussion, feel free to answer all questions, also feel free to disagree to something that someone says.
Now what I would like you to do is to make it more informal, please introduce yourselves. My name is Earl Form, I am a Male Nurse at Caribbean Medical Centre and I am involved in the Aids Programme, and Venerai Disease Programmes. Moreso, in Aids programmes, doing Aids tests and Blood Tests and counselling.

This is Ms. Cohen. - I am a communication person, and I am involved in designing campaigns on Aids in general and I would like to say that whatever is said here is very confidential, if you want to use another name, no names would be mentioned, it is tape recorded only for memory, never mind what you say it is very confidential.

My name is , I'm a stitcher, I am 28 years. I am single.

, I'm presently unemployed, I'm 32 years of age and single.

, I'm a seamstress and I have a daughter.

My name is , I'm unemployed, I sing calypso and I'm trying to make life the best way I could, I am 40 years of age.

(EARL ASKS THE QUESTIONS)

**QUESTION:** What are the most important things to you in life?

**ANSWER:** My health and my sewing, I am always at the doctor taking check ups.

**ANSWER:** Having a family and a good future.

**ANSWER:** To make a future for myself and not to depend on people. My intention in life is to make myself someone, someday. I always live with that intention hoping that someday I would succeed.
QUESTIONS: What are your biggest concerns in life?

ANSWER: I live with my mother and I consider her a lot, because she tells me what is right and what is wrong, and I figure if it was not for my mother I would never have been around.

ANSWER: I am concerned about the personal side of my life and the environment and how my country is going. I find the people are too wild, too many drug problems in the country.

QUESTION: What do you know about Aids?

ANSWER: It is a killer disease.

(FEMALE) ANSWER: It is a killer.

(MALE) ANSWER: Something I would not like to get, I can tell anybody about that.

(FEMALE) ANSWER: When you get Aids you open up yourself. The meaning of Aids is Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome, the Immune System would become deficient and you would not be able to protect yourself against diseases.

(MALE) ANSWER: When you get Aids you open up yourself. The meaning of Aids is Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome, the Immune System would become deficient and you would not be able to protect yourself against diseases.

QUESTION: Where did you first read about Aids?

ANSWER: On television.

(FEMALE) ANSWER: From abroad through correspondence.

QUESTION: Where did you get the most information about Aids?

ANSWER: Evening news, Express, sometimes little articles dealing on Aids telling you how it is spread. I think Aids is like Cancer, I think it was purposely sent here.

(MALE) ANSWER: I believe that Aids does not spread like Cancer it is spread through direct contact.
Aids and Cancer is not the same thing, Aids spreads through direct contact and Cancer spreads through-out the body.

QUESTION: Can you tell us how you associate Aids with Cancer?

ANSWER: How you get to know about Aids, is through television and sometimes you watch a person and say he's on "Aids man". He don't have to be on "Aids Man", but that is my knowledge of how Aids is. I am not an Aids expert, I access Aids by the information I get. Aids is something that was in the air before it came out and broke out in people, if you read the scriptures in the Bible, it tell you when the world is going to end and a lot of explicable diseases. Cancer does not come just so, you have to smoke cigarettes and marijuana and then you get Cancer.

QUESTION: How did Aids come about? How much do you know about Aids?

ANSWER: From what I have been told, it is a Virus that attacks cells, then they have the white corpuscles that helps to fight out the virus. Sometimes the Aids Virus kills the white corpuscles, so whenever this happens, the body becomes weak and then expose to other illnesses, and catch other diseases quite easily. These are some information which I get to understand.

ANSWER: I read on papers, how people get Aids, sometimes you get belly pains, headaches, sometimes backaches, cold sweat, your hair falling off, sores.

QUESTION: If you think you wanted more information about Aids, where could you get it?
ANSWER: Ministry of Health, Family Planning, Medical Centre. If you want to get more information about Aids, you can go to an Aids patient, spend a day with them, see what's it all about, how they are thinking and feeling. Spend a lot of time with them, how they clean themselves.

QUESTION: Have you ever had a chance to discuss Aids with anyone at all?

ANSWER: Yes, I discuss Aids with a doctor, Dr. Clairbourne, (FEMALE) I talked to him concerning Aids.

QUESTION: Have you ever had a chance to question anyone else, apart from a doctor?

No answer.

QUESTION: How serious do you think the problem is in Trinidad?

ANSWER: Very serious, it is a killer after all. Some people are not very serious, they behave like they don't care, sometimes the doctor might give them a warning and they still go and do the same thing.

QUESTION: What about around the areas where you live, how serious is it in your community, apart from the entire Trinidad & Tobago?

ANSWER: Aids is spreading, if a fellar goes to a party, he might not know a certain girl is an Aids carrier. Aids is something, it is there already, as long as one man has Aids, everybody sick, unless a person can control himself, and say no more free sex. Aids is caused by having free sex. If you see a girl in a meeting and she's looking nice, sometimes you say I would like to have her, just like in
ANSWER: (cont'd)
the movies. What they promoting on the movies is not Anti-Aids, but Per-Aids, but every minute you see a guy kiss a girl, he might just meet her 15 minutes ago. This is the same problem happening in life, you might go tonight in a disco and have a couple beers and next thing is Aids. The name for Aids is very good because it is aiding and destroying and man if you drink a couple beers, if you did not drink the beers, you might say "boy I don't want to, that girl looking like an Aids girl", but if you drink six beers, is something else. This is ticklish, it has a whole set of phsyiatrist to it. Aids came to destroy the masses, whites, blacks, chinese, it has a population problem. Everybody wants to do their own thing, so it must have a little sickness.

ANSWER: (FEMALE) The way how Aids is, you try to protect yourself, you don't know what the other partner is doing, you still have a fear of getting it, you might stay by yourself, your friend might go out there, you don't know what is going on out there, and then he bring it back to you. I have a fear.

QUESTION: Who do you think is at risk of getting Aids?

ANSWER: (FEMALE) Man, I think is everybody.

ANSWER: (MALE) A lot of people is at risk, but one important thing, the prevention of getting Aids, is a religious way of life, just what the bible say about Aids. As a little child growing up the book told us about Aids, but we did not know it was Aids. God told us to follow Moses, he was right, also he said no sex before marraige, if people had obeyed that rule they would have no problem with Aids. Who believed have least chance of getting it.
They who stick to one another and abide by what they say, if they say one partner. Some people want to have five, six different partners, so sometimes when you contact this you really don't know who you get it from, so I feel people who stick to the laws will fear better by having one partner.

**QUESTION:** Do you feel that any race at least at risk of catching Aids?

**ANSWER:** I don't think about races, I really don't know.

**QUESTION:** Don't you think it is easier for a Japanese to get Aids than Chinese, Indians, or Africans?

**ANSWER:** It can happen to anyone for instance, a lot of Chinese and Japanese, most of them are seamen, they travel to different places, at times they want to go out at nights and have a good time, they go at clubs. For instance, bounce up some ladies and have a good time.

**QUESTION:** Do you believe race plays any part in the spread?

**ANSWER:** Anyone can get it.

I believe this is a general view, if all the races practice their racial consciousness in the way it suppose to be practices, and put up the various racial barriers, not because they want to discriminate against each other to keep that cultural distinction, the Indians practice real Indian way of life and chinese, practice the real chinese way, if we can adopt a way for the African, of which we don't have right now. That will also help to bring the discipline to that barrier because the
racial barrier is the barrier for Aids. If an Indian man practice his Hindi, and uphold the laws of Hinduism, he would hardly be allowed to go in that area where Aids is. Not now, but after ten years of Hindi way of life, he would breed children and the children would stay in India. If you watch the chinese, I don't think we have a lot of chinese Aids cases, we hardly have any Chinese Homosexuals in Trinidad, that is because, they keep that cultural thing going to so long, so if Africans and White who does not keep their cultural links together, which is the Caucasion people and African people who are living life freely, and these are the people who generate Aids into the world.

ANSWER: I feel he's debating our people in Trinidad alone, remember you have to consider other countries outside Trinidad. Remember, this thing is rampant in China for instance, you cannot consider Trinidad alone.

QUESTION: What about the females, have you any views on this?

ANSWER: I agree with him.

(PEOPLE)

QUESTION: What do you think are the chances of someone you know to get Aids?

ANSWER: I know at least 100 people who I know can get Aids. I would not miss myself, but if I move so wrongly too, I could get Aids. An associate of mine has already gotten it, I don't know about other people but I see it come close to where I am. My friends died, he did not die from that but from other sickness, it happen close enough right around here.
ANSWER: When Rudolph Charles died, Desperados speculate was Aids, so was Wilbert Holder and liming on the block and fellars smoke cocaine you can get aids, so I have family who right now dying from aids.

ANSWER: I have a friend who have aids, and she died from it.

QUESTION: That friend might have had certain behaviour patterns, what about other friends you have do you feel that they may have anything that could make them more likely to get aids?

ANSWER: No answer.

QUESTION: Do you think you are at risk of getting aids?

ANSWER: Yes, I am always at home my mother is always home, I don't know what my father is doing on the outside I might be home everyday go to work back home, keeping to myself, so therefore, I am open to anything therefore I am at risk too.

QUESTION: Do you think you are at risk?

ANSWER: I could have been at risk after this meeting, I think I should sit down and think about this so I can prevent myself form getting aids. No sexual partners, I heard the lady said partners. I think since aids is so very high problem that WHO/PAHO had to come to Trinidad to have seminars to discuss aids. A person who studying aids should know that one of the main reason is through sex and homosexuals. There are two things a person should stop doing.
QUESTION: Why do you think they are at risk? What do you think causes AIDS?

ANSWER: Same virus which affects the body after fighting the virus, it weakens the body, you become ill and you get sick, then the body is unable to fight this.

QUESTION: Do you think anything else can cause AIDS?

ANSWER: That is all I know about.

QUESTION: Do you think you can get AIDS from anything, except the virus? How does the virus affects you and what do you think causes it?

ANSWER: I would say it started with Veneral Disease and then it went on to the higher stage.

FEMALE: You can get AIDS from injection, two males, also having sex with a female carrier who has it, making the blood mix with someone who has it.

QUESTION: Is there any way else you can get it?

ANSWER: I suspect kissing, also mosquitoes can be a carrier.

FEMALE: The only way I know about is sexual intercourse.

QUESTION: Have you ever heard any other way mentioned?

ANSWER: Some people say is through mosquitoes and kissing, which we heard could be not so.

QUESTION: How does the virus gets into your body?

ANSWER: It can cause by needles, when you have sex with someone who has the virus, then they transmit the virus to another person by having sex.
QUESTION: How can you get it from someone who has the virus?
ANSWER: Yes you can get it from them?
MALE:

QUESTION: Is there any other way you can get it from someone?
ANSWER: By injecting one person, and then using the same
FEMALE: needle to inject someone else.
MALE: Other ways are sexual intercourse, and injecting
needles.

QUESTION: Do you know of any other way you can get it from
someone?
ANSWER: No, I don't know any other way.
FEMALE:

QUESTION: Can you tell from looking at a person any other
way he or she is infected?
ANSWER: I personally cannot tell, I just heard about glands
FEMALE: swelling and loss of weight.

QUESTION: Do you think you can tell by looking at someone
if they have aids?
ANSWER: I think I can suspect someone with aids. Having the
MALE: virus you can be affected, you can't be sure, my
personal judgment is to safe-guard myself, tell
myself if the fellar has it or not or the girl.

QUESTION: Do you think by looking at someone you can tell?
ANSWER: You can suspect to a point, you can't be sure.
(MALE)

QUESTION: What would make you suspicious?
ANSWER: I will be looking for unusual signs of aging, skin
discolourization. I might know the person, I know
(MALE) him a certain skin colour, and he starts to act
QUESTION: Do you think you can tell if someone is affected?
ANSWER: I don't think so.
(FEMALE)

QUESTION: Why?
ANSWER: I would say you might know someone because they are getting small or they aising, that could be something that is causing the virus, could be anything. So, I would now say you can tell if someone has the virus.
(FEMALE)

QUESTION: Can a person who is most healthy has aids that can pass it on to another person?
ANSWER: Yes, I think that person could be the carrier.
(FEMALE)

QUESTION: Why?
ANSWER: Sometimes when you are the carrier you can get sick within 5 years. You can be looking healthy and normal.
(FEMALE)

QUESTION: How does they pass it?
ANSWER: By sexual intercourse.
(FEMALE)

QUESTION: Do you agree?
ANSWER: Yes, I agree.
(MALE)

QUESTION: Do you think by having veneral disease would increase your chances of getting aids, or do you think that it does not matter, do you think by having veneral disease would make it easier for you to get aids?
ANSWER: It just does not matter, once you have the virus you are exposed to any other kinds of diseases.
(MALE)
QUESTION: What do you think by having veneral diseases, whether syphilis, gonnorohea, herpes, any of the veneral diseases makes it easier to get Aids?

ANSWER: Yes, if you have the virus, if you have syphilis for instance, or gonnorohea, makes you chances of getting Aids easier.

FEMALE: I would not say so, because if you get treatment in time, and properly well cared, I don't think you have a chance of getting Aids.

MALE: well, I think a person who contact veneral disease would try to get it. As she said when you take treatment that could be a barrier for Aids.
I figure as a guy, as someone gets venereal disease, it's to follow up, so I figure getting venereal disease in a sense would make a person more aware of Aids and conscious of contracting sociable diseases.

**QUESTION:** What do you think would happen to you if you get Aids?

**ANSWER:** You can die from getting Aids, because there is no cure for Aids.

**FEMALE:** I agree with him, it will take a few years before you die, according to your body, how your body can fight it to last a little longer. The race is dying.

**QUESTION:** So as long as you get Aids you will die.

**ANSWER:** No, well I figure before you dead a lot of things have to happen to you especially those who like to commit suicide and take gramoxozone. But the people who like to live, right all the people who getting Aids is the people who like to go disco, like to pick up nice girls, like to go to work and pull in salary, all kind of thing and live the life of the world and the reason why God giving you Aids is not for you to just dead, if it was just so easy it would not have no WHO and PAHO. Is for you to see in the night and day that you have a sickness and it is not going any where, you will stay long to die. In the process your friends would start to scorn you, your own mother would not want to touch you when you have Aids, you cannot take care of yourself, so you have to get someone to see about you in the toilet, when it takes you it has a thing called fits that does take you. I would say is a lot of things that you have to look into when you get Aids. According to the lady you could have Aids for 5 years and you do not know, so therefore, everytime you pick up a girl and you get Aids, she would say he is an Aids man, so it's a social problem just like...
(15)

**QUESTION:** What can cure Aids and is there a cure for it?

**ANSWER:** I do not know if there is any cure.

**FEMALE**

What I heard, there is no cure.

**MALE**

If I go down believing that there is no cure, all the convictions I have about life, I would get Aids tomorrow, because if there is a cure for cancer, there must be one for Aids.

**QUESTION:** So you believe there is a cure for Aids?

**ANSWER:** Yes, is just that mankind has not discovered a cure as yet, which is something that is possible right through.

**QUESTION:** How soon do you think they can get a cure?

**ANSWER:** I believe they can find a cure in the near future, because from what I was hearing, they began experimenting on human beings and America believes some different business they found out and they said that business could prevent the virus from all different courses then help to fight out this virus. So I believe in the near future they would find a cure.

**QUESTION:** Now how does the infection affect your body?

**ANSWER:** Fatigue, tiredness, you will get small.

**FEMALE**

**QUESTION:** Have you ever heard of a test for Aids and what can it tell you?

**ANSWER:** It would tell you if you have it.

**FEMALE**

I never really heard about the test for Aids, I never got into asking around where to go, I'm just there.
QUESTION: What do you believe the test can tell you?

ANSWER: I know there is a test and it would show you if your blood is clean or not, something similar to a venereal disease test.

QUESTION: What is the difference between being infected or having the disease.

ANSWER: Being infected, you get the virus then some people who get the virus, their bodies are stronger than other people, so some of those people get the disease while others don't.

MALE: I think someone could be infected and not have the virus, someone said just now you can have the virus for 5 years and not be sure about it, unless it breaks out on the skin. I believe once you are infected you have it, and it could spread from you to someone else, so once you could spread it therefore it exists.

FEMALE I agree.

FEMALE I agree.

QUESTION: Would you take the Aids test?

ANSWER: I would

(FEMALE)

FEMALE: Yes, to make sure everything is alright with me.

MALE: Well if I suspect myself of getting Aids, I would take the test, only under those conditions I would take the test, but I believe part of the Aids business is a lot to do with propaganda and it's a business.
(17)

ANSWER: (MALE)

I cannot be vulnerable as far as Aids is concerned, a person like myself is not going 'vikey vie' into nothing, this is the only thing I am thing I came to concerning Aids, and you are lucky I came here, but Aids is something you can catch very easily and taking a test is one of the ways you can set yourself up for getting Aids, I mean if you have an enemy working in CMC and you owe him a hundred dollars, he can afford to fix you up.

FEMALE:

I disagree with him, I would take the test.

QUESTION:

What do you disagree with.

ANSWER: MALE

Some people for instance, live of a news, like the journalist, television, it have people who is not glad aids is here, but without aids there would be no headline for them, so they have to keep this aids topic going and I don't want to be part of that aids programme as such. Aids, the in thing is Aids, was herpes long time, everyone going for their aids test.

QUESTION.

Would you go for an Aids test?

ANSWER: MALE

I am not in the crowd, but when I see I am getting aids, I'll go for the test. I am not following anybody, this is the only aids programme I ever came to, this is sort of confidential. I would take a test by a private doctor.

QUESTION.

Why do you prefer to take it by a private doctor? I don't want to be ashamed, I would like to know if I am doing something, they must not know my doctor. It is not like a Veneral Disease test, you take an injection, it is aids you talking about.

You had asked me if I can tell if a person has aids or not. I can tell myself if that person has aids stay away form them instead I have to wait till their doctor tell me about that.
Supposing now a girl looking like she has aids, after we drink beers and have free sex, it is best you say yes she has aids.

Well I quite agree to what he's saying. Prevention is better than cure.

**QUESTION**: Would you ask your partner to take an aids test?

**ANSWER**: I will, just to be on the safe side.

**FEMALE**

**MALE**

Yes, I did just last week.

**QUESTION**: How would you ask your partner to take the aids test?

**ANSWER**: I would like you to take an aids test to be on the safe side.

**FEMALE**

**MALE**

I would say, I ususpect that I might have aids, I am going to take an aids test and I want you to go with me. We should take the test because you can never know what will happen.

**MALE**

You might have some violent partners and they might say, girl go and take an aids test, next thing she can come with some hot water and throw it on you, it have some people like that, you can go and tell them to take an aids test, it's an insult to them.

**QUESTION**: If you take an aids test and it is positive, what would you do?

**ANSWER**: You might think about committing suicide.

**FEMALE**

**MALE**

I might get nervous and do something drastic, it come like any other sickness.
FEMALE

Just hope you don't get it, because if you get it is a different story so many things you have to go through, you have to accept it you are an aids person and you might have to live a certain amount of days.

QUESTION.

So you do not feel that you want to commit suicide, and you want to live?

ANSWER:

MALE

For the first day I would want to commit suicide, but after a few days when I see I did not die one time, I would go ahead and live on, but I would not spread it to anyone.

FEMALE

You mighht be saying that now, but when your hear you have aids, you don't know what you would do, you might go and spread it.

MALE

I don't believe in sexual intercourse I don't believe a person should have sex with a stranger, I don't believe I could have sex with anyone, unless I know them. I will have to go around with them, married first, and then have sex with them, therefore I would know the person, also their family background, school they attended, if are a virgin or not how many boyfriends they had before, these are the things you have to check for, before you go out there.

FEMALE

I know this girl who had aids and she went wild, just going around with anybody, I don't know if she died from it or not. If I have aids I don't know what I will do..

QUESTION:

Do you think there is anything that could avoid you from getting aids?

ANSWER:

Yes, stay with one partner, or don't do anything at all.
Stay with one partner, people who make affairs. Sometimes people have the disease and they don't know. Probably, some of them know they have it and they just don't know what to do about it. They just keep on spreading it, some coke addicts also.

What about other means, apart from not having sex, if you know any other ways you can prevent from getting aids?

You can use condoms, it is a form of protection. Stay away from homos. Homosexuals are carriers.

You say the condoms, do you know any other methods to avoid getting aids apart from not having sex?

Giving blood and not accepting blood, no sex.

Live by yourself. You have to get a partner for sex. You can live a religious life that is a prevention of aids. Sometimes you go to church, you might see someone nicer than your husband, don't go with him, go back to your husband. Also in the office you might pull up your leg for the next man to see, these are the things that could prevent aids. Discipline and living a life of no sex and drugs like in the sixties, you must have a safe living, like how grandparents used to live, coats and can-can must come back in to prevent us from going the way of the devil.

I don't think that would stop that, it is your mind.
A hundred years ago, it had women in can-can but now it have them in miniskirts and short tops. This is the calculation I made live th life, a hundred years ago there was no aids, which is cover up yourself and live decent with one husband. That is very hard for Trinidadians to do because Trinidad is the most infertility country I know. Every woman who I know married has an outside man and every man has an outside woman.

QUESTION:
Has anyone tried using a preventative?

ANSWER:
I tried using a condom, two years ago, any how I tried she does not want it.

QUESTION.
You know why she does not kike to use the condom?

ANSWER:
She does not really enjoy sex.

QUESTION.
How do you feel about using a condom?

ANSWER:
Well, I feel it is a form of protection for myself, this lady in particular does not like to use it at all, she says, she does not feel good when having sex.

FEMALE
What I feel the condoms is a preventative, sometimes it has holes.

MALE
She said it can burst.

FEMALE
It has holes and it can burst.

MALE
Some could have holes or sometimes it could be a bad one.

QUESTION:
Is that the reason why you would not use one, have you ever tried one?

ANSWER:
Yes I tried one?
QUESTION: Would you try it again?

ANSWER: Yes I would try it, but you do not get the real feeling.

FEMALE

MALE

As a user of condoms, I would not use condoms against aids, any other type of herpes. Someone might tell me they have Veneral Disease I would use it. But with aids, if I suspect you have it, I would have no dealings with condoms.

QUESTION: You said about condoms, do you think is something you can use in the future?

ANSWER: I feel after a certain time after using it all the time you just get fed up using it because sometime you do not get the real thing. As the lady said with a condom, that is why I feel most people don't use it.

QUESTION: How do your awareness and knowledge of aids affect your behaviour?

ANSWER: Well to be exact I used to be around singing calypso, moving around and going different places. Sometimes when going home walking in the street, a woman would ask you if you want cigarette, you doing anything tonight. Well I made a little thing already, I am not ashamed to say.

FEMALE

I agree with him.

QUESTION: What would you recommend to someone who wants to avoid aids and Why?

ANSWER: Stay with one partner.
If he's my partner and like to run around with women. I would warn him and tell him, about the dangers, I would tell him about condoms to prevent getting aids. Some people very stubborn you talk to them but still they don't hear. That is the best preventative you could use but some people don't listen.

Aids is spread by homosexuality although he said I would tell him to always stay with one partner make sure is a female and do not have any anal intercourse because that is how aids in cause by anal intercourse with male and male that is the main course.

Yes, I agree with this gentleman but sometimes you stay with one partner and you getting it.

We will move on to the pratice of safer sex. Have you ever heard of safer sex pratice, what it is all about.

You have to be on the safe side, try and avoid contacting this disease, try and do every thing possible and make sure that you don't get it, because this aids in effect you try your best to avoid what you used to do..

The meaning of safe sex is during the days of the pill, making too much children safe sex come in with the condom, at one time you could use a condom and go with anyone. Safe sex mean get a single partner, know who you having sex with use a condom, do not have any homosexual relationships, do not be a bisexual anymore.
ANSWER:

MALE

I meet a chick in Holiday Inn and all of we would drink beers and try and make friends one time tonight. Long time when you go to a party, you try and get the girl one time, dance two sets and look to have a little sex downstairs, but no more of that. Safe sex, no sex with strangers.

QUESTION: Who do you think should practice safe sex? How often and when do you think it's necessary?

ANSWER:

MALE

I feel all those women who are hustlers, they should practice because they would be exposed to any kind of man and they don't know where the man come from, they don't know who he is, the lady is just looking for a dollar, but you don't know what would happen after that. So those are people who should practice safe sex.

FEMALE

Yes, I agree.

QUESTION: What are the advantages of safe sex?

FEMALE

I think that if a young girl is now breaking out in life and have a boyfriend, should take a test before having sex.

QUESTION: Do you think by taking a test is part of safe sex? Do you agree with that?

MALE

Once you do those right things you spoke about which is practising safe sex. You will find that you feel secure mentally, first I know who I am dealing with, so anytime I feel arouse, you know where you are going to off-load and you know that it is with someone that is safe. If everyone practice safe sex, therefore it would not be safe, because as soon as a girl becomes thirteen years and want to practice sex. I don't want my daughters having sex until they leave school so we have to get
within the laws of every country, have to have some laws about sex. Like Ayatollah Khomeini who beat women who have sex, without marriage, I believe in that, this safe sex thing is something like an excuse for people to have sex at the age of 13 and 14 as a girl have "bobbies" she ready to have boyfriends in a Christian society in the Western world. Then people have courtship, all this thing have to done, courting and carrying girl out to theatre. When a man has a daughter and the neighbour say "Can I carry your daughter cinema too", you are supposed to say no, because in the middle Eastern countries a girl and a boy is separate until marriage, so safe sex would include the separation of male and female and the benefits of that is no Aids, less Aids.

Then he might be saying no to his daughter, then she go to school and she is open to God alone knows.

So then you are saying there shouldn't be such a thing as safe sex?

No, you might not let her go there, but then she gone to school and you not sure is exactly there she gone. She would have a good time and then come back home.

Do you think there are any disadvantages of safer sex?

Yes, as I said we would let people feel it, it is a free for all sex world we are living in. You seeing a pamphlet all over the place, especially students use a condom pratice safer sex, you see a young boy and a young girl, even the advertisement may have school books, and this girl might be feeling hot, she will get the feeling because she is a teenager for a young boy in calss and safe sex is an excuse for primorcrity, that society that you breeding in is the classroom.
This is a future of aids society next to twenty years it would be like discussing an aids problem, so we have to watch how advertising this safer sex thing. Safe sex is within the law of this society, plenty of in the western world, there are no laws regarding sex, marriage is a free for all sex society we are living in.

SAFE

Safe sex should mean legal sex the advantages of not praticing safer sex, everybody feel they should have safe sex, only married couples should be able to pratice safer sex, not students or little girls.

QUESTION: Safer sex yes, but only within legal frame work. Anyone agree or disagree?
ANSWER: Yes, I agree.

MALE

I intend to agree, but one thing, say within the family a husband and wife not only they should have sex, teenage boys have sex also teenage girls. Therefore you have to tell your daughter, son you have to explain to them and tell them, it could happen from such and such and such, in what you do. But still sometimes, when you talk to the children sometimes they don't hear.

QUESTION: Do you have children?
ANSWER: No.

MALE

QUESTION: How do you think you can talk to someone about safer sex?
ANSWER: I would tell them about this same partner he is a great important roll.
QUESTION: Would you advise a young person to use condoms for safer sex?

ANSWER: Yes, I would tell them about it then I would tell them too about having one partner, because it is very important having one partner.

QUESTION: How do you feel about that, relating safer sex with a condom, to a friend or a tape?

ANSWER: I agree.

QUESTION: Do you think there is a better word for safer sex? Instead of using the term "safer sex".

ANSWER: As I showed you how I disagree teenager with safer sex, when you have sex from a teenager you start everything young, when you come out of school you do not know anything and the society is stop, make sex illegal. The better word I used for sex is safer sex, safer sex is for married people not for students, not for teenagers I would want to make it illegal for people who are not married and want to have sex, that is my aids solution, to make it illegal, if I know you are having sex and you are not married, you will have to face the high court. My safersex is for people who are illegally married or having a legal contract to have sex.

FEMALE

So if you are not married, would you be able to have sex?

MALE

If you have sex and you break that law you will have to fact the punishment. You will have to be married, this would just cause confusion.
So that will cause fourteen and fifteen years old to get married. The way I see it, I could marry my daughter to the other man son, and when they get older they can go and live together, when the world was like that it did not have any aids, but is now they could married now they want and have aids. Long time the Indians use to practice this way of life also the christians. Mary was given to Joseph to be married, so all Christian women was given to be married. As a matter of fact these are the things cause aid. Do you agree?

To get married, so therefore all now I have to go to court. All the people who have children nineteen to twenty years, what would we do about them?

What we are doing here is formulating a new thing for aids, we are not talking about when people have their own personal discussion, we are making a new legal system for Trinidad and Tobago right here in this room, before that people was not prolonging what we are saying so all those who have children like myself and under nineteen. My daughter is thirteen years, when I was nineteen years I was planning to get married, have a nice home and live happy ever after, but it did not work out like that, so I am saying all those who married at the age of thirteen and have children at the age of nineteen, it is nice to have children, but what about their family.

It is a nice suggestion but I feel people will still break the law.
At a point people is afraid to go to court, they are afraid of the magistrate, the bigger the law and penalty, is harder for the law to be broken, and breaking a marriage law, in countries that make marriage illegal.
Countries that practice this legal way of life, find out if they have high AIDS problems, what is ratio of AIDS in that country, as compared to countries which live freely, a free society like America and Trinidad where we say "Boy a person should be able to choose a free partner." What do we want to do? Marry any time we want to? That is what we have to study, that is why God gave us AIDS, to see who wants to obey him. This is the law where we are talking about legalising marriage and making it legal, is it not what we say, is God say that sex before marriage is a sin, any pastor in any church would tell you that, so this is always part of religion rights.

Then you must remember your idea is very good, but God was the creator who created everything, heavens and earth and everything. He commanded them not to eat from certain fruits and they still disobeyed him, so then if those people did that and that is God's law, well then when is man giving them the law, they would disobey the law.

What are the most common venereal diseases that you have heard about?

Runnings.

Syphilis and gonorrhoea.

Do you know of any other?

Runnings is the same gonorrhoea.
QUESTION: What can happen to someone who has venereal disease?

ANSWER: If you are pregnant, the baby can be blind or deformed.

ANSWER: Some pass it on to the children.

QUESTION: Do you think most people have venereal disease?

ANSWER: Yes, both women and men.

QUESTION: How does someone get venereal disease?

ANSWER: By contact, then from one person to the next.

QUESTION: Why do people get venereal disease?

ANSWER: Things that they do, health habits, things that they eat.

FEMALE: Sometimes sex with animals.

FEMALE: Through sexual contact.

QUESTION: How can venereal disease be avoided, have you ever tried to avoid it?

ANSWER: By using condoms.
ANSWER: Same way as aids, practice safe sex, because when you go on the streets and have sex with any and everybody you are able to get venereal disease.

FEMALE: I think you can take up venereal disease from toilet seats.

FEMALE: I do not know much about it.

MALE: From toilet seats, and why I said from food, is because sometimes people selling food might pass the disease on through the food, by not washing their hands and just start eating.

QUESTION: How did you first feel when you learned you had venereal disease?

ANSWER: I did not feel no how. I got up a morning and I went to CMC and they told me I had something, I cannot remember the word, and she gave me some tablets and an injection, then I went and talked to my partner and he said that he does not have that, I just went for a check up.

QUESTION: So then nothing was wrong with you before.

FEMALE: No.

FEMALE: I was furious when I found out I had it, because the first time I had sex I got it, I did not know exactly what it was, I was sixteen and I just kept on passing this pus and my partner took me down to CMC and I got medicine.

QUESTION: How did you feel after?

ANSWER: Well, I did not feel any how because at that tender
And the gentleman, how did you feel?

Uncomfortable and uneasy, because I stayed about four months before I got a check up.

Well the first time I noticed this white thing and I did not know what it was, so my brother told me to go to the doctor. I felt different, not my normal self then. You do not really move about like you are supposed to then, you really do feel different.

When you really know that you had a venereal disease, was there anything special that you started to do?

Well I did not know much about these things and when I found out more about it I really had to stop doing what I use to do. Like when I am peeing I use to feel a burning that was the first time I felt that.

What did you do when you got that burning?

I decided to go by the place on Wrightson Road.

Same thing, I was kind of scared and I did not want to go, then after a while I made up my mind.

I knew through the grape-vine.

I went to a private doctor and he recommended me to go to CMC.

When you know that you had it did you tell your partner?
(34)

ANSWER: At that time I did not have a partner, I got venereal disease from going into town on the streets, I was a street person.

FEMALE: It was a joke, after I got the results and I told him, he said that it was not from him.

FEMALE: My partner sent me to CMC.

MALE: I had no partner, I use to run around and they gave me a little business to tell the person and I gave the person it.

QUESTION: Did your life style change after that?

ANSWER: Yes, I am always by myself, home, work.

(FEMALE)

FEMALE: No, not really, I am the same person.

MALE: I made a vow, I do not want any dealings, I just want to stay away from sex for a little while, and not to go about living like other people, I do not want to be no saga boy again.

QUESTION: Have you ever tried to use a condom or make your partner use one?

ANSWER: As I told you before, I always use a condom and that is why I was punished for not using a condom and plus I had a female partner who always wanted to use a condom. Long time we use to call it frenchies.

(MALE)

FEMALE: I used it once or twice not often.
QUESTION: Where do you get your condoms from?

ANSWER: The drug store.

(FEMALE)

MALE: Drugstore, Sixty-five cents for one, they sell either in packs or single.

MALE: I use them sometimes, I get by the drug store, by Family Planning Association and then by the Ministry, they gave me.

QUESTION: Would you continue using condoms?

ANSWER: Yes, I recommend using condoms?

(MALE)

(FEMALE) Also I hear people criticize the feel of it, but whether you use it or not it is always the same. Sometimes you can get a great sensation out of using condoms, like the perforated ones and if you have a kinky havit, you get a kinky condom, so it is according to your feeling. I highly recommend it.

QUESTION: What would you say are the advantages when you recommend them?

ANSWER: It is a barrier between skin contact, and that is the main barrier against catching venereal disease or Aids and with a rubber in between that form of contact is a way to make you feel better about yourself when going and have sex. I see it as a safety precaution where family planning is concerned.
Once I was going to have a little thing with a woman and I was going to use a condom and she told me that she does not like that, it is 'chooking' her, she ratheres it just so and she wants to feel the flesh, and then a next lady said she did not like it. So some people do not like it and some like it.

Are you using condoms now more than before? I thinks it is only gentlemen using condoms here and not the females. The question is do you feel you are using it more because of Aids or it does not matter just the same.

As long as you have a safe partner, there is no need to use it, then there is always a risk, that is why two people have to really have to understand each other.

Weil, before you could have said you will use it once in a while, but now is it everytime?

I would say everytime, because it is safer from Aids.

Would you use it now?

Yes

What about your partner.

I would have to make him use it.
I would try to influence him by asking him.

I think the reason for these attitudes towards the condom has a lot to do with the country, in Trinidad, the condom is always considered as something you use outside, so it is always associated with someone apart from your wife or regular girlfriend. So you find that in Trinidad, the males would have to use it more than the females.

Do you worry about Aids?

I do, because I could get it and if I get it I do not know what I am going to do.

I try not to think about it, because worrying would made me get headaches and I would get sick very fast, so I try not to worry much about anything.

Yes I worry, because my fellar had this girl who was tracking him and he talked to his partners and they told him how she was looking good and he went and had sex with her, about a week after he told me his penis was feeling funny, so he went into CMC with her and they got some yellow tablets, they said it was some little information or something. But, he did not take all the tablets, then we had sex after and I found that everytime we had sex about two days after I getting this scent. The first time it passed off and the second time I find the scent getting worse, so I got worried and was wondering if is Aids. Then he was wondering to if it is Aids, so we went up in the Medical Centre this week here, that is now I went up there. But, they said it was not anything, but I still took a blood test for Aids, I wanted to be sure.
ANSWER: I am scared.

(MALE)

MALE: I am like this girl, I tend not to think about it too much, because presently I am fed up hearing about AIDS and drugs. Because they try to eradicate a problem and is only talk that they want to have a convention and conference and next 10 years a new disease would come out and they would forget about it. So I want no unnecessary worries, If I notice, just like how she got that, then I would start to worry because then something get close to me and something touch me, like if I was like her case I would be very worried.

QUESTION: How do you think it has affected your community?

ANSWER: A great deal because the people really do not like to do the things they use to do too much again, like for instance, how we use to have a lot of get togethers and the people use to run around with plenty women and now they stop with that. By now it affecting some men especially, because they cannot do the things that they use to do so that is my reason for saying so.

QUESTION: Now what do you think you can do about it?

ANSWER: I have a thing against those homosexuals, about how I would work on them, first the AIDS campaign would not cure AIDS, people would still get infected with AIDS. But if I was a political leader, I would take legal action. I would take them and move them out of Woodford Square and execute them, not that they are AIDS carriers but they are the start of AIDS.
ANSWER: Those who are carriers of the virus, I would try to assist them, try to see what best could be done to them.

QUESTION: What would you like to know about AIDS.

ANSWER: I would like to know how it first started.

FEMALE: How did you come in contact with the first person, where exactly it first started.

MALE: Where it came from, because most people right now like to know that, who brought it here.

QUESTION: Now where would you like this information to come from?

ANSWER: The Ministry of Health.

QUESTION: Now where else do you think that information would come from.

ANSWER: All over the world, a Health Organisation, if you apply to them and ask them certain trying questions. Like was it a part of German warfare during the Vietnam War. Was there anything near to AIDS. Did they have anything near to the HIV Virus at that time and all these kinds of things, like somebody with high thinking could go and investigate if this thing was purposely sent into the world, because you never to know behind high circles what plan they have for the world. Nobody do not know if these guys was practicing the HIV Virus long time. So there are different questions raised.
QUESTION: Who do you believe most for all the information you got here in Trinidad.

ANSWER: Well I am gathering all my information and I am not going out to believe this one and that one, I am using my own judgement, because I find that sound reasonable. I do not want to be mislead because is PAHO, boy them fellars know about Aids, because the people say Aids start in Africa, the next one say is China and the next one say New York. I get all the different information about Aids, so I would sit down and derive my own answers so is not a matter of believing. I am only gathering information to help my on self.

QUESTION: Who do you believe most for on Aids in Trinidad?

ANSWER: CMC.

FEMALE: CMC.

MALE: Different areas, depending on where you get your information from.

MALE: Like I said, through the Ministry of Health and CMC and they deal with veneral disease and so on. I feel they know a lot about the diseases and so on and they could tell the people about it.

QUESTION: Are there any other agencies in Trinidad that discuss and give you information?

FEMALE: CMC.

QUESTION: Would you get information like from radio, television, cinema, film shows?

FEMALE: Well they have to get it from someone to show it to the public.
QUESTION: What I want to know is that when you say where, is if you hear it on TV or radio or cinema, which one do you think would have more impact on you then?

ANSWER: Newspapers.

FEMALE Mostly television.

QUESTION: It does not matter because if they start any story at 8 o'clock, they might change it, so that is how it is and Evening News even worse.

FEMALE I will go to the Centre and find out.

QUESTION: What do you think is the best way of getting the information on Aids across to you?

FEMALE By printing pamphlets, and giving them to the public.

MALE Yes that is a good idea. You can give programs on the Radio concerning this and tell the people so they would be more aware of what is going on.

FEMALE But some people cannot read, so the radio and TV.

FEMALE: On the radio and I listen to only music, nothing else.

QUESTION: So for news, do you listen to the radio?

FEMALE I might catch up between 9 and 10 o'clock.

FEMALE I would say the TV, because they would not bring all that, they would bring shows and news flashes whatever.

MALE If you want to contact, you have video tapes for adults and you have little comics for students, if you really want to reach the people with Aids, you can have a little interview with a AIDS unit, spend the day with...
the students having concerts.

you think you can contribute to the education programs.

your knowledge of what you know about Aids, one you know who has Aids and what you saw them so you can tell others that you saw and how he suffered. I feel by doing this be letting other people know that this Aids something to play with.

Drama and thing so I could dramatise a skit some cast of people, you know, have a little not like Gayelle and then a little camera men and the people acting, because people like care, in the cinema. I like my writing and could type a little Aids story, this is the which I could contribute to Aids.

have little skitts, I see myself having a skit or a little play on aids, a camera men and a girl acting because people like to me and stuff like that, like writing and can type a little aids story too, these areas I think I can handle on aids.

but just talking about aids?

could talk to them.

think you would be able to help in passing knowledge of aids to a friend?

know about other countries, in Trinidad only listen to you if you have qualifications, talk to them about aids, some people would know if you are a doctor.
him, make a tape and let people see how the man suffering and so on, then show it on TV. You do not have to interview x, y. and z. Then if you have a comic about somebody illustrating and carry it to the students.

Some people might not want their faces on the television or the cassettes.

If you are lucky enough to find somebody, who want their faces exposed, well that would be effective, in showing the fellar and his lifestyles and that same person could tell them why they must not get that. So then the ways would be radio, television, pamphlets and comics for the children.

No children, a next thing is they making a mistake with this Aids thing and it getting too popular right through the family circle. I find that the children should not be included in the Aids program. When a child is growing up you have to leave him the that environment until he reach 13 years.

They have Aids programs in Secondary schools, they might have a 15 or 20 minute program because some students might have a free period and the teacher or somewone will get organised with nurses and doctors to go into the schools.

What they can do to make it more interesting is to bring it between the shows and that way people would listen to it.

You know is to make it like an advertisement. Within the program. Sometimes like if you are having a plan you can include it.
I don't think so, they are making attempts in various way trying to encourage people, they are sending pamphlets for the past few months, people get these papers and they talk about Aids, showing you how it started coming out on your skin. People hardly really taking caution, some people but some ignore it.

I find they should stop prosecution, that is the biggest part.

I quite agree, anytime you see them doing this thing look them up.

Right now, young girls can get money so they have to make affairs. There's no money to buy coke, if they stop prosecution the young girls might not be doing that.

They might do something else.

You might have a little either to stop it, but that is one thing you can stop, from ever since.

You can't stop it, unless they create employment.

The whole idea is Aids will flourish in prosecution like Trinidad and America. The Western way of life flourishing Aids because they might stop prostitutes, it might be legal. You can go to Miramer Club and see a strip tease.

What message would you convey to the Government?

I would suggest politician.

Do you think that would help?
MALE: Keep sex in the family, live a good family life, let us bring back family life in Trinidad now, let us bring back the old way of life. Some fellars just want to live that promiscuous way of life and just studying to go and have it outside.

MALE: Let us live that religious way of life.

MALE: Still they would not do it, they would still go outside. Sex is a kind of thing that some people just cannot stay with one person. They have to go somewhere else.

MALE: We are trying to keep sex in the family, this is what you are looking for, we are looking for no Aids. If you do not find a solution and you still go back and find it, we will have more Aids.

FEMALE: I would say keep away from drugs, because drugs lead to sex and then from sex you will get Aids.

END OF SESSION #1

1988, August 18
FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS ON AIDS

TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

Session II
20 August 1988

TEENAGERS

SYLVIE COHEN
Consultant
EUROPEAN ECONOMIC COMMISSION

Group moderator
COURNEY BOXILL
SESSION II: TEENAGERS

QUESTION: What are the most important things to you in life?

MALE: My parents, because they give me a sense of an education background, they clothe me and give me spending money and the love that they have for me.

MALE: The important things to me in life is happiness, health and security.

QUESTION: Why do you say this?

MALE: In order to be happy, these are the things that enable you to be happy. You should have some kind of belief and pray for guidance and health.

FEMALE: To be loved and to have faith and trust.

MALE: My family, so if I have problems you could discuss it and they could help me out.

QUESTION: What are your biggest concerns in life in general?

MALE: To enter life, everything that you do you must be prepared to enter life, and to enter life you must have a steady road so you make a plan, because there are roads paved everywhere, so the most important thing is to have a plan.

FEMALE: To achieve my goals and help my family as they help me.

MALE: To have a family of my own to carry on the family name.

MALE: The people of the society, how they act towards one another, how they carry on in general.
Now let us change the topic and get down to our main venue of our discussion this afternoon.

**QUESTION:** Have you ever heard about aids?

**MALE & FEMALE:** Yes.

**QUESTION:** What do you know about aids?

**MALE:** Well it's a virus and it can be caused by a number of ways, through sexual contact with different people, blood transfusion by using infected needles, drugs, etc.

**MALE:** Well there is no cure for aids right now, you should try to stay with one person in your sexual activities.

**FEMALE:** It's a disease and a killer and one of the worst things that man could bring on the face of this earth.

**MALE:** I fine that aids was always here, but is just that when somebody dies long time you just take it as he died of pneumonia or whatever. Now with technology and with research they found that disease and they called it aids, it's a killer and you can get aids by blood transfusion, and sexual intercourse with who has the actual disease.

**QUESTION:** You are all very informed about aids and you should be congratulated for this, being just teenagers, so I want you to tell me where you got this information?

**FEMALE:** On to and newspapers, school.

**FEMALE:** They sent nurses from the Health Office and they came to explain about aids and how you get it and how it was brought here and what year.
QUESTION: How was it first brought here?

FEMALE: By the Americans.

MALE: Like for Carnival when tourists came down and you might meet one and have sex and then they go back and a next person might come along and you have sex with them.

QUESTION: Yes, but where else did you hear about AIDS besides in school?

FEMALE: From the Ministry of Health.

QUESTION: Could you tell us some of the things they told you?

MALE: That there is no cure and they are still trying to find a cure for it.

QUESTION: Was there any other sources?

FEMALE: My relatives and neighbours, they explain it to me.

QUESTION: Anybody else had that experience like relatives and neighbours explaining it to them and telling you about AIDS?

MALE: My sisters and father told me that AIDS was always around and when people die, regardless of what they say is pneumonia or whatever and that is what they put it down as because they did not know.

QUESTION: Of these sources, bigger brothers or sisters, parents, T.V. from which or these sources do you get most information?

MALE: Television.

FEMALE: Television.
What was the most influential source of information for you?

**Television.**

Television, because on television, you could see different parts of the world like Russia, America all of these are experimenting on this virus and they have a lot of technology but not here in Trinidad and with this we could break down the virus. I do not really know what they are talking about, like the scientific words.

I think that if they do find either now or in the years to come a cure for Aids, there would be a worse disease, it's just one disease after the other.

Why do you say that?

Because long ago there were diseases and they come into modern times and get they worse, so if they find a cure for Aids, another disease would come, and then the same thing would go on and they would take a longer time to find another cure for that disease.

Now let's get back to the question that he answered, What was the most influential source to you?

I read it in books, magazines, newspapers, that in Trinidad it is a leading disease and it could just kill you. After a certain time like eight years you could die.
QUESTION: Remember, we said we heard about it on television, some said in school, their parents so of all the sources that you heard it form, which one influenced you the most?

MALE: Television.

FEMALE: Television.

MALE: I think when you read it, I read about it on the time magazine about a person who had it, and how he reacted and the precautions used, how he has felt about having it. He gave a general overview.

QUESTION: I like the word that he used instead of influence, he said, his reaction to the particular median was quite good so this is what I am asking, of all the different sources that you heard about aids from, which one caused you to react in a positive or negative way the most.

FEMALE: I'll say television, like Gayelle once they showed it on television and it interest me a lot because they also had a victim with the aids virus and he was talking about his experience.

FEMALE: I think that the people around you who die from it would have an effect on you, because those people who live around you, when they die from it as you live in the same thing, it does not mean that you have to get it but you know it would turn your head on.

QUESTION: So then it is the talk in the community of the people who died from aids. Is this had a great effect on you?
FEMALE: Yes, because I never knew they had it and they just come and die from it. So then you wonder who else has it and you could die from it.

QUESTION: Okay, if you wanted more information about aids, where would you get it? Which source of information would you most likely use?

MALE: Family Planning, the Hospital and people who had it, like he said from the magazine.

MALE: The Ministry of Health.

QUESTION: Why did you say the Ministry of Health.

MALE: Well, they are the ones who get the information about the virus and they try to pass it on so I would look up to them as people who know more than me.

MALE: I think the Ministry has an outgoing drive now on the education with the people of the public servants especially, and they are going in to companies and educating the workers. Then they are attending lectures and mostly the school children as they are going into the school.

QUESTION: Which source of information would you most likely use?

MALE: The Hospital, because they are the institute that is researching into this aids virus, they know more about it, so I would use that.
Okay, let me change that question around, because I saw some quest, or marks on your face. Which one are you more likely to believe and accept?

The Hospital because they are dealing with aids victims and they might know more about it how to deal with them and they would be able to explain it to you more clearly.

Anybody with a different opinion than hospitals?

I fine all the sources are okay and we are getting the same information on aids, it's most likely the same information they are bringing across, I would not say I am only listening to the television or the newspaper. I am getting informed.

And you want to be informed and as long as the creditability of the source is okay, you would accept the information?

Yes.

I would say the Ministry, because they suppose to have the information readily at hand, because of their research and people coming in and how they get it, I think that most of these people get it because of drug abuse and sexual contact.

Have you had a chance to discuss aids with anyone?

No.

Yes, the amount is 2.
QUESTION: With whom?

MALE: With friends and family, they have the front views on it, they tell me and I tell them, same thing with family, they might know a bit more on aids than I do, so I talk to them and they talk to me.

MALE: Peers and other friends and we sit down and talk and exchange views about aids.

QUESTION: If you will have a sexual partner would you discuss aids with him or her?

MALE: Ask them if they have aids, if they say no it makes no sense having sex with them and they have aids.

FEMALE: If I have a partner, I would ask him if he has aids, somehow I might believe he is seeing someone else, I would question him and ask him, I see you with this person and I want to know, I have trust in you and I want to know if you trust have trust in me, also I would like to know if you have any sexual intercourse with anybody, and you should be able to answer me correctly.

FEMALE: If you ask someone if he or she has aids, he would say the answer is no, suppose that person was with someone else and they had it, he would not know. I think the best thing to do is both of you can go and check it out, not once a year because during that time you can get it.

QUESTION: How do you mean by checking it out?

FEMALE: In the Family Planning, or wherever they take an aids test.
MALE: You can have trust in your partner, and your partner could tell you he or she don't have aids, and they could have aids and next you go and have sex and eventually you get aids.

MALE: I think this only refer to aids, no other sexual disease.

QUESTION: What sexual disease you are thinking off.

MALE: Veneral Disease.

QUESTION: What are some of these Veneral Diseases?

MALE: Syphyllis and gonoroneo.

QUESTION: How serious do you think is the problem in Trinidad and Tobago and you know what problem I am talking about?

MALE: Well I think the problem is very serious because as for example I am living in Diego Martin and maybe I can get a boyfriend living in Arima, one of those far places. If we have sex once and he have aids, I might be able to get also you know it spread, don't matter what you do.

MALE: Aids is very serious because the population in Trinidad is declining, the age is dying of aids and the mothers who are expecting new born babies can die, within three weeks after the baby is born.

QUESTION: Did someone wanted to say about the seriousness and why?
QUESTION: Is aids a serious problem in Trinidad, and why you said that?

FEMALE: Yes,

MALE: I think it is serious not only Trinidad, but all over the world but in Trinidad we have Carnival and different people come to Trinidad as a resort, our lovely beaches and Carnival. They might have aids and bring it in.

QUESTION: Why don't you think it is so serious?

MALE: Because it is not related to any racial group, anybody can get it, the highest rate is the Indians, but I am not sure because I read it on the newspapers.

FEMALE: I think it cannot stop totally but it could be under control, if you realise most of the people who died from aids, is the unmarried people, if you really go according to the Bible, you not suppose to be having sex unless you are married. All who has it would stay with it and die but who don't have it would continue living for a longer time.

QUESTION: What about the equivalent of aids in the community where do you live?

FEMALE: I heard of one person but I suppose they spread the rumours because they are jealous or something. I heard this Maxi-Taxi driver has aids, he used to take my school team netball players to matches. Well we asked him if he had aids he said it wasn't true because people just like to spread rumours. They usually carry school teams to netball matches, so other people did not want them to get the job, so they spread rumours.
QUESTION: How many known aids victims in Trinidad & Tobago?

MALE: About 240 aids victims, I saw it on the newspapers.

MALE: It could be about that because last year it had 135 aid victims in the hospital, but now it could have more. I would say it goes up to over hundred.

QUESTION: How many hundreds?

MALE: About two hundred or more.

MALE: How do you know certain people has aids it could be about 240.

QUESTION: But have you read how many people in Trinidad and Tobago has aids?

MALE: About 240.

QUESTION: Where did you see that?

MALE: On the newspapers headlines., most likely express. About two months ago it was publish.

QUESTION: Comparing with the other countries in the world, where does Trinidad & Tobago run per every million?

FEMALE: I would say Trinidad & Tobago has the highest population of aids. I think that is only in the Caribbean.

FEMALE: I don't think they are ranking so high.

MALE: We are ranking very very high in the top ten.
QUESTION: For every aids victim known approximately how many carriers are there.

MALE: I would like to know what is hepatitis, is it a carrier? No.

QUESTION: Which group of people are most likely to get aids and why?

MALE: Homosexuals, drug users

QUESTION: Why you said homosexuals?

MALE: Because they use drugs and say they get aids from the needles and the other partners goes with them, they get the aids and that fellar might have other clients and all of them would get him.

QUESTION: Why did you say drug users?

MALE: A lot of people are taking drugs to get out of frustration.

QUESTION: How would the drug users get aids?

MALE: In contact with needles.

MALE: I would say the bisexuals, because around Carnival time a man might go with a woman who has aids, and therefore he can get the disease and he could have same partner or group male and he can pass it on to other partners.

MALE: I think prostitutes, they are the ones who wants money, without money I don't know what they would do.

QUESTION: Which group of people who are unlikely to get aids?
FEMALE: People who don't have sexual intercourse and people who don't use drugs.

MALE: People who deal with the church like the nuns, priests etc,

MALE: Swaggart who had sex with a woman and he is a priest.

MALE: He took a chance but the woman don't bound to have aids.

FEMALE: I think old people, because they don't have any cause to have sexual intercourse, so they would not get aids.

QUESTION: How do aids spread throughout heterosexuals population? This means having sexual intercourse with the opposite sex homosexuals, bisexuals having sex with both males and females. There is an opinion here that the people who most likely to have aids are the homosexuals, bisexuals and intravenous drug users. How did aids spread to us...

QUESTION: What are the chances you know of getting aids?

MALE: If a person goes with someone who has aids, he would get it but if he is sure that the other person has it he can carry him to the clinic or the hospital and take a blood test, to prove if he has aids or not.

QUESTION: What are the chances you know of getting aids?

MALE: Because the rate in Trinidad is very high.

FEMALE: In the middle because the population in Trinidad is high.

MALE: In the middle because half of Trinidad have it and the other don't have.

MALE: I would say in the middle because the person that you know you can talk to them, discuss aids how you can get it, so you can prevent yourself from getting it. So therefore you can minimise aids.
MALE: I think people who probably have AIDS might not be aware they have AIDS because the places to go and check is not advertised.

QUESTION: What are the chances of someone you know getting AIDS?

MALE: I would say it is very high.

QUESTION: Do you think that you are at risk? Why?

MALE: Yes, because I could have AIDS I might not know, I could go with someone and get AIDS just so.

FEMALE: I am, but I don't think I am at risk because I know anybody could have it, and it's in the air and why freeing from sexual contact so you would not get it.

MALE: Yes, as she said she don't have to have sex with someone to get AIDS, but she don't know they can drug her and then have sex with her. When she wakes up she would not know if she has AIDS or not.

MALE: Yes, I am at risk especially at Carnival time you can meet this girl and the way you feeling and she's feeling you can go and have sex. You would not have time to go in the hospital to get a blood test, at the moment you can get AIDS. And if you go with another girl she can get it.

FEMALE: I don't think I can get AIDS, because to myself I am too young to have any sexual intercourse with anybody and I'm not sure if I know anybody who takes drugs or anything like but if they come to me and tell me to take a sniff or something like that, I know I will say no like on the advertisement.

MALE: People say to abstain from sex, but that is madness, because there is a time when teenagers is sexually active, so if you can't help yourself you could go with somebody that has the disease and therefore you can get it.
QUESTION: One more opinion. What do you think causes Aids?

MALE: Promiscous behaviour.

MALE: When an individual is wild and he is having sex with anyone, so with this wildness he will get aids.

QUESTION: When somebody gets aids, what is the cause of it?

MALE: Ignorance, in terms of sexual

MALE: In terms of sexual, there is protection but is it not a 100% sure so the risk is higher.

QUESTION: I do not think that you all have understood me properly, so let me explain a little more. What causes pneumonia? What is the cause of malaria? What is the cause of hepatitis? What causes aids?

MALE/FEMALE: Don't know.

QUESTION: Is aids caused by a bacteria? Is aids caused by an insect? Is aids caused by a fungus? Is aids caused by a virus? How do you think aids is spread?

MALE: Aids is spread in many ways, like drug users who use needles, when they are using the needles to stick themselfe, it is only one needle they have, so one person might have aids and therefore he will give the rest.

QUESTION: Is is spread by any other way?

MALE: Promiscuous aids, in terms of not sticking to one partner.

QUESTIN: But if I have three partners, but neither I nor the three partners have it, neither of the four of us would get it, so how is it spread in addition to intravenous drug when one of the persons using that same needle who has aids, then it would be spread. How else would
MALE: Getting in contact with homosexuals or heterosexuals or bisexuals.

QUESTION: I think you have to add on something to that. Having sex with a homosexual or heterosexual or a bisexual, does somebody want to add on something to that?

FEMALE: By using needles. Someone who has aids.

QUESTION: You said something that it is not spread by shaking hands, are there any other rumours about how aids can be spread by not having sex?

FEMALE: By kissing.

MALE: Drinking from a glass.

FEMALE: To me I'm not sure because the nurses say they can't get it by kissing by I say with the saliva mixing up with the person who has aids and you don't have aids, it could be possible you could get aids.

QUESTION: Can one get aids from somebody who has the virus but not the disease?

MALE: A carrier.

QUESTION: What is the difference between a carrier and somebody who has the disease? Is there any difference.

FEMALE: I think the carrier distributes the disease to whoever they get into contact with they can give the person but there resistance is very high but whereas the person who has the disease can also give and yet he has it he's at risk.

QUESTION: We don't know if she's correct, does everyone agree with her?

MALE & FEMALE: I agree.
QUESTION: Does anyone have an opinion different from what she just said?

MALE: A carrier, he will just give the disease to the other people he would have the virus it might take him longer to die, the person that have the disease he or she will give the disease to other people. He or she would die faster the person who has the virus and the people that he gave the disease too will also die.

QUESTION: I want you to make an attempt, since you learn these things from your school to tell us the different between who is a carrier and somebody who has the disease?

FEMALE: A carrier of the virus they go around having sex with other people, if they have a girlfriend and she's feeling hot and want to have sex with him, she have aids and he has the virus he would not just go with her. He would take precaution of going with her.

QUESTION: Can you tell from looking at a person if he or she is affected with the disease?

MALE: No, if a person has a good size and they lose weight drastically.

MALE: I would say there are other sicknesses that make a person lose weight, then you see spot appearing on the skin it could be anything it don't have to be aids or small pox. And after a few weeks it just clear up.

QUESTION: Can a person who looks healthy who have aids can pass it on to someone else? How?

MALE: Yes, by sexual intercourse having sex with another person would carry it on the virus to the other person and they remain healthy, and they are not showing the signs of the aids.
QUESTION: Do you think that having a venereal disease would increase your chances of getting aids? Or do you think it does not matter?

MALE: They are just looking healthy.
FEMALE: Yes. Because the body is broken down to the disease you have before and aids might just make it worse. It would be ease.

QUESTION: Can you tell from looking at the person, whether he or she has the virus?

MALE: No.
FEMALE: No.
MALE: I think in the early stages, from marks on the body. That is when it is developing in your body.

QUESTION: We identified the several names by which names can be said, what is the importance of this to you?

MALE: It makes you become more aware.
MALE: As is makes you aware, you have to prevent yourself knowing how the disease is transferred.

QUESTION: Is the carrier likely to get the disease?

FEMALE: Yes because the virus just gets worse and developing into the full disease.
FEMALE: No.
MALE: Because he is already carrying the disease.
FEMALE: When their resistance is low they would eventually just have the disease.
FEMALE: As they have the virus it would be easier for them to get aids just by carring the disease.
QUESTION: Is getting the disease related to sex? Or the class you belong to, or race, that it have anything to do with getting the disease whether male or female? Is there any income group in Trinidad that will not get aids? Is there any age group that will not get the disease in Trinidad? Is there any racial group that will not get the disease in Trinidad?

MALE: Anybody will get the disease, it does not matter what group or race you are in. It is just your own personal esteem and what it is you do.

MALE: Everybody will get. I agree with him.

MALE: People in the income group are subjected because of drugs. For race I think the Indians are high risk. For age group I think is before 25 years when you are sexually active.

QUESTION: What do you think will happen to you if you get aids?

MALE: You will die.

FEMALE: I will regret having sex with that person after getting aids.

FEMALE: I think that if you are selfish, you will try to give it to as many people as you could before you die so that you do not bear that burden by yourself and you will be happy to know that you are not dying by yourself and somebody else is dying with you.

QUESTION: What are some of the symptoms of aids?

MALE: Well the Immune System breaks down so if a cold comes around you will get it very easily because your body cannot fight the virus.

QUESTION: What will one observe happening to you?

MALE: Loss of weight.
FEMALE: The sides of the mouth become black, spots would be on your back.

QUESTION: What about the length of suffering?

MALE: Seven to ten years.

QUESTION: What is the length of time between getting the virus and getting the disease? As far as you are all aware, people who have aids what kind of treatment do they get from their family and friends?

MALE: The friends reject them, because they might not have the education about aids, so they would not want to come close to you because they think they might get aids. The family is the same thing but they would come to terms with it, they would go to a doctor.

QUESTION: If somebody in schools has aids, what do you think the relation with the school friends be?

MALE: Just stay far from me.

FEMALE: I think if the principal and teachers know that a student has aids, they would not let them attend the school any more, because on television and the news they do not allow the children to attend school. I would be against it.

FEMALE: They should have a chance to study and be as normal children and not to be harrassed.

FEMALE: I think if you are well educated on aids like to know how you can get it you should care for the person but take precautions as to how not to get it. When somebody has aids the best thing to do is to care for that person because that person does not have long to live again.
QUESTION: What can cure AIDS?

MALE: There is no cure for AIDS?

QUESTION: How soon do you think there will be a cure?

MALE: Next five years.

FEMALE: Next three years.

QUESTION: Why do you say next five years?

MALE: They are getting more determination about this AIDS and they are working real hard.

FEMALE: As they are getting more information on how to cure the AIDS, it would be shorter time to cure the disease.

QUESTION: Have you ever heard of a cure for AIDS?

MALE: Yes.

FEMALE: Yes.

QUESTION: What can the test tell you?

FEMALE: If you have it or you don't have it.

QUESTION: Does it tell you whether you have the disease?

MALE: Yes.

QUESTION: Or does it tell you that you are a carrier?

MALE: I don't know.

QUESTION: What does it tell you?
QUESTION: Would you take the test?

MALE: Yes

FEMALE: Yes

FEMALE: I would not take it because I know for myself that I did not get in contact with any of the relationships for getting aids so I would not have any reason for taking a test for aids.

MALE: I do not know, tear that I might have it and I would do something real drastic.

QUESTION: Something drastic like what?

MALE: Well you go by the doctor and he tells you you have aids, you might kill yourself.

MALE: If you know that you are not having sex with anybody or not taking drugs you would not get aids, so I would not take the test.

QUESTION: What do you think your friends would say about taking the test?

MALE: They would say no because they know that they do not have aids.

FEMALE: Some of them might say no and some would say yes, because of their lifestyle they would be involved in having sex and because of the group talk they would say they would not take the test, but they know to themselves that they had sex and they not sure if they have the aids talking with their friends and they don't want to tell their friends they had sex and they would not want to take it.

QUESTION: Would you take the test?

FEMALE: No.
QUESTION: Are there people who say they rather not to know if they have aids?

FEMALE: Yes, because some people would like to spread it to other people.

MALE: Not knowing you have aids I wouldn't know to myself I have the aids, I know it would be dangerous to other people that I coming in contact with the opposite sex. I would not want other people to know could be very embarrassing.

QUESTION: What do you think about this attitude of not wanting to know?

FEMALE: I think it is kind of possible, if you just there and you don't know.

QUESTION: Would you ask your partner to take this aids test?

FEMALE: Yes, both of us could go and take it.

QUESTION: Would you ask your partner to go and take the aids test?

QUESTION: Suppose you went and took the test and the test proved that you have aids?

FEMALE: I would say I should not go in the first place and I would regret it.

QUESTION: But would you regret going to take the aids test?

FEMALE: Yes, I would regret.
QUESTION: Suppose you take the test and it prove that you have aids, how would you feel?

FEMALE: I would say I should not take the test, then I would regret going.

QUESTION: How would you feel?

MALE: Depressed.

FEMALE: Knowing that I have a short time of living, I could go and kill myself now.

MALE: Doctors now adays are right, you could be wrong and you can go and kill yourself.

QUESTION: Suppose you went and take the test and it proved that you have aids, what would you tell your partner?

FEMALE: Yes, because you probably get it from that person in the first place.

MALE: When you tell him or her the person can go and spread it.

QUESTION: When you say spread it how do you mean?

MALE: It means that you have aids, so now by doing this if she or him says spread it, and says that he or she has aids, it could be endangering yourself too because people would say where he got it from, you was not with him.

MALE: If you with somebody and you get aids that means that you got it from your partner, so your partner should know and you should both go and take tests.
QUESTION: Please describe your feelings towards this disease?

FEMALE: Sickening.
FEMALE: Angry.
FEMALE: Terrible.
FEMALE: Disgusting.

QUESTION: Why do you have these feelings towards AIDS?

FEMALE: Because it is killing people all over the world, God put people on the world to live so why a disease has to come and spoil everyone's life.

MALE: It is killing people, even babies who are innocent.

QUESTION: On a scale of weak, medium to strong, how do you rate your feelings towards this disease?

MALE: Strong.
FEMALE: Strong.

QUESTION: How do you describe your sexual activities at present?

FEMALE: I do not have any sexual activities.

MALE: Stop running girls wild now, I have to cool myself and seek out somebody that I think I'm sure of.

MALE: I would look for somebody who don't have aids.

QUESTION: How do you describe your sexual activities before your knowledge of aids?

MALE: Running wild. As you know about this thing now you cool down.

QUESTION: Why have you significantly change or not change your sexual activities?

MALE: You have to change it because with AIDS now, if you keep on going wild you know you would get the disease sooner or later so by this changing
MALE: Of picking one partner you will decline your wait of your getting the aids virus.

(cont'd)

QUESTION: How would you describe the sexual activities of your friends before this knowledge of aids came on television, etc.?

FEMALE: Well, I think they had more freedom. They did not have any fear of getting aids when they were having sex.
QUESTION: Is there anything one can do to avoid getting AIDS?

M: Don't have sex.

F: Stop taking drugs, stick with one partner.

M: Avoid having sex and injecting drug needles, but as a teenager stop having sex is madness it is a very hard thing to do.

F: If you only get AIDS you would stop.

M: You get sexually active.

QUESTION: Have you tried any of these practices?

F: No.

M: You just don't get involved.

M: Some said to avoid having sex, some said to stick to one partner, others said if you are involve in any drugs, you can get AIDS.

F: Try to stop using drugs and having sex and things like that. I don't do anything like that.

QUESTION: Have you tried avoiding AIDS and how?

F: Although, they say, you can't get it from drinking in people glasses.

QUESTION: How can one avoid of getting AIDS?

F: Stop using drugs and stick to one partner.

QUESTION: Which one of these would you practice to avoid getting AIDS?

F: I practice, by sticking to one partner.

M: Suppose your partner has AIDS and you don't know.

F: I don't have a partner but the answer to the question is
QUESTION: What would you recommend to someone who wants to avoid aids?

MALE: Don't use needles with people who use drugs, stick to one partner. Make sure that partner do not have aids.

QUESTION: What advise would you give someone to avoid aids?

MALE: Stay away from drugs and sex.

QUESTION: Have you ever heard of safer sex practices?

FEMALE: Using condoms.

QUESTION: What are the advantages of safer sex practices?

FEMALE: It is also increases your chances of getting aids, you could never know what could happen, you can use a condom and it could burst and anything could happen.

QUESTION: Is there a better word for safer sex practices, what would you recommend to the Ministry of Health?

FEMALE: No.

QUESTION: We spoke about Veneral Disease, is there a cure for it.

FEMALE: Yes.

QUESTION: Do you think most people has Veneral Disease?

MALE: No.

QUESTION: How does someone gets Veneral Disease?
MALE: Protecting yourself.

QUESTION: Do you know of any friends who used condoms?

FEMALE: Yes.

QUESTION: Where did they get it?

MALE: From Family Planning.

QUESTION: Do they still use it?

MALE: Yes.

QUESTION: As far as you are aware are they using condoms more now as before? Why?

FEMALE: Yes, because some people cannot do without sex, they don't want to stop because of aids, so they use condoms.

MALE: It also makes a person feels safer. Sometimes it may burst, but this is a chance you have to take.

QUESTION: Now, could you elaborate on that a little more?

MALE: If when using the condoms it happen to burst, it is the same aids you are getting.

QUESTION: Those of your friends who are using condoms, do they ever express how they feel about using it.

MALE: They feel safer, but without the condoms they could get aids, with condoms doctors say it is a hundred percent safer, but it is better than not being safe at all.
QUESTION: Would you recommend the use of condoms to anyone and why?

MALE: Yes, because it could limit a chance of getting AIDS or any sexual disease not only AIDS.

QUESTION: Do you worry about AIDS?

MALE: Yes, I worry about it because you could never know who would have it. I could settle down with this girl, I never see her running wild or anything like that. Next thing you go and have sex, you would not know if you have AIDS or not.

QUESTION: Do you worry about AIDS which regard to your future? In what way?

MALE: Yes, you have to worry if you get it in the long run.

QUESTION: In what other ways you worry about getting AIDS? What about marriage?

MALE: In some cases, some wives or husbands might not be devoted as they should.

QUESTION: Any other reasons why you worry about AIDS?

QUESTION: Have your parents ever talked to you about AIDS? Could you show your hands please?

FEMALE: Yes.

QUESTION: How many yes and no. One, two what have they told you?
FEMALE: Mummy keeps warning me about aids, the world out there is something else, be careful who you are choosing. The risk is great, you don't know who have it out there.

MALE: My father and sister, they told me about aids, and how it came about. If you get immune to one disease or any other diseases and aids came out from all those diseases, so whatever drug they use would have an effect on aids.

QUESTION: What would you like to know more about aids from the Ministry of Health?

FEMALE: More symptoms of people who have aids.

MALE: Any body could have it, but there are people who are tested and the public knows about it.

QUESTION: Do you think they should publish the names of people?

MALE: If you publish the names of people it would bring some kind of shame to the person, in a way they could.

QUESTION: What would you like to hear about aids? What is the best information about aids?

FEMALE: Documentaries on television.

MALE: Radio, a lot of people listen. Newspapers, pamphlets, educational campaigns.

QUESTION: What do you think you can contribute to the educational campaign?
MALE: We can have the information, you can spread it to your partners, the people who know little about the disease.

QUESTION: What message would you like to convey?

FEMALE: Stay off drugs, and have one partner.

MALE: You tell them about what the disease can do, also the harmful effects.

QUESTION: What message would you like to convey to your parents of how aids is?

MALE: You can talk to your friends, exchange views and ideas.

QUESTION: What you want to convey to the Medical Officer of Health about aids?

FEMALE: Let the parents know more about the virus for them to explain more clearly to the children to understand and what to do.

QUESTION: What message would you like to convey to the Politicians, The Prime Minister, and the Ministers, any particular message to them?

MALE: I think they should have some kind of organisation set up to give people special care?

FEMALE: They should have like documentaries with teenagers, discussing about aids and let the children listen to teenagers in different age category. They would know more about it hearing it from anybody else.
QUESTION: Is there a special message, you would like to tell to your friends or the general population?

MALE: The message is keep avoiding certain habits and cut down on constant sex, use protection.

MALE: I would think my own personal view, the government should not encourage, all the places prostitutes hang out, they should get rid of them, they are seen as a positive aids busines because young fellars go their too. Get rid of them, that could limit down the aids by at least two percent.

QUESTION: What do you think of the questions you were asked today?

MALE: Interested.

FEMALE: Educational.

MALE: I think we should be able to ask questions, but it was very informative.

QUESTION: Was there any question, you did not like in particular?

FEMALE: The one with the virus and aids.

QUESTION: Were there any questions that turned you off and you found that we should not be asking teenagers, are you sure?

FEMALE: No, yes, we are sure.

QUESTION: Is there any question we forgot to ask you or we should ask you?

MALE: I don't think so.
QUESTION: How do you think AIDS came about?

MALE: AIDS was always here, when you die they say it is AIDS.

FEMALE: I don't think that was your opinion, I think you don't agree with that.

FEMALE: AIDS was always there, the world get technology and they name it AIDS, but it was always there.

END OF SESSION II: TEENAGERS
ANSWER: For instance, I have a little boy child, everything on television or radio he knows it. It has many ways you can do it, even through musical ways, visual ways to the young people. That came up earlier that the prostitutes might be clean, you might see the secretary coming out of the office and she have aids. When someone is affected that is the time you would want to go after it.

ANSWER: I think we need a programme on television educating the people, having the real reasons for the virus, we have reach a stage where we need to learn why, where or how.

ANSWER: We talked about advising your kid to stay away from that kind of programme. I agree with him because it is a question of chance, you might tell someone to stay away from that group and they go with a next group and get it. There's nothing in telling the person that.

ANSWER: When I talked about television, when you look at CNN you just get a brief flash of what's going on. There should be an aids programme.

ANSWER: One of the things, you see in society today, I call it the sexes of society, what we see is the media projective our women folk do not seem to be update about it. If you are independent and working for your own dollar, your own car. What you see in society today, women in ads are only advertising for sex.

QUESTION: What message you would like to convey to the Ministry of Health?
ANSWER: More education.
ANSWER: More facts.

QUESTION: What message you would like to convey to the Political Authorities?

ANSWER: Same thing.

QUESTION: What message you would convey to parents and relatives?

ANSWER: Talk to the younger ones, they are the ones who should know about the disease.

QUESTION: What message would you like to convey to your friends?

ANSWER: Play it safe.
ANSWER: Stick to one partner.

QUESTION: What message would you like to convey to children and teenagers?

ANSWER: Big people use drugs to but you have to tell the children about drugs and so forth.

ANSWER: As far as you know you can contact the disease by using the intervena drugs.

ANSWER: You have to educate them about how not to use drugs, beside s playing it safe, all these things you have to tell them.

QUESTION: What message would you like to convey to the general public?

ANSWER: The same message.
FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS ON AIDS

TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

MEN

Session VI

25 August 1988

SYLVIE COHEN

Consultant
European Economic Commission

Group Moderator:
COURTNEY BOXILL
SESSION VI: MEN

INTRODUCTION: I'm an Electronic Technician age 50 years. 
Foreman Gauger age 44 years. 
Labour Relations Officer age 43 years. 
Tire Retreader age 60 years. 
Managing Director age 58 years. 
Clerical Assistant age 54 years. 
Retired Sanitation Supervisor age 58 years. 
Accountant age 57 years. 
Managing Director age 45 years. 
Drilling Tool Pusher age 45 years.

QUESTION: In your opinion what are the most serious diseases facing Trinidad and Tobago today besides AIDS?

ANSWER: Heart disease.
ANSWER: Cancer.
ANSWER: Diabetes, syphilis.
ANSWER: High Blood pressure.

QUESTION: I think all of you have heard about AIDS, could you tell us where did you hear about this disease?

ANSWER: Over the media, television.
ANSWER: Newspapers.
ANSWER: CNN and Trinidad.
ANSWER: I first heard it over CNN.

QUESTION: From which of these sources did you get the most information?

ANSWER: CNN.
ANSWER: Newsweek.
ANSWER: From written Reports, you get more information there like
QUESTION: How much do you think you know about aids?

ANSWER: Not enough.

ANSWER: Enough to know that I don't want to get it.

ANSWER: When I say not enough, I mean I know enough not to get it but then not enough to know what to do when I it.

QUESTION: If you wanted to know more information about aids, where would you get it?

ANSWER: I believe there is an agency in Port of Spain, I think it is the St. James Infirmary where Dr. Bartholomew is doing some research on aids.

QUESTION: Anybody else knows any other source where more information is obtained?

ANSWER: The Community Development Centre, a government agency and over the last few years a lot of programmes through the village councils where you get a lot of information.

QUESTION: Of these sources where you know you can get information about aids which one would you most likely use?

ANSWER: I would go to the Medical Centre.

ANSWER: I would go to Dr. Bartholomew because as far as I know he is the leading authority on aids in Trinidad.

ANSWER: I am wonder about what he is saying, if he feel he has aids or if he is looking to bring himself up to date about the aids situation.

ANSWER: When you said just now about the other disease, I believe we forgot one, drugs. Also alcoholism is treated as a disease.

QUESTION: Have you had to chance to discuss aids with anyone and if so with whom?
ANSWER: Well not seriously, but you and your partner would say well who has aids and who don't have aids and how they got it.

ANSWER: I think we try to find out from one another how much they know and what is the cause of it.

ANSWER: Aids, I believe stems from the immunity system of the body it also has a healing system, for example if you get a little scratch it tends to heal without any medication. Aids is a disease that destroys this immunity and healing of the body whereby leaving exposed to anything that comes across.

QUESTION: Have you had a chance to discuss aids with you sexual partner?

ANSWER: Yes.

ANSWER: (all) Yes.

QUESTION: Both with your sexual partner and your friends and associates, what was the exchange about, what was the content of your discussion in addition to what you already told me?

ANSWER: They are afraid.

ANSWER: Boy look you better behave yourself because I know I am clean.

ANSWER: Well I try to discuss it with my son and he says that he knows about it, don't be afraid of it.

ANSWER: I discussed it with my children and they said "Daddy this is not anything to try and get so try and stay clean". I told him but boy you are younger than me I believe that you should get a blood test and he said no. So two weeks after that hers wife had her and he said she is brave, he said suppose when she went it was positive he said no, he is sure its not him. So I told him how does he know it is not him and he could not answer. So I told him me must be sure and he must go and one to find out but up to now he has not gone as yet. But he is sure that his wife does not have it so I suppose thats why he did not go.
QUESTION: How serious do you think is the problem in Trinidad and Tobago?

ANSWER: Very serious. According to the reports that we have Trinidad is rated as the third highest per capita and this has to be alarming.

QUESTION: What about your community, San Fernando, do you have any idea of it prevalence, its spread?

ANSWER: We hardly hear about people in San Fernando, we mostly hear about people in Port of Spain.

ANSWER: No well officially I don't think it is specified exactly where the cases are. They just say they have five or six cases in Trinidad.

ANSWER: It is very difficult to get accurate facts, if you know of somebody who is losing weight people would say he has aids so it very difficult to get accurate facts to determine how many people in the community has aids.

QUESTION: From what you have been reading, how many cases of known aids patients has there been in Trinidad and Tobago?

ANSWER: A friend of mine tole me it is very frightening and that over 200 people have already died from aids and they had identified that 10,000 people are carriers so if that is true it is really a tremendous and frightening situation.

QUESTION: Somebody said that Trinidad and Tobago ranks the top three in the world per capita, any other opinion about where we run?

ANSWER: That is the information that we have. We are way up there.

QUESTION: What do you think causes aids?

ANSWER: Ignorance.

ANSWER: Virus.

ANSWER: Do you mean what causes aids or how is it transferred from one
ANSWER: it something causing that. Another speaker said its probably a virus that you get, you get it several ways.

QUESTION: We are dealing with the cause of aids?

ANSWER: I would say a virus.

ANSWER: As far as I know nobody seems to know.

ANSWER: A virus but we don't know the roots of the virus.

ANSWER: The presence of something in your body.

ANSWER: What we are told is that you get it because of sexual relationships, having sex with more than one partner and other relationships, like homosexuals. It derived from Africa, from monkeys and recently in the newspapers somebody said it was a genetic thing developed in the lab and the WHO was making the connection.

But what really is the truth is the facts. What really is a virus if its a virus, is it something that somebody picked up in the air. We are told because its related to sexual contact.

QUESTION: In addition to sexual contacts are there other means by which aids is transmitted?

ANSWER: Blood transfusions.

ANSWER: Drug users.

ANSWER: Intravenous drug user.

QUESTION: Can it be spread by shaking hands?

ANSWER: No.

QUESTION: Can it be spread by kissing?

ANSWER: No.

ANSWER: I'm not sure, they also said its spread by saliva.

ANSWER: Body fluids.
A doctor on television did say it depends on the type of kiss, we are talking about the kiss when you are making love sort of kiss which can be transmitted which is spread through saliva.

**QUESTION:** Can it be spread by sitting on a toilet?

**ANSWER:** No not at all.

**QUESTION:** What about in bathing pools, exchanging tooth brushes?

**ANSWER:** Yes.

**ANSWER:** It can be transmitted through a pool, because in the pool when you are swimming and you swallow some of the water it will affect you.

**ANSWER:** I don't think you.

**ANSWER:** By tooth brushes you can get it, if somebody has a gum disease.

**QUESTION:** What about injections and skin piercing instruments?

**ANSWER:** Yes.

**QUESTION:** Can it be transmitted by blood?

**ANSWER:** Yes.

**QUESTION:** Can it be transmitted by hugging?

**ANSWER:** No.

**QUESTION:** Can you tell from looking at a person whether she or he is infected, that is have the virus?

**ANSWER:** No.
Is there a difference between having the disease and having the virus?

Yes I believe, I believe some people are carriers of the disease and they don't have it for a long time. It is not possible they would get it for a long time.

You can have the virus and it develops to a stage where you have another disease whether cancer of pneumonia and that is evidence of the disease at an advanced stage.

Can somebody differentiate between having the disease and being a carrier?

Well from what I heard, there are some people who are healthy carriers, so although they have the virus in their body they are healthy and they could probably transmit the virus some way or the other to another person who would actually get the aids virus and get sick and die and they would remain healthy.

Can you get aids from someone who has the virus but not the disease?

Yes

Could you elaborate on that please?

This person who has the virus had sexual contact with somebody else, that person get the virus, get sick and die of aids whilst the original person remain healthy and strong.

Can a person who looks healthy but has aids pass it on to another person?

Yes.
QUESTION: Do you think that having a venereal disease increases someone's chances of getting aids or do you think it does not matter?

ANSWER: They said that having one of those venereal diseases increases the risk of aids catching more easily.

ANSWER: If you have venereal disease your body is not up to strength because you do not have the amount of resistance you are supposed to have so therefore you become more susceptible to catching another disease.

ANSWER: I don't agree with him, because if you previously had venereal disease that was cured and you don't have it at present then the only possibility is if you get an injection and you get the aids virus with the injection, when then I could see the possibility of getting aids.

QUESTION: What kind of people are most likely to get aids and why are you saying this?

ANSWER: From the media I gathered homosexuals because most of the people who are infected are drug users and homosexuals.

ANSWER: Because of a bacterial disease which you get mostly in homosexuals.

ANSWER: Anal intercourse by bleeding which is semen going directly into the blood stream.

ANSWER: Drug users.

ANSWER: From contaminated needles.

QUESTION: What kind of people are least likely to get aids?

ANSWER: Priests, nuns.

ANSWER: People who are not contaminated and only have sex with each other.

QUESTION: How do you think aids is spread to the heterosexual population? Assuming that it began by homosexuals and bi-sexuals.
ANSWER: Through the bisexuals, if a bisexual goes with a homosexual and then with a straight person and onto other straight persons.

QUESTION: What are the chances of someone you know getting aids?

ANSWER: I know people who can get that any time because they don't want to behave themselves.

ANSWER: It does not necessarily mean because you feel that you are free of aids that you cannot get aids and it does not necessarily mean that you have to go outside of your family life to get aids.

ANSWER: I find it very difficult to say anything in this discussion because of one reason the first thing is that to reach to what we are talking about here we got to realize then what is the real cause of aids. Now we talk about sex, kissing and different things but is it a virus flying in the air. But what it is really cause it what it is create it to come about now to me we ought to try to find out that. Because if kissing could cause aids and bathing in a pool could cause aids then it is very difficult to find out then the last question you asked someone. So if it is true that aids could be contracted so then the only way for us to know that my partner can't get aids because he must not bathe at all. So I would want to find out then the real cause of aids, now having sex is not the cause, its something that created something that created them to contact that virus.

ANSWER: But that is what the scientists all over the world is working on.

ANSWER: That is why I want to find out what is the real reason.

QUESTION: As we said before the real reason for this discussion is to give the National Aids Foundation information that they can use to mount an educational campaign in Trinidad and Tobago with the objective of reducing the rate at which aids is spread. This is why we want information from you, this is why we went to married women, to teenagers, to medical doctors, to priests so we are getting a wide cross-section of the Trinidad population.
We want to know how much do you know about it. If we find that you don't feel sure about what you know this is helping us to know how to inform you better. So right now we are not answering your questions that you are asking but later we will give you some pamphlets.

Do you think that you are at risk and why do you think so?

Yes, because you do not know what the other person is doing. If they say aids has no respect for a person it comes back down to you, the question is if I feel I would get aids, I would say yes because I have another relationship with somebody outside. I would say yes because I could pick up aids by even going to the dentist or even the doctor by getting a blood transfusion or going to give blood. Not in the sense that I would say yes because of sex but certainly yes.

Based on something that you said, do you think that you can gets aids by going to give blood?

Yes.

By going to the Blood Bank if they use a contaminated needle on you.

Do you think they still use contaminated needles at the Blood Bank?

I really don't know..

Recently there was a report of people giving complaints, that they went to give blood and this situation came up and that was through one of the health centres in Chaguanas. So the person at that time was very observant and they kicked up a hell of a fuss, so then it came out that they were using one needle over and over again.
A lot depends on what confidence you have in the health care system, but I doubt it.

I don't agree with you, I have confidence in my health care system, but when a question like that comes up and the person who was there observed and made noise, but after I was told from the doctors and the other people that it did happen only then I would have to believe. At least we say that we have been listening to the CNN news and our television, but these things come out on the television in ways and means that other people contact these things so is either we believe it or we don't believe it.

I believe it.

It came out on the papers sometime ago that when a person is going to give blood they always check for this disease before they take the blood to put in the bank. So if they are doing it that way then the blood should be safe.

Regarding having confidence in the health care, I believe that as long as you are using the private practitioners, now let's say that the doctor has to buy the needles it would be profitable for him if he has to use two needles, then he could use one needle ten times, so in a situation like the the doctor continue to use the same needle because it is profitable to him so I think in that situation things like that could happen. Just to save a dollar.

Have you ever asked your doctor or your dentist if the instruments or needles are sterilised?

No.

From my experience, I would go with by my little quack fellar, and so he is always with a pan with hot water, so when he use his needles he just drop them in there, so then he take it out the hot water with a clip. now I would see him there, but
the fellar going in the back and coming back so, you don't know what he is doing. There are some of them who would sterilise their needles and then are some of them who are not doing it.

QUESTION: What do you think happens if someone gets aids? What are the symptoms?

ANSWER: Loss of weight.

ANSWER: There is a thing on television where they show you some of the symptoms like loss of weight, getting sores on the skin.

ANSWER: High fever.

ANSWER: Lymph glands about the body.

QUESTION: What is the length of time between getting the virus and getting the disease?

ANSWER: I don't think there is any specific time period on that.

ANSWER: Three months to eight years.

ANSWER: No, but I would like to ask a question.

QUESTION: What can cure aids?

ANSWER: There is not cure.

QUESTION: How soon do you think there will be a cure?

ANSWER: Soon.

ANSWER: Just after they get the one for cancer.

ANSWER: Just before I left home, on CNN news, thirteen states in America, as the baby born they drawing blood to check for aids disease. But of course it is confidential, nobody knows who are the parents, but every child is given this test.
QUESTION: What do you think of children who has the aids virus but are otherwise health, of attending school?

ANSWER: If it is that you can't or you have to go, lets say through personal contact like kissing and anything and they say you can't contact the disease I don't see anything with the children going to school.

ANSWER: Providing the other children are aware of the dangers. Like if there is an accident and the child bleeds and the other children are not aware of the dangers, then they can become contaminated.

QUESTION: Would you allow your child to go to the same school, where there are one or more children with the aids virus?

ANSWER: Yes.

QUESTION: What do you think of working with someone who has the aids virus?

ANSWER: Same thing.

ANSWER: I think we are saying that because of the lack of education that people have so that for us to say yes just so it's not easy to say and its not easy to accept. I don't think people would be ready to accept that situation because of the lack of knowledge. That has had a frightening effect on people as soon as people talk of aids they would make a joke and thing but deep underneath that I think people are frightened, because if a man at the job site have aids I don't know who wants to stay close to that man.
What I am saying if we know we are able to catch aids in so many different patterns, which is not by sex only then, I am saying I am not prepared to work around somebody who I know has aids because by simply using a glass that someone used, not knowing if there is water or something and if you use the glass that is a way of catching it too because you will be putting the glass in your mouth with the water, notwithstanding the education is important, but if it is true, there are so many different ways people could catch aids, it would not be the correct thing to work around someone who has aids.

Are you saying the same thing applies about sending your child to a school with a child with aids?

Yes

Have you ever heard of a test for aids?

Yes.

What can that test tell you?

Whether you have aids or not.

Whether you have anti-bodies.

Whether you have the virus.

What can the test not tell you?

It would not tell you when you are going to get better..

Do you know where you can take such a test?

Caribbean Medical Centre.

Wherever Dr. Bartholomew work.

The General Hospital.
ANSWER: A private practitioner.

ANSWER: Is it not said that you can take an aids test, show up negative or positive, I was hearing recently that to really clarify the situation of a real aids test that you need to stay away from sex for about a year to really show up the negativeness or the positiveness to that instance. It may show up that you have aids with the real aids test but you might have sex with somebody, but what I have been told, it may not necessarily come up. Tomorrow it may show negative, when it is positive.

QUESTION: Are there people who say they have problems to take the test at these places that you have identified?

ANSWER: Don't know.

ANSWER: Not really.

QUESTION: Is there any ideal place where you suggest that this test could be taken?

ANSWER: The leading man on aids in Trinidad is Dr. Bartholomew, so go by that fellar.

ANSWER: Any of the General Hospitals.

QUESTION: Would you take the test? Why? Why not?

ANSWER: Yes

ANSWER: Yes, to know what is happening to me.

ANSWER: I would not take the test unless its absolutely necessary, for example recently I heard that if you want to migrate to the U.S. you need to do the test. So if I want to migrate I would take the test, but if I just get up in the morning and say I want to take the test to see if I have the virus, I would not do that.
If for some reason a person I had or have a relationship with and it is said that that person has aids, then I would go and take the test.

What do people you know say about taking the test?

I think it's a natural fear, people don't want to know that they have it.

When you have it you have it.

Has anybody else here heard that opinion expressed by other people?

Other people want to get the test to be sure they don't have it.

Have you heard of people saying I am not going to take the test?

Yes, because they prefer not to know.

What do you think of this attitude these people have?

You should turn that statement from these people and say we because I have never really brought myself down to that cause to say well I would want to go and take a test. With all the things happening you should go and check a doctor and take a test, you feel you are safe and playing it cool, but then again there are so many other ways to get it, so then its not necessarily sex so then it could be a frightening thing to just want to do it.

I think if the test was free, people would be more inclined to have it.

Listening to people, looking at Trinidadians and Tobagonians, there are some people who are concerned about aids, there is a few of us when we are talking about it we seem to be
And it has nothing to do with the situation where is a living something in their mind and to me Trinidadians are just living. When we talk about it we seem to get concerned but if you really investigate Trinidadians and Tobagonians you will still see them by the hotels and the brothels and living free so I say they are just living they are not afraid. This is because of the education, it does not show to be a painful thing, whenever a person contact aids, people hardly ever see the person growling under any pain so its something that you can't see. There is no relationship with you seeing a person suffering and because of that people seem to still live free so when somebody dies you only near they die from aids.

I want you all to respond to what he just said, is this what you are observing, are his observations correct about Trinidadians just living free?

I can say yes to that because I know of friends when talking about aids, they say boy if I have to get it I would get it and I living. I just doing what I have to do.

What do you think is behind that freedom?

Lack of education.

There are a lot of people living free and they don't seem to seem to care about it and I think it's because of the same reason, lack of education.

I think it's more than that, people always say that something is going to take them and they can't get away from death and they are not afraid to die.

Most people say they are only here for a short while, eat, drink and be merry.
My feeling is that people don't know what is the real cause and creation of it, because we know about the sexual think but later on we are hearing so many things could cause it. So if nobody know what is causing it then why should someone abstain from sex when you know there are other ways to get it. So instead of having the mind clogged up and tightened up, because up to this time they cannot say what it is.

Would you ask your partner to take the test? If yes, why? If no, why not? Your sexual partner that is.

I would say no because if I'm not going then my sexual partner should have no reason to go.

If I am going to take the test, I would have my sexual partner take the test. We should both play it safe.

If my sexual partner takes the test, I would go to.

If you ask your wife to go she might think that you are insinuating that she is not straight, so its best not to ask.

If you went for the test and it was positive, how would you feel and what would you do?

You would feel to lie down and die. I feel if I get sick I would be able to cure myself, because I know a lot of bush medicine. Normally I don't go to the doctor but sometimes I get sick and from going up in the country I know a lot of bush that I can use, so I go ahead and use it and I would get better. And you should not stop training.

The only thing that could cure you is the fellar on top. The Boss.
QUESTION: If you went for the test and it proved to be positive, would you tell your sexual partner?

ANSWER: Yes.

ANSWER: I might think that probably she also has it.

QUESTION: How do you describe your sexual activity at present?

ANSWER: One partner relationship.

ANSWER: Freely.

ANSWER: Moderate.

ANSWER: Highly active.

ANSWER: Moderate.

QUESTION: How would you describe the sexual activities of your friends, people that you really know?

ANSWER: Wild, some of the people that I know.

ANSWER: Fairly normal, I mean they seem to be going on the straight road, no extra curricular activities.

ANSWER: From my experience, is that having two or three partners, is no problem up to this time.

QUESTION: Is there anything one can do to avoid getting 'aids'?

ANSWER: Based on what we know of aids, I don't think we can be sure as to how to avoid aids?

ANSWER: Go and take a test and live in a glass cage, so that you will not have contact with anything. Up to now we are not sure as to how we are contacting aids so that question I cannot answer.
ANSWER: Based on what he said, I believe if you don't have aids and you take precautions, like having one partner, and going to a careful doctor and you are not a drug user, I don't see why you should get aids.

ANSWER: You are taking up from the point of view that you get aids through sexual relations, because if you don't have aids and your partner don't have it you are saying that you can't get it.

ANSWER: If you don't have aids and you have one partner and you are sure she don't have aids, how else would you get it. As I said if you are going to a doctor and he's taking the regular precautions like using a brand new needle, you can ask the doctor to use a brand new needle because you are paying the doctor. And you cannot catch aids by bathing in the pool, they asked you if you can catch aids by bathning in a pool they did not say you can get aids by bathing in a pool.

ANSWER: You can get it by kissing.

QUESTION: Have you heard of safer sex practices?

ANSWER: (all) Yes

ANSWER: By using a condom.

ANSWER: By staying with one partner.

QUESTION: Which sexual practices are considered unsafe?

ANSWER: Homosexuals.

ANSWER: Bi-sexuals.
QUESTION: Which sexual practices are considered safe?

ANSWER: One partner.

QUESTION: Would you say using a condom is considered safe?

ANSWER: If the condom does not burst.

QUESTION: Have you tried any of these safer sex practices before? If yes, which one?

ANSWER: I never tried any.

ANSWER: No.

ANSWER: Yes, condoms.

QUESTION: Who do you feel should practice safer sex? And when?

ANSWER: Everybody.

QUESTION: How often is it necessary to practice safer sex?

ANSWER: At all times.

QUESTION: What do you think are the advantages of safer sex?

ANSWER: It minimises aids.

QUESTION: What are the disadvantages of safer sex?

ANSWER: None, no difference.

QUESTION: How does your knowledge and awareness of aids affected your sexual behaviour?

ANSWER: You will not be wild.
QUESTION: Which of these behaviours do you still continue to use?

ANSWER: (all) One partner.

QUESTION: Do you think that this behaviour is permanent? Or is it just for now?

ANSWER: Under the present circumstances.

ANSWER: Maybe they might find a cure for aids.

ANSWER: So you mean to say if they get a cure for aids you will go ahead and get aids then.

ANSWER: I know people who might have a little runnings and just because you can go and get an injection. But because you know there is a cure and you know the person have it you will not want to let it pass.

ANSWER: If they find a cure for aids, the same thing would happen they are so adventurous, they would do anything.

ANSWER: I don't belive so. People would not take the risk about aids, like veneral disease. Because if you know someone has aids you would not go with the person.

ANSWER: I believe that.

ANSWER: In the case of syphillis you know it can be cured, but not aids not with the present situation. I don't think anybody would take a chance.

QUESTION: You are saying that a person would know someone has gonnorhea or something and that person would go and have sex with the person just for the record sake and you know that those people
ANSWER: They might use it if they have it on hand, but if you are walking down the road and this thing appear on you well then you would go.

QUESTION: What would you recommend for someone who wants to avoid aids? And why would you make this recommendation.

ANSWER: Well they say the safe system is the one partner system, so that is what you would advise him to do. They say that you cannot get aids with one partner.

QUESTION: What advise would you give to your children?

ANSWER: Stay away from drugs and the one partner system

QUESTION: What are the most common venereal disease that you have heard about?

ANSWER: Gonnorhea.

ANSWER: Syphillis.

ANSWER: Herpes.

QUESTION: What can happen to someone who has a venereal disease?

ANSWER: Blindness.

ANSWER: If not treated it could rotten out your inside.

ANSWER: Madness. A physical disorder.

ANSWER: The majority of us here know of a fellar who had venereal disease and he did not cure it and right now he is a cripple.

QUESTION: Do you think most people have venereal disease?

ANSWER: Yes
ANSWER: No, because of the cure and the education.

ANSWER: Most people are not sexually promiscuous in Trinidad and Tobago.

ANSWER: You know most of the people in Trinidad go in night clubs and make fares, but there a few who don't go.

ANSWER: I don't believe that.

ANSWER: I think the majority of people in Trinidad have more than one relationship. Both sexes.

ANSWER: I agree with that.

QUESTION: How does someone get veneral disease?

ANSWER: Sexual relationships.

QUESTION: How can veneral diseases be avoided.

ANSWER: Using condoms.

QUESTION: Have you ever tried avoiding veneral disease? How?

ANSWER: By using the condoms.

QUESTION: How would you describe in your own words what promiscuity means in Trinidad and Tobago?

ANSWER: Freedom of sex.

ANSWER: More than one relationship.
Most women think they are at risk with regards to aids, because they feel they at faithful but they are not sure of their partner. What do you think about this?

The male could feel the same way too.

I believe that that is hypocrisy.

It could work both ways.

A man could be straight and the woman could be crooked.

I believe that most women feel they are at risk because as someone said earlier in the discussion that they always tend to believe that men are the ones who knock about and thing. So the women would always feel they are at risk.

Where does all this double and triple relationship come from, unless it is a double and triple relationship with man because I am sure that Trinidad man although they have homosexuality within the society, we are talking about that they have more than one woman so that this look to me as how women feel, it is not men only. Trinidad is horn city. A lot of women are involved in double relationships whether married or single. So that I am not of the view because man does knock about he is the one having a double relationship.

You know a woman seeing about two other men besides the husband and let us say that that fellar happen pass, and then she goes with him then I would say is both sides doing it.

There is another situation that does not involve promiscuity but involves women who are faithful.
ANSWER: In Trinidad and Tobago you find that a woman who is normally a housewife so that she stays at home and the man who is outside working, always outside, in Trinidad you will find that women are more stay at home and the men would be on the outside. So that the woman would always feel that the man is always knocking about. Sometimes the man would come home and take his wife out but that don't mean to say that the woman cannot have two women too.

ANSWER: I think the statement is true. But most women will feel so. But I still feel there is some hypocrisy in it because in a similar way the men could also feel that way. Because of the way that society has been developed the women always appear to be protective at all times.

QUESTION: There's a belief that womanizing is all over the world, in some countries womanizing is greater than in other countries. What is your opinion about womanizing in this country?

ANSWER: I think in Trinidad it is compared on a one scale, Trinidad & Tobago would rank in the tombo in womanizing. Probably, the questions of high incidents of aids in Trinidad where that rank, they would be directly related.

ANSWER: The incidents of aids in Trinidad and Tobago is greater in homosexuals throughout the world. You can say because men like women and women like men they have a fear of aids. It is when men like men.
I believe womanizing in Trinidad and Tobago is just as normal in any part of the world. I don't think it is more in Trinidad than in Barbados or any other country, it is the same wherever you go. You travel people in Trinidad look for woman, and people all over the place look for woman, and I believe it is the same thing here in Trinidad, it would not be different to any other country.

Well, I said man is man and regardless where you go man like woman and that's about it womanizing is what man does.

Is it in Trinidad alone?

No, man in general in these times we really have to consider what is womanizing. If a man who have got a wife go and have another woman or girlfriend. We describe womanizing as a man having more than one woman.

If he look for a girl and gets a girl and they are going together, and somewhere else he looks for another girl, and he's not married to theis one and he goes somewhere else and looks for a girl again well that is womanizing and I believe that is what they are talking about, it not necessary it have to be married man.

What is the extent the other way around, that is women looking for men?

Manizing.

Is that a practice in Trinidad?

I don't think so.
I think it is coming to common, you have to look at the historical time and what's happening in the society, I think it has a lot to do with men going out and having their own way. I think with younger women, it's more worst, well that is the vibes I get. That kind of sexual trabose, I think it is becoming more worse than before.

The incidents of womanizing, what implications that has for the spread of aids?

Aids could be spread by men as well as women.

I would say it has a greater effect on the spread of aids because is the more womanizing and manizing it has the greater risk of the population of getting aids.

What do you think of homosexuality in Trinidad and Tobago is it increasing?

Yes.

What do you think about bisexuality in Trinidad and Tobago, is it increasing?

Have you known any bisexuals males?

No.

Yes, I am wondering if it is now in the open, I am not sure, probably there is much more open kind of relationships here, I am not sure if there is more than before.

In the present aids atmosphere, are you ever heard or aware of one partner asking the other one to use a condom and the other one refusing or yourself having that experience? Have you ever use a condom or let your partner use one?

I read today on the papers that they are developing condoms to women.
QUESTION: Are they sold as yet?

ANSWER: No, they haven't sold as yet, but they are developing it, and they say it would be stronger than what men use.

QUESTION: Have you ever in your life time try using condoms, if no say why?

ANSWER: No, I never tried using it because you are with one partner and there's no use in using a condom.

ANSWER: No, because I was never in fear of contracting diseases.

QUESTION: Where did you get the condom form?

ANSWER: Drugstore.

ANSWER: Family Planning.

QUESTION: Do you think thater's a difference of the condoms you get free and one you buy?

ANSWER: When you buy there's a choice of texture or whenever you get from Family Planning is one type of thing.

QUESTION: Do you still use the condoms?

ANSWER: Yes.

QUESTION: Do you think the condoms is a safe protection against aids?

ANSWER: If you are taking the advice from a Medical Centre, we have to take it as sage, but I don't think the guarantee of the condom could be safe.
QUESTION: Have you ever tried using condoms on your partner and she did not want to use it?

ANSWER: Yes.

QUESTION: How did you handle that situation?

ANSWER: My partner wanted me to use it and I did not want to use it. Under the situation, I insist, it is used instead of birth control.

QUESTION: Would you recommend condom use to anyone and why?

ANSWER: Yes, because it suppose to be safe.

ANSWER: I offer you certain amount protection.

QUESTION: Do you worry about aids? Could you elaborate?

ANSWER: No.

ANSWER: Yes, because there's no cure for it it's something I believe all of us could get it at any time.

QUESTION: What is your biggest concern about aids?

ANSWER: How do I really contract aids that is my biggest problem.

ANSWER: You worry about it because you could never know when you could catch it. Then you base on this tax coming out over the last period and sometimes they tell you Americia this and they show you a lot of and you worry if man does not exceed themselves over the next 20 to 30 years just because of the virus if you don't find a cure for it so that is where you have a problem.
ANSWER: My greatest concern, is to find out what it is really causes aids?

ANSWER: You know that is said you get aids through research there are all kinds of aids and there are various ways of getting it out you can't be too sure. There are environmental factors to help you get aids for instance in the United States they say that certain groups of people are more liable to get aids more than the other group and they talk about black people.

QUESTION: Which group or people do you think are most at risk?

ANSWER: But according to the experts they say homosexuals, also people using drugs but I have seen other seems when you are making a social analysis some people say poop people, the spanish, blacks in the United States and whites are more at risk of getting aids. People are in fact of getting any kind of diseases, so it leads me to considers probably there are other factors to facilitate people in developing aids, but what are the factors, I don't know. But they say, some people, I read some stuff that says about environmental stuff like that but they just speculating.

ANSWER: What bothers me is there are people who say they are not highly contagious but it is very difficult, at the same time they try to warn you about your behaviour and also to be aware of aids and if you are so sure it is not to be highly contagious, so there fore it would not be hard to avoid.
ANSWER: I have also heard that they say there are certain conditions that need to be present for you to get aids, it is not a question of having sexual intercourse with someone who has the aids virus, and yet it terms the proproganda about aids virus, in other words it good to keep yourself straight and it seems there are other factors in terms of why this proproganda or other conditions.

QUESTION: What do you want to know more about this disease, aids etc?

ANSWER: Everything.

ANSWER: There must be something, sex is sex but what it is causes the aids virus, how it is created.

ANSWER: If you talk about homosexuals even self that is so, is it some kind of chemical.

ANSWER: Before when someone died form rheumatism, or arthritis you see this thing going around long time and you don't know it is aids.

QUESTION: What I would like to know, what are the preventitve measures?

What are the things you think you can do about the aids situation?

ANSWER: Spread the word of the one partenrship, use condoms.

ANSWER: I feel before I can do anything about aids, I have to learn more about it, I think at this stage I can tell anybody about aids. All I know is what I see on T.V. and read on the newspapers, so I believe I have to be educated more on aids virus before I can pass on the information to anybody.
What have you agreed that you need more information about, could you please tell us so that we can transmit it to the authorities that deal. What is the best way of getting this information across to you?

News media.

Feel it is more importantly through school system. Newspapers, television, magazines.

Having it also made to be printed stuff that you can send it out, I don't think I really ever came across my little booklet. These are the things that should be prepared. This should be snared by the hundreds, so the Christian do it, stand up by the corner and give you leaflets as you pass. You know you need to give these little things.

Through television, sometimes you sit in front of the television, it flashes something you see and that's it. Another point made is try to educate you about aids, I think we need to emphasise the effects and the results little bit more. If you make an effort to keep people away from aids, if you can show them what can happen if you get it. It might look bad, if you can show them what the aids victim goes through.

How did you think you can contribute to the educational campaign?

Educating yourself we need to have education and we can further it, so we can help people.

Think the television can do a massive job, instead of telling it to people you would be able to see it.

Sometimes you see children running up and down and you think they are not paying any attention, but you check them out and you would see what is happening.
FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS ON AIDS

TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

Session IV
23 August 1988

PRIVATE MEDICAL PRACTITIONERS

SYLVIE COHEN
Consultant
EUROPEAN ECONOMIC COMMISSION

Group moderator
COURNEY BOXILL
Q. What other serious diseases are there facing Trinidad and Tobago beside AIDS?

A/F Hypotension, diabetics, coronal disease.

Q. In addition to hypotension etc and what?

A/F We are talking about diseases, you are not talking about other problems of... that do not need care?

A/M No diseases.

A/F Because one of the major problems is geriatric the aging population. It is going to need care.

Q. Please any other opinion?

A/M The only other infectious disease I could think of is hepatitis and there is an increase now in T.V. that is needed but I don't think that has reached....

Q. Do you think that you know enough about AIDS?

A/M The problem with that question is how much is there to know and if you know how much there is to know you know enough. I think whatever information has been disseminated, I know, If there is recently development well, of course, I wouldn't know about what has not been published.

Q. What is your response to that question?

A/M I think I know as much as any general practioner must know.

A/F I think it is a learning process there is so much that has been discovered in Africa, in America. I think it is an ongoing process it is educational. I try to read and look at everything that is available in Trinidad. To me, it is one of continuing education I would say.

Q. What are your sources of information? Can you identify some of them?

A/F Television, newspapers, seminars run by different medical agencies in the country.
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Q. Could you all add to that?

A/M I would add journals to that, professional journals.

Q. Among the sources that you just quoted which ones specifically could define the Immune Syndrome? It is very general can you quote one specific source?

A/M I would say seminars. Medical seminars, medical technology that I can use can be very educational that have mounted locally and abroad. The ones are televised from abroad on close circuit television.

Q. Then you could name how long ago?

A/M Well, the last close circuit T.V. was the last one WHO the two day which were only open to a few practioners and the last seminar was in July of this year.

A/M That was the Medical Association, one of the most valuable ones is only our situation here.

Q. How long ago was this conducted?

A/M In July of this year 3rd July. There is another one this Sunday.

Q. Of all of these sources that you mentioned which one gave the most information?

A/M Seminars.

A/F I would agree but if you are talking about the general public and which I have considered myself one also, the television. There has been some excellent programmes on television and if you are appealing to the general public to get educated you need something visual.

Q. But as a medical practioner?

A/F You need something visual as well. You need to hear what is happening but you also need vision to see, to understand what it is about. Because even at seminars there are illustrating with diagrams. The visual impact is important.

Q. Which source of information has been the most important for you? Gave you the most information?

A/M The general background of information of the disease is the journals. This big seminar in July I think was the most liable one.
Q. This question may seem similar to the one I just asked in that we still want to know of these sources which have been the most influential in your knowledge about AIDS?

A/F I would say the seminars because there we are getting the latest facts and figures about our local situation.

Q. If you wanted more information about AIDS where would you get it?

A/M I know where I should get it and that is the journals but that is not freely available anymore because of the foreign exchange problems. Journal subscriptions have to fail. The medical library in Port of Spain General Hospital is the only place you can reach the journals now so I cannot say that journals will be where I will get my information in the future, unless I would want. Because you are no longer allowed the limit of three hundred institution fees and that no longer relates to General Hospital.

Q. Could I hear another opinion please?

A/M If I wanted information on AIDS I would go to the journals.

Q. Of these sources of information which one would you most likely use to get information?

A/M I think the seminars are the best because you could inter-relate with the person speaking. They are asking the question and he will either put you straight if you are ignorant of the answer or you will modify so that you can understand it more clearly.

Q. If you had a chance to discuss AIDS with anyone. Could you identify who these people are please?

A/F It depends what you mean. Are you talking about patients, scientists, doctors, researchers in the AIDS programme. I think we all talk to a variety of people.

Q. And you are identified with people to whom you speak, those that you just mentioned cause all of those, anybody at all to whom you have spoken.

A/F About AIDS?

Q. That is the answer that we want.

A/F Oh yes. I have talked to patients, many patients...
In fact there is not a day passing in a general practitioner's life that you are not talking to somebody about AIDS. Prevention, celibacy, life-style, you name it. It is a whole educational process one is now conducting with one's patients. And in addition to that you are talking to the people who are doing the test for AIDS also. What we should be looking for, the people who are doing the research, the people doing the test for AIDS. It is an ongoing discussion, everybody's practice I would think medically, dentist and doctors.

A/M Even the dental field we have a large number of people who come in and the first thing they discuss with you is the AIDS virus and what is most striking is people's ignorance the spread, most of them. So it is a long conversation as to why you are wearing gloves and face masks, how does it spread and variably it is a long drawn out... and most people have misconceptions about the spread of AIDS.

Q. Could you be specific in telling us now what the content of this discussion has been?

A/M It is mostly to answer questions. It is only questions of patients.

Q. What are some of these questions?

A/M The most recent, an amusing one is a patient who came for a papsmear and wanted to know if my speculum was sterilised or disposable. He wanted a disposable.

Q. And that is a relatively frequent request?

A/M No No.

A/M Some of the patients are concerned about actually getting infected by the virus while they are in your care. There would also be situations where they will bring up the AIDS conversation in an effort to sort and see whether or not you are aware of what they have heard on television. They would say - you know you can get something if you ods that by AIDS and if you look a bit surprised they will then go on to tell you - well you know I saw it on television. All they would say you know they would give you a reference to the researcher. There are basically people who can tell you that if you a so and so act is done you could get AIDS, this is in reference to your practice and what is going on in your life. They are not concerned they presume they are aware and how AIDS is caught outside by practice. They are mostly concerned of what happens in the confines of your office or they will look to see in fact. They
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will scrutinize your place to make sure that you are wearing gloved hands and that sort of thing. So they are conscious of AIDS from that point of view and they are very conscious of it.

Q. You have identified several different kinds of people with whom you talked to. You are content with some of these discussions?

A/F Well, lets talk about who, either friends or patients who want to talk about AIDS. There has been such a terrible scare, and the spread is so rapid that they are worried of course, everybody is. And they think it is something like a plague and they don't understand where it came from and so on so I try to explain to them that we have many viruses, hepatitis, viral infenzas and so on but it is no different. It is a kind of germ very small but this particular virus does things that other viruses do not do and I drew a little diagram to show them what the virus does and how it damages the immune system and then I explained what your immune system is. So they get the psychological understanding as simple as possible. That is what I try to do with people.

A/M Medical practitioners in particular are extremely skeptical about having treatment. They will actually say to me that they are not happy about having treatment at all so it would appear that there are certain levels of not so much ignorance but scare from anybody. They will have this basic ... I would put it almost down to unilogical fear, certainly not a lack of education. It is just unilogical fear.

Q. How serious do you think the problem is here in Trinidad and Tobago?

A/F Very.

Q. Do you think you can elaborate?

A/F Because of our attitude to sex. People are very, very promiscous in Trinidad.

A/M I have just come back from New York and I do not think if we try and in your case very, very, very,. Now in Trinidad we have Carnival and we have that time of year when promiscuity is right and I think was fair as far as I am concerned. Because at that time of year... would benot necessarily related to any one group. Certainly in Trinidad it is something to worry about. Because unlike other societies we have a time of the year where sex is accepted as being free time.

A/F I would go further than that. I would say there is no time of year when sex isn't free. We have a promiscous
society and in the lower income groups marriage is not the norm and having many partners is the norm. And I am not talking about the gay population I am talking about the general population. I think that is our big problem here.

A/M I do not think that message has got across that there is heterosexual spread. I do not think that message has got across and this question of partners or monogamy chastity. People feel that you only have two partners or three partners that they still pretty promiscous or you are safe. But they don't know the multiply effect that those three partners have another three partners and this idea escapes most people.

A/F Absolutely correct.

A/M In certain economic stratus three partners are considered an acceptable recommendation of 'Macho man'.

Q. It is we missed that point you just made. Are you of the opinion that whoever is responsible for educating the public should emphasis that point that you just made. What is your opinion of that and could you tell us in that context of education what should be done to identify.

A/M I think people should be alerted to the risk of contracting the disease if they are not absolutely scrupulous about their sexual partners. There is no perhaps or maybe or careful sex absolute scrupulousness, faithfulness whatever would adjust our social coltations. And what one must do to add to it but it boils down to if you are single you may chase if you are married you remain faithful.

A/F To add to that I would say you need television. I keep emphasizing television everybody keeps looking at the box with diagrams which demonstrate the multiplier effect.

Q. How serious is the problem in the community in which you live? From your knowledge.

A/M From my personal experience from my patients mostly lower class is that the woman may be faithful. 90% of the men are not faithful. Women come to me expressing the fear that their husband may contract the disease.

Q. Are you saying that, that percentage of infidelity is the same today as it was before the scare of AIDS?

A/M Yes. I do not think it has changed.
A/F The message has not got across.

Q. How many cases of known AIDS victims are there in Trinidad and Tobago.

A/F I cannot tell you that though the figures were presented at the last seminar, but the figures are rising all the time but I personally have had four patients who have died of AIDS, all male.

Q. How many known AIDS patients are there in Trinidad? Give me your estimate and what would be proceeded to be.

A/M I think I have actually that estimate but I can't tell you where I got it from. It would be something like 280.

Q. What is your opinion?

A/M I think the figures quoted at that seminar were 325.

Q. Where does Trinidad and Tobago rank in the world with regard to AIDS? Per capital.

A/M In the top fifteen.

A/M Courtenay Bartholomew, he reckoned it came quite close to the top five.

A/F I would agree with... the last figure given.

Q. For every known AIDS victim approximately how many known AIDS carriers are there?

A/F I would say at least 5 times that figure.

A/M I would thing about 5 times would be that figure 15.

Q. Which groups of people are most likely to get AIDS? And why are you saying this group is the most likely?

A/M Well this seminar we went to presented some interesting figures in that whereas when the disease first came to Trinidad I think the ration was 18:1 or 18:0. There were no females getting the disease but we rapidly reached the point. I think we are 3.2:1 and the emphasis there was that our figures are moving from the Western European American figures where it is predominantly homosexual disease. The African picture where it is a heterosexual disease.

A/M Yes. I would say so. It is still in the high risk group with those high figures in the homosexual community so 3.2:1. The heterosexual are catching...
8.

Q. Besides the male, female differentiation that you just made, any other group?

A/M The only other group that was significant abroad was the I.V. drug users. But in Trinidad they don't seem to shoot coke they smoke and they sniff. So the I.V. drug users are not normally seen in Trinidad.

Q. Which groups of people which is least likely to get AIDS and why?

A/F The people who are totally celibate and I mean totally. I imagine among the religious groups if they are totally celibate.

Q. Any other group?

A/M Young children.

A/F But now of course it is being passed on to children by their mothers.

A/M In the 15% of children according to the last statistical ... even if the mother is HIV positive 50% of children may well come up negative.

Q. Although the mother is positive?

That is what they reckon.

Q. What are the chances of some of you now getting AIDS? And not knowing in one of your patients since?

A/M Quite high

A/F I think from what we discussed, sexual relationships one does not know what sexual relationships any person has.

A/M I say high because of the Carnival Syndrome.

A/F Which now seems to be an annual syndrome.

Q. Do you think that you are at risk and why?

A/F Yes. You can be dealing with the AIDS patients and be totally unaware that the disease can present with so many symptoms that resemble other diseases and you can be at risk. I had an AIDS patient who was undiagnosed after being seen by myself and other doctors and ended up on a kidney machine and our big worry was how many of the young doctors looking after the patient could have got nicked, cut, stuck with needles while attending to this patient who died of AIDS. It was finally diagnosed when he was dying. It imitates so many diseases.
10.

A/M I consider myself at high risk because not only because I am a dentist. My practice is a hospital practice. I treat patients who have AIDS and even at private practice one gets... who identify these. Of course there are a lot of patients who have AIDS but you will never know and in dentistry of course all the instruments are sharp and there is a lot of blood around. And inevitably you are going to stick your finger whether you like it not.

A/M So it is high risk although the literature suggests very few dentists in fact there is only one case of a dentist in New York but they are not too sure of his sexual habits.

A/M Because of coming into contact with patients and body fluids.

Q. What do you think causes AIDS?

A/M Sexual Behaviour

A/M You mean actual causes of AIDS, how the spread is transmitted.

A/M Well it is basically while body fluids from one person gets into contact with the next. Either blood, seminal fluid or other discharges.

A/F I agree with what he says we are uncertain about oral fluids. .... whether it causes it or not. Recent research has said no.

A/M So pissing is all right but it is true AIDS is transferred by body fluids.

Q. There are anything else besides body fluids?

A/M Trnasfusions and I.V. drug abuse.

A/F Which I would say comes under body fluids.

A/M Anything that sticks into an AIDS patient that eventually makes your body fluid into contact with the transfer of AIDS.

Q. There has been some evidence of people being unwilling to donate blood, because they are fearful that AIDS can spread this. Is this true?

A/M Yes.
11.

Q. Is it true that it can be spread that way?
A/M No. Inhabilitation.

Q. Is there a difference between carrier of the virus and someone who has the disease?
A/M Yes.

Q. Could you describe this difference for me?
A/M Well a carrier is a person who has antibodies in the blood stream and the person who has AIDS has the symptoms of the infection.

Q. Is the carrier likely to get the disease and how soon?
A/M It is likely to be five years generally accepted.

Q. Although the figures go on descending?
A/F Yes.

Q. Are chances of getting the virus related to sex, class, age or race.
A/F Yes. In this country let us start off with race. There are not many cases amongst the indian population. There is a definite difference. That is race.

Q. There are not many cases of indians with the disease or virus or both?
A/F Both

A/F Class. I would say yes we know that the lower income tends to be more promiscous.

Q. When we say age we mean they are already indulging in sex. We are not talking about 10 year old and 3 year olds.
A/F Any age from teenage onwards. The more active are between those ages.

A/M I think the ratio is showing some narrowing presently because of the speculated the difference of ages nothing to do with the genetic material or the fact of different attitudes towards sex.

Q. What about the chances of getting the disease? Are they related to anyone of these factors - sex, race and past

A No
Q. Can someone get AIDS from someone who has the virus but not the disease?

A/M Yes. The sharing the body fluids either sexually or with intravenous drug abuse.

Q. Can someone tell by looking at the person whether he or she is infected or is a carrier?

A. No.

Q. Can a person who looks healthy but has AIDS pass it to another person? How?

A/F Yes. By sharing of body fluids.

Q. Do you think that having venereal disease will increase someone’s chances from getting AIDS? Or do you think it does not matter if you have a venereal disease?

A/M Yes. It increased chances.

Q. Why are you saying this?

A/M Because you presume the person has a promiscuous lifestyle, there is some theory about co-infection and you are permitted raw mucozal services.

Q. What do you know about the importance of venereal disease in Trinidad nowadays? Has it increased or decreased?

A/F Yes. It has increased.

Q. Which disease has........

A/F Gonorehea, Syphilis

Q. What are the implications for Trinidad and the fact that the disease can be spread in the ways you identify?

A/F Serious because economically preparing of patients with AIDS is quite a problem.

Q. Any other implications please?

A/M Yes. Economically looking after them and economically the loss of jobs, loss of manpower and loss of productivity I think if you look at a country like Trinidad with a small... treatment strait. The alarming thing about AIDS is that you cannot necessarily predict what your.. requirements will be to provide drugs in the future. And drugs are very expensive so economically and socially as well. If we ignore family life the whole stigma of the disease and family groupings, villages its far reaching.
Q. Are you saying this in the context of the rate of the spread of the disease annually?

A/M The context of the disease getting to a point where it starts professing itself more frequently in the village community.

Q. Any other implications?

A. None

Q. If you come into contact accidentally with the patient's blood or body fluids what is the first step to take?

A/M Wash your hands with bleach

Q. How do you feel about working with someone who has the virus but looks healthy?

A/M No problem with that.

Q. You are not scared of such a person?

A/M No I am not scared of that person.

Q. Why?

A/M Becdause by all evidence I have been produced social intermingling with a person like that will not expose you to the virus.

Q. How would you feel caring for a homosexual AIDS patient?

A/M Well I've treat them like any other patient, this is my job, that is what I was trained to do.

A/F I've had AIDS patients, I've done what is necessary and send them on to caring.

A/F Caring where in hospital, at home or in office.

Q. Hospital or office as a medical practioner.

A/F I look after the patients, if the patient reaches hospitalisation and treatment you would send them to where they could have it.

A/F I have had to care for them already and as far as I am concerned they are patients O.K. I can't really distinguish between homosexual and AIDS or whatever, if somebody is ill or somebody has a problem I just have to deal with the problem regardless of my personal feelings about their life-styles or whatever else is wrong with them. I just have to give as appropriate
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that I personally can manage and if I cannot do it I have to find a fast treatment for the person otherwise.

Q. Would you rather care for someone who got the disease from transfusion or that person is a heterosexual patient with the disease?

A/M No. I think actually I do not think I would rather treat the patient. I do not think I have a choice. I do not think that I have been given the choice. I have been trained to treat the patient to whatever illness. I treat them as they come I don't adopt agitively.

A/F The fact it is only now becoming heterosexual we have had to deal it on a homosexual level all along.

A/M Although I do understand the nature of the question there are some of my colleagues who won't treat them and in any hospital practice. I get letters referred to query gay, professional people writing that, sad to say but there are some professional people who just won't treat anybody. A person who has AIDS but I see a lot of these patients in hospital who were referred to this query quite foolishly.

Q. Do you all have similar experiences as your colleague here. Other colleagues doing what he just identified not yourself?

A/F I think what happens is this - that for instance I presently have a problem with homosexuality for my personal is as I have a problem with alcoholics I have a problem with drug addicts. I have a problem who I find are not balanced according to my definition of what balance means, so therefore I do not really put homosexuals in any category I just put them along with people with what I mentioned. But it does not alter how I have to deal with them because I can put my personal feelings in a special pocket and deal with everything else because these are human beings and in fact who am I to be a judge of anybody and I think most of my colleagues that I talked to feel the same way that I do. I have not come across any doctor who has given the impression that because of their personal beliefs it would alter their way of handling an AIDS patient. I haven't met anyone like that.

A/F Recently I had a patient come to me, a young man who was concerned about the possibility of having autoimmune disease and turned out that some weeks before he had been to a doctor who was suppose to have done a test on him and everytime he went back to the doctor the doctor said he had not gotten the results on him yet.
Well I checked with the laboratory to which the sample was supposed to have gone and it turned out the sample had never gone to the laboratory at all. So for those weeks this young man was perhaps in agony. I then took the blood sent them to the same laboratory, turned out the test were perfectly normal. So somewhere along the line the doctor was afraid to deal with the patient, so there are people who are not dealing with and not being honest with some people.

A/M My experience as a hospital consultant. Patients refer to me from outside so the letters I get could not necessarily what would would be seen in general practice. Patients are referred to me by letters from their dental or medical practioners. The letters I refer to, I would say 80% are compound dental practioners. So what I am referring to is basically a person feeling that if a man comes and he looks homosexual I don't know how one looks homosexual but to them the behaviour pattern suggests that he might. Immediately they put sentence him to the hospital because they are afraid to touch him.

A/M I do not have a problem with that.

Q. What is your opinion of allowing children with AIDS virus that are healthy, going to school?

A/M I do not have a problem with that.

Q. Can I hear from the others please?

A/F They should be permitted to go to school but of course it has community opinion and that may be a problem.

Q. Would you let your child go to school with someone who has the virus?

A/F Right now I am sure. My child is going to school with someone who has the virus because I am sure it is in the community, so much so I am sure that most of our children most of our friends children will find at least one in school where there is a child with the virus.
Q. If there is a known case of AIDS

A/F I have no problem with it at all, I have patients in my practice who have the virus or children with the virus who are going to school, same school with some of the children as my friends we know about and the point is everybody is scared, I mean in spite of all the literature that is spoken of and all the things that you read everybody is scared, everytime those patients come for checking I am scared myself. But we can halp that personal fear but I mean I don't see any problem with the children really going as long as we keep on educating the public as to what precautions we should take either if you have the AIDS virus or if you are in contact with somebody who has the AIDS virus.

Q. What is your opinion though of the education that is going on in Trinidad & Tobago concerning AIDS?

A/F I think they are very slow in getting to the schools on an official level and the sort of feedback you are getting from the children in the school is that nothing is being done in schools and that they are also getting double messages. This morning for instance on my way to work I was stopped by teenagers, my daughter's friends, people like that talk about and they are saying that they are getting double messages. They will get a message that it is ... but have safe sex, whatever safe sex may or may not be and you would be alright and they can't quite understand then that is so - why is the disease still being spread because if you are indulging in safe sex and you are still catching the disease what are people really telling them and I think the children are confused.

A/F The message has to be there is no safe sex

A/F The ministry is afraid to take that stand.

Q. What about the education of the wider community? Village?

A/F The wider community claim that they are not getting enought information.

Q. What do you think will happen if someone who gets AIDS?

A/M Socially or medically. Medically he die, socially you are likely to be ostracized.
Q. What do you think would happen to someone who gets AIDS?

A/F The patient will die. You want to know before that?

Q. What about the symptoms of the disease?

A/F The problem with AIDS that we mentioned earlier on is that it can imitate any disease and how...miss diagnose AIDS. You may suspect it. Seminars have taught us that it can look like many things so be on the alert. We can look for it, but it can go undiagnosed.

Q. What do you think about education the public on how to recognize the symptoms for AIDS, should the public be told what the symptoms are?

A/F We can't. It is difficult. What happens they become panicky and they keep coming in for everything so it has its pluses and its minuses. I don't know. I never made any decisions about it. I am not sure.

A/M I think Dr... has said it is such a diverse disease and its manifestations are so diverse it does not make sense because it just increases paranoia about. You know.

A/F I think what we have to push is the prevention, prevention a certain type of life-style rather than getting people into a panic.

A/F I would tend to agree with that. I think the public is quite aware when you talk to people at least in the P.O.S. area, when you talk to them and I have talked to one or two like in the Pleasantville, but not to much in the country. You get the impression that they know what the symptoms are because most of them begin to worry when they start having fever or loss of weight, just non-specific symptoms without even the... even the aware in points symptoms in terms of the disease. So I think a lot of them are aware of what the symptoms are, but whether giving them more information about that is likely to help. I am not sure I think I would agree with... that what we should really try to deal with more prevention so that I mean because once you have the disease its...

A/F Of the four cases of AIDS I have had who have died, each one presented with a totally different picture. There was not similarity amongst the four.
A/M I have a fear that if you make it, the nurses at the health centre are going to segregate as if ... 
A/F No, no, the nurses at the health centre should not be taking the blood tests.
A/M If you talk about health centres use, I agree it should be done at that level.
A/F Well, a lot of the patients are frightened too. They are saying that when it is done at that kind of mass level, there is a scare that the needles are being used over and over again, especially now that there is this problem of money most of the patients ask - Are you going to use the new needle on me? 
A/M Well, up to eight years ago, they used to use sterilised needles.
Q. You suggested community health centres, your office, hospital or send patients to take the test. If those are not ideal places, describe for us what an ideal would be like for taking the test.
A/F A centre to which any and everybody can go, supported somehow internationally by the ... somewhere so the funds will be available syringes and needles. If you have the international label people would be more encouraged not to be so fearful that our economy is making people use needles. It must be a place where you can walk in any and everybody go so nobody feels stigmatised. Just like they did at Caribbean Medical Centre everybody can go in there and get a VDRL done.
A/M The last circular I got which was about a year ago suggested that we can't send blood samples even from a hospital consultant position until the patient is examined by a medical practitioner to see if they have the symptoms, of course, that is foolish. I am sure they must have changed that. But even at that level it is obvious the hospital consultant that there is no money. To think you have to have some belief the ... I think I have the virus even for self serving to protect yourself you want to know.
Q. Would you take the test?
A/F Why not!
A/M I took the Hepatitis test and the vaccine
A/F If you want to encourage people you must understand that nobody in the population thinks that they are so perfect that they won't submit themselves to the test, I think is how you encourage people generally.
A/F Because in choosing the fact that not ... that you are facing any valid judgement or anything but when you realise the enormity of the consequences of this disease and when you realise that you have been examining patients without all the protection that they claim you must examine with, when you discover subsequently on many of these patients now become positive and you are wondering to yourself that you have put yourself at risk - so do you really want to know and you realise how vulnerable each one of us is. I am too, whether I want to take the test at all.
Q. Have you ever asked any of your patients to take the test?
A/F Yes.
Q. Why?
A/F Because you think the patient is at risk and if the patient turns around and says like some of them - Doctor, would you take the test? I would say yes because I think that is the way to encourage ...
A/M I am fearful actually because sometimes the test are not accurate. That is the trouble with the whole test that is something you have to tell the patients not just our attention is drawn previously.
A/M The test has certain consequences. If it is a false positive, I would prefer if the symptoms have to be really quite obvious before I would push it in that direction.
A/F What would you do with the patient in whom you have had false positive? You do not tell the patient this, you may, and you never tell a patient he or she had AIDS unless you get a second opinion.
A/M  Certainly in dentistry when one looks at a patient and somebody comes in with infection one is guided by the simple rule that if the three areas of symptoms that you look at are unrelated in terms of any one carrying the three symptoms then you suspect AIDS. So in dentistry there is a simple guideline that if you look in somebody's mouth and there is Candida tumour and they have a cold and they lost weight we presume that it is likely the person has AIDS. So that is a good yard stick but it does not really run true and the last case I saw which I could probably justify - I think only two of them did actually have AIDS. So it is not a thing you can say that after you have the symptom you have AIDS.

A/F  None of the ones I have seen had Candida. They all presented a different disease.

A/F  When you are talking about AIDS or you are talking about HIV infection, which one are you really talking about?

A/M  I am talking about both the virus and the disease.

A/F  Because my concern is not really AIDS. Firstly, I am a general practitioner and my concern is not really with the person who has AIDS because I think at that stage in the game there is not very much I can do in Trinidad. What I have found in practice is that stage of the game is that he is given or she is given up for dead already. It is not even like you read about it in the States where they treat the person really treat the person for the infection. There you get the impression that they have AIDS, they get the infection, at that first infection, they are going to die from. That is the impression. In truth and in fact when you look at our resources here we don't have resources at this stage to do any heroic effects for an AIDS patient. So my problem really is not with the AIDS is with the HIV infected person and I don't want them to get to that stage at all and my problem is with the people who are negative now who most likely are going to turn up with some other test positive because I have been reading that people can be rhesus negative and still be carrying the virus. Is that true or not? I am not sure. I think so. And I think ... mind, I am getting criteria
which lead me to believe that these young people in another year will be definitely HIV positive. Those are my problem patients. I don't have much problems with the fine-body ones at all because that is ...

Q. Can AIDS affect the brain?
A/F Yes
Q. In what way?
A/F Brain damage, mental disturbance, dementia.
Q. What can cure AIDS?
A/F Nothing so far.
Q. How soon do you think there will be a cure?
A/F Well, who knows.
A/M There has never been a virus cure yet. There have never been a vaccine or anything like it to treat any viral infections.
A/F Yes, there has.
A/M Like what?
A/F A vaccine, yes. For example, Polio.
A/M No, no, I mean a retro-virus or even a ... virus
Q. These types are not have never been very successfully treated vaccines.

Q. How long?
A/M I think very long.
A/F I think that's what they look for though..
A/M They are looking for a virus that would help in prevention.

Q. How soon do you think that may come about?
A/F I think it is going to happen
A/F I think perhaps that AIDS can't be cured but it is possible there may be some patients who can recover from the AIDS and with certain treatments that it may be possible that there might be less than 1% type of patients who may get AIDS and may be able like say systemic lupas have an omission. I think that.
A/F I think they are going to find a prevention. Something to prevent AIDS I am a very optimistic person.
A/M I think there may be drugs in fact to maybe block the virus to get the receptive of the T cells to be dropped. I don't know if there is a vaccine to knock off the radiants.

Q. You have indicated you have a test of AIDS? What can this test tell?
A/M I think that it tells whether or not there are antibodies present in the blood stream.

Q. What does it mean to be sero-positive to HIV?
A/M Is that you have the virus which is in the serum of the blood.
A/M With the receptors of entrance.

Q. What the test cannot tell?
A/M It cannot tell you if you are going to suffer from the disease. It tells you that you have been exposed to the virus but we can't tell you when you are going to suffer from the symptoms of the disease.

Q. Have you heard of the window phase? That is the period where the tests won't tell you anything. Why is it so?
A/M The test is sensitive to the antibody after exposure. There is the period of time where the body is manufacturing that
antibody. Until that becomes or reaches levels that can be detected. The patient is in what is called the window phase.

Q. And how long does this window phase last?
A/M Up to six months.

Q. Do you know where one can go to get the test done?
A/M There are many labs now who do the test that you can send blood to. There is the...... blood agency in Carec who will do the test.

A/F The government CMC labs and the one in San Fernando. San Fernando big enough. I think they take the blood and send it up here.

Q. Are there any patients who resent taking the test?
A/F Yes. Most people do not want anybody to know that they are having the test done.

A/M On a personal basis I remember when I joined the Civil Service you were supposed to have a VDR1 test and you were had to walk in. I was a bit put off being seen walking into the hospital at where it is exclusively for people with venereal diseases, so I imagine to your question would be emphatically yes. People would resent going to a place where you get AIDS test done because of the social stigma of somebody seeing you.

Q. What do you think could be done to avoid this hesitance of going?
A/M I think the tests should be made available at the General practitioners office where blood can be taken at that level rather than send the patient up to a centre near the open yard.

A/F There, that causes problems. Most times you don't... of time, you may be just want the test, you do not have time to really carry it yourself to the lab, you might not have the facilities to keep the blood properly. And then there is always the problem you never have people on a permanent basis to pick up blood samples on a regular basis.

Q. And what do you suggest could be done?
A/F The health offices - they could use health offices or type of facility and if the general practitioners can go on a regular basis for instance. Bloods are being taken up not necessarily for HIV could be for blood sugar, screening for blood types, could be all types of things, could be done at that time.
A/F I think you need to make it easily available to people who just like they did for syphilis testing during one of the Caribbean Medical Centres. For anybody can walk in. They could sample the whole population.

A/F I have seen many patients for the test for various reasons. Some come to ask you, some come to you realising that that is what they are afraid of although they have not said it and you have to sort and think for them and the further thing is that the medical ruling says that you must not send them for the test unless you have their permission first. You can then send them for the test as an investigatory sort of a thing. Because you think it is right. You have to explain to them first and what has happened to me is I have one patient who is the contact of a patient who has died of AIDS. This is a young girl, her fiance it was, she refuses even with all the consequences to go for the test. I have sent her for the test, I talked about it, she has refused to go for the test, she is disappointed and sh formed an alliance with another young person. Now I have no proof that this girl is HIV positive, you see and these are the kind of problems I have in my practice. I have patients who are rhesus negative, certain things that we need to believe I tell you that I think we are sort of in the high risk too.

A/M This is why I do it without their permission

A/F We are not suppose to medically or sr legally.

A/M I don't care

A/M I know

A/F Who says medically or legally. I draw the line at that I think it is alot of nonsense from the lawyer at the seminar. I really do.

A/F If we feel its nonsense we have to make out our case known. Because Medical Association and a Medical board is at the moment putting their case for the law of Trinidad and Tobago and unless we say different they are going to accept what the British Medical Association says.

A/M They say that we can't take the test unless the patient is advised but that does not mean they have to follow that. Because in England they have more structural medical services and therefore before....

A/F I think should be notifiably disease like other infectious diseases it is not a notifiably disease and I think we should insist it becomes a notifiably disease so that in this particular case all contacts can... of the patient.
Q. Let's turn on to the issue of confidentiality. If one of your patients, the test came back as positive would you tell this patient's partner?

A/F Not without the patient's permission.

Q. Would you give this information to his employer?

A/F Definitely not.

Q. Insurance Company?

A. No

Q. What about their relatives

A No

A/F Nothing unless the patient gives permission.

A/F In that case I am going to the specialist and I think it's got to become a notifiable disease and I think in some ways the relatives have got to be called upon but I .... this is a public health problem that has got to be dealt with cause of the spread of the rapidity of the spreading.

Q. Why are you saying that confidentiality should be adhered?

A/F Because of its repercussions for the patient and because our prime responsibility is to our patients first and everything else after.

A/M 'Also it is one weapon we have if the patient did not feel we would respect the confidentiality he wouldn't come forward, especially the people in the high risk groups who would definently not ...'

Q. What do you think is the detrimental factor to confidentiality?

A/F One million people, size of a medium size town anywhere abroad and everybody knows everybody in it.

A/M That's peoples attitude just do not think that THERE IS such a thing like confidentiality.

A/F Because the community is so small we cannot be incognito in a small community.

A/F It's like a small town in small town in U.S.A.

Q. Do you think the system can be improved in that town?

A/M No

Q. How would you handle counseling patients
Q. How would you handle counseling patients?

A/F  patients have got to be dealt with counsellors specifically trained as an aid to the patients family doctor.

A/M  Yes I think the general practioners should be the first member of the counseling team. I do not think we can be exempt. I think in fact the general practioner has to decide whether or not the patient needs counseling by somebody else. I don't think automatically there should be a counseling service where the patient would normally shove through certain patients would benefit counseled by the people. Certain patients relate to their practioner much better than if they are with anybody else.

A/M  I think it should be available in that the general practioners get training in counseling.

Q. Do you feel you know enough for counseling?

A/F  No

A/F  But I would like to say this if we are talking about the patient general practioner may I say that about 90% of the population do not have a general practioner.

A/F  You have to have a counseling in the district. District help.

A/F  This sort of counseling and training use to be done by the Caribbean Medical Care with venereal diseases and I think is is necessary to the general population to be able to have available counseling because now many people may need a general practioner.

A/F  What also can happen is that there is a lot of volunteer organisations and religious organisations that are willing to be drawn into the net who have time and could necessarily be trained.

A/F  I would be very, very cautious about religious organisation

Q. Could you identify them for us? What do you think should the counseling team be made of. And elaborate also on counseling in this context?

A  Specifically trained medically, the ones that are trained psychologically.

A/F  Why do you say be very cautious of religious organisations?

A/F  Why I say that is because of the ones I have seen accepting death in such a very courageous and very mature way. Have been counseled by religious organisations.
A/M Do you want to get into this discussion now?

A/F Yes because we have a patient about whether if... you should take the test of the patient without asking or telling the patient.

A/M Well I think as a family doctor, working at a very different level to most other doctors. One case I had this... lost a tremendous amount of weight. She was unable to give me any reason for it. They suspected a psychological reason and I have since been proven right cause I took the blood and I got the test coming back negative so I am happy she does not know anything about it. To some it may even be an insult to ask them to go for an AIDS if she refuses it she is in a quandry. I put a burden on her and I am in a quandry.

A/F Differential diagnosis not proven.

A/M Yes. And I have another patient who is in fact a close friend whom I am now going to do an AIDS test on without that person knowing. I think if it becomes back positive then I will repeat it. And I would probably go to see a specialist with that patient, accompany them to see to see the specialist.

A/F I absolutely agree with Dr...

Q How does one break the news to this gentleman that is positive?

You have to break news about cancer, like all kinds of other things.

Q. You have mentioned the implications about cancer. Cancer has...

A/M This is why I say that you should talk about notifiable thing. Confidence where I am concerned even with the test which is absolutely between me and the patient. I will label them with a fictitious name. I send the blood off. I don't...

A/F Same here

A/F Usually there is a code that if you ask the lan about you can work out a code for the patient or a fictitious name as you do so that nobody knows.

A/F None of my cases have I told the patient. Just what you said go to the specialist.

A/M Then the patient goes back to you. Do they come back to talk to you?
Q. Is there a particular circumstance where you would advise the patient to take the test?
A/F Yes.
Q. If yes, what circumstance?
A/F If you suspect the condition or if the person has been in contact with somebody.
Q. In any other circumstance?
A/F If the patient comes to you and says they do, they come, peace of mind like what I described earlier on.

A/F On occasions too, if the patient is of the high risk group and has to have surgery or has to go to the dentist I sometimes advise it.

A/M No, actually if the symptoms have come up and you ask the patient if ... they would say yes, they would like the test, I send them back to the general practitioner with the blood. I send the blood off to the lab and ask them if they could send it back to the general practitioner.

Q. What about the circumstance of marriage and you wanted to ask some mothers?
A/F Pregnancy.

A/F Some patients ask for it now and I do it and some I suggest to them just not ... education and anything else because I am using that as my sort of bank because the ministry does not agree with that idea at all, they do not agree that pregnancy or marriage should be used as a screening.

A/F But what we can do in any sort of programme is advise young people if you are going to marry you should have this test in addition to tests as VDRL and other tests as part of an educational programme. Because in some parts of the world it is now required.

Q. As your colleague described her experience with this patient what do you think of this attitude of the patient that she just described?
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Q. As your colleague described her experience with this patient what do you think of this attitude of the patient that she just described?
The patient needs a psychiatrist

I agree with you.

How do you feel about taking the sexual history on a patient?

It is normally done by doctors.

Although you answered this question to some extent previously what do you do where there is admission of homosexuality or bisexuality? Where do you get this history?

I talk about celibacy and hastiness.

How do you deal with taking sexual history from homosexuals?

You ask all the normal questions about partners, number of partners, his faithfulness, the dangers. If the patient comes to you because they are worried about the possibility of AIDS you have got to take a full sexual history one does not take a detailed sexual history just everyday from every patient but if there is a suspicion of a problem when the patient comes to you. You have no option but to take the history.
A/F One case the patient went abroad in two cases the patients went abroad/. One patient his mother was a nurse in the States and he died a few weeks in Port of Spain General Hospital. In the specialist ward in every case the specialist was....

A/M In your case you said if you had done the test on that girl you could have sat her down and confronted her with the result.

A/F No the thing about it is there is no way I could have done the test on her. She is so intelligent that I would have had to strap her down and take the blood by force. Because there is no way as soon as we talk to her about a blood test she already knew exactly what I had in mind so you see she is blanking and masking everything and all I can do is that she should decide not to have a sexual relationship with anybody.

A/F ... you couldn't succeed, for example, with the blood test obviously, but it is ... understand the risks of forming that alliance with somebody else.

A/F Well this is the problem you see this is what I am trying to get through to her but then she is saying there is no risk because he did not have AIDS. She cannot come to terms with that and this is why I spoke to some other female doctors again because I don't know how we end up with these patients. But they have had one or two cases like that.
A/F I am one to myself. I am saying that for a heterosexual 
doctor then but I am wondering what will happen if that 
doctor is themselves homosexual. Whether male or female they 
may have problems you know it may be an embarrassing situation 
for them. I do not think that most heterosexual doctors 
should have problems. I may be wrong.

Q. If you had a patient who took the test and it was positive 
what do you tell that patient?

A/F The test has to be repeated and it is discussed with their 
specialist.

Q. Have you ever heard of a general practitioner who gave 
the test without forming their patient?

A/M No answer.

Q. Could we just alude... the visit to some extent but 
 could you give us another looking of what do you 
 think of that attitude of the doctor? Who did the test 
 without the knowledge of the patient.

A/F Could I have done many tests without the knowledge of the 
patient. We are not going to spread out every last... 
I am not talking about his, I am talking about other 
 sources. What you going to do you going to terrify the 
 patients, you going to say I am doing some blood test to help 
in my diagnosis. Finish. You gave the confidence 
of the patient you are looking for things AIDS maybe just 
something added now to a lost of other things one has been 
looking for, for years in diagnosis.

A/M When you send a patient for a Barium enema you don't 
say I want to see if you have cancer. I say well you know 
you have some symptoms we must see what is causing the 
problem.

A/F What I find fantastic about all this .... testing is as 
 is when you are sending a patient for a test of AIDS it 
is as if you are giving the patient AIDS, if you find 
a positive for the test you will only uncover what is their 
and whether you do the test or not the disease is going 
to show itself sooner or later that's the way I look at it.

A/F You get on as though you are giving the patient a death 
warrant the cancer of the disease is hodgkins disease, 
lymphoma you name it. You are giving the patient the 
death warrant. You are looking and sometimes you do 
tell the patient you wait for the specialist and in the case 
of Cancer. I have patients whom I have never told they 
have cancer because psychologically the patient would have 
laid down and die. I have a patient who was treated for 
Cancer 15 years ago and is very much alive and kicking 
she has never been told she has cancer.
A/F I am talking about the general population, carriers and so on.

A/F I am afraid of fear being put into a patient and you pick up the papers and every other day and read those horror stories about this abageda this is Rozart everything is being related to the Bible this was predicted 2000 years ago, 1000 years ago. You know this is a sin visited. You see it all the time in the press. There is a religious connotation of terror attached to AIDS it is a plague you are getting it because you sinned so many years ago and so on. I think we have to be very, very careful.

A/M When one says counselling I am not thing in terms of making the patient accept their demise. I am thinking of a constructive approach. Where patients will be able to go to say I am in a state now where I know I am going to die but I have this symptom or... feel that somebody with mental or the training to... at the right way. I don't think necessarily one wants a religion.

A/F I am very fearful of it because of the terror I see being spread.

Q. With regards to your training counseling these patients what would you like to know more about?

A/M You see it is different very very different diseases cancer or terminal illness is relatively brief the persons life-style is relatively normal up until a short while before death but I think the burden that one would have looking after an AIDS carrier before and then spend the year if they are probably treated one year and a half. Dying is the burden for any individual would be incredible.

Q. What do you think the context of the counseling training should be?

A/M I think it would be a team approach.

A/F I cannot help but bring in the religious part of it and then I cannot help but be me. Because the only I can deal with anything in my life is to have a religious sort of background and happily in the West Indies most of our people have a religious background. There is a fringe that is kind of fanatic fringe but even they can be dealt. with too. So until... to deal with it is with religious just if a start in the sense that one whois difficult to explain explain... but at the same time what happens is everybody is very much free and relaxed and you accept whatever is coming a very positive not that you are saying it is in faith or anything like that, you know but I mean you just dealing with it in a
sensible fashion. And I find it very easy for me to cope with it. I need to cope with it, with my patients on that level.

Q. Besides the counseling that has to be given by medical doctors is there anywhere in Trinidad where an AIDS virus can go for counseling?

A/F The Caribbean Medical Centre sees patients. I do not know how much counseling they are or do not do. But I am feally afraid of the religious and promises of quick cures. Very much.

A/F I have not heard of any of those.

A/F Oh yes, oh yes. There are always people saying that they found a cure.

A/F I am talking about Trinidad and Tobago.

A/F Trinidad and Tobago. I think should be where they can get medical advice, care, scientifically with the support of psychologists or psychiatrists to deal with the mental aspects. I am afraid of all kinds. We have all kinds of religious ... communities.

Q. Lets deal with the prevention now please. What sexual practices are considered unsafe. Please try to be specific Until you done it to some extent already could you just repeat just one concept of prevention?

A/M Any sex with more than one partner. I was going to ask you when you say what sexual practice is unsafe.

A/F Unsae if that you HIV partner is positive any any sexuality can be unsafe. If they are not then obviously any sexuality would ne safe. Basically that is what it boils down to.

A/F Any sex for a start is unsafe.

Q. Sexual practices are considere possibly safe

A/M Again that depends on who you are doing it with. Well has to presume your partner has HIV positive when you ask that question. Not necessarily.

A/M If I am a doctor advising somebody that AIDS. A teenage say about sexual practice I would say masturbation is the thing that is safe.

A/F You see the whole thing is so ridiculous cause this gentleman put it in a nutshell. The person does not have the virus in the first place you can do anything with that person and get away with it. If the person has the virus I don't see that anything is potentially safe because we have a saying that all kinds of things
are safe and we have to say that in inverted commas because we have no idea because we are learning. Every month we are learning something. So as far as I am concerned when we give out things about safe sex and unsafe sex I do not know really what we are telling the public. What we are really try to tell them is there are certain practices that is better that you do not practice because we think that you are at risk that is of really telling them.

A/M Which ones

A/F Anal sex, oral sex, sex without a condom and you are not even sure the condom wouldn't burst.

A/M Even the virus is suppose to be transmitted possibly...

A/F But a lot of condoms are being sold.
Q. Is there anything one can do to avoid getting AIDS?
A/F Don't have sex, don't take blood, don't share needles.
A/F Avoid drugs.
A/M Don't go to apartments
A/F Absolutely and terribly important
A/F Be careful where you are going
A/M I do not take offence to that case I mentioned if a patient knows and if he asks a doctor - Do you reuse your needles? - I think it is a very pertinent question. And I wish more people would ask that sort of question, I think we should encourage people to ask these sort of questions and perhaps ...
A/F Every patient who tells me they had to go to the dentist, I would say is your dentist a trained dentist with all ...

END OF CASSETTE
DOCTOR'S SESSION
TAPE 2 - SESSION IV - SIDE

Q. What would you recommend to someone who wants to avoid AIDS?
A/M Stay with a partner that don't have AIDS and hope that that partner.
Q. ......Why?
F/A Stick with a lady who doesn't have AIDS and if it is a man vice versa. If the partner wants you enough make sure the partner has some test.
M/A Choose a partner who you are sure is going to be monogamous and you be equally faithful.
Q. What particular sexual practice would you recommend?
A/F Any.
Q. What about condoms? Would you recommend them to anyone to prevent getting the virus.
M/A We don't know that it prevents the virus. What you can say to a person is that if they have to be promiscuous, its like you take precautions, and the only precaution which you know that might have a bearing on it is to wear a condom.
F/A Wear 3 layers. It's like wearing gloves in surgery. At one time one wears gloves to protect the patient now one wears gloves to protect the surgeon. I know a female patient who made him wear two, she insisted that he wore 2 and then she came in because she got torn....
Q. You all seem to have doubts about condom use as a means of AIDS prevention. Can you elaborate on these doubts?
A Well, yes, the virus is believed to be able to pass through the layer in and condoms burst especially among homosexuals.
Q. I saw the Ministry of Health about 2 or 3 weeks ago advertise in the newspaper a particular condom with some chemical additive that kills the virus or.. What's your opinion on this?
F/A The Ministry's idea is that they can't change people's behaviour so rather than just allow everything to go as is they may as well give them something to use but they have read and they have agreed with the fact that the condom is not a 100% answer to prevent AIDS even with these spermicidals that they are using. The Anoxilin 12 or whatever it is. They can't say it is a 100% certainty that it will prevent AIDS but they are hoping that the people use enough of it that they will cut down the instance of spread.
F/A You can only tell by a trial if everybody uses it or you do a study on it you can only tell by everybody using those condoms - see what happens - if the spread is reduced.
Q. How do you feel about teaching how to use condoms? Teaching your patient.

F/A That is normally done by G.P.'s.

F/A I don't like it because I have this very strong view because I think to myself that the crux of the problem is not AIDS in the society. The crux of the problem is the promiscuity of our young people. I am more concerned about the young people, the adolescents. I'm concerned about the teenaged pregnancies, I'm concerned about the number of abortions, about the number of infections. I'm concerned with all kind of other things, break-up of family life and all kinds of other things and to me AIDS is just a spin off from this so... I do not, I definitely do not teach them about condoms. I use that as my last resort to the end of my story. Because my thrust is to try my best, my personal best to try to see if I can change the behaviour patterns of the youth who come in contact with me.

F/A I think by the time the youth reaches the doctor they are already having a very active sex life, I think you have got to teach them to use prevention early in the school before they reach the doctor.

F/a I am not talking about my patients in my practice, I go beyond my practice so therefore I suppose, I am not talking necessarily as a doctor in my practice, I say my mission is, so I am definitely going out there.

M/A I don't think that as is done abroad and project it that using condoms is safe sex, I think that the chances ....you have to say if you are going to teach people about using condoms, you have to tell them that it breaks that it is not in fact as safe as it is and even when they use it there is an off chance that it may burst, there maybe several things wrong with it and that they may in fact expose themselves regardless, so it is not a safe way of sex at all, it is a way of trying to reduce the numbers like in the event that it doesn't burst so you have no problems, that you might be relatively safe. But there is no statistical data as to show anything more.

F/A I think that we are playing around with sexual education while teenagers just jump in.

Q. I'm glad you mentioned teenagers. If a teenager wanted to get condoms would you oppose it?

F/A Certainly not, but I am just not ........anything but I'm trying to educate them as best I can along the lines that .....  

Q. What advice would you give to a teenager then, in the context of what we have been speaking about?

F/A Talking to them.......for a long number of years before AIDS came on the scene and I have always said to them if the juices get so high and the excitement gets so great that you can't resist, you better have a method of prevention. Tell it like it is.
This is it! People talk about morality and what not but the crux of the matter is just what you said. I remember when I was in University - everynight before we went out, somebody's mother would say as we were leaving, bye bye, be good and if you can't be good be careful and if you can't be careful name it after me and that's basically life.

But you're talking about university, the problem is, my problem is when we are talking about the 11 year, 12 year and 13 year olds - that's a difficult problem so I really have to take it seriously, I have to take it morally. I have to take it everywhere I can, I have to use all the ammunition I can because we are talking about, as I say, little children. We are not talking about university students now, people on the brink of life.

...and the principle remains the same.

the principle may remain the same but ....

The problem is we do not tell children the facts of life they have to find out by experiment and thats when they get into difficulty. We've got to educate children about what you cant to call it, the birds and the bees, children are told nothing, the masses of children are told nothing.

They get it all in magazines and videos.

Yes, and they experiment.

Is there anything you can do to avoid getting AIDS in your profession?

Well, in my case yes, in all surgeons cases, any surgeon would pursue this, I know that general surgeons would rarely stick their fingers because they actually feel for a needle or something like that.

Not anymore.

In my case, you must have to be careful, wear protective gloves, glasses, face masks and may very sure you are very careful not to inject or cut yourself with an ........anemia.

I am beginning to wonder whether all patients who are going for surgery should not have a test before.

Well, there was some talk about that and then they decided that if they did most of them who are HIV+ would not show and even if they were carrying the virus so then they decided that all patients should be treated as though they are positive - so it is what is said but not what is done.
Q. If you had a choice would you rather not work with AIDS patients? Please describe your feelings if you had that choice.

M/A It depends on what type of work. Certainly any kind of work which does not put me at risk I wouldn't mind but for an AIDS+ patient who wanted a minor surgery which I do in my office, I don't think I would do it.

Q. Could you just explain that, why you wouldn't do it?

M/A If it was a minor procedure which was not essential to their life, I would not do it.

M/A In my case, I would do it, because you see when you're trained to treat patients, they are patients and I take an oath, there are some of my colleagues who take ..........views, but in my opinion that is what I was trained for. You see sick people and then you treat them.

Q. But, I'm talking about the ones who are not sick.

M/A In my case I see them as sick people. They come in with acute problems and I have to treat them. I can't turn them away.

Q. Do you think AIDS patients should not have sex?

M/A Well, there have been clubs in the U.S.A. where AIDS patients get together and have sex with one another. That has been considered to be a reasonable thing.

F/A You should not have it with an infected person. They should not be permitted to pass on the disease...

F/A Unless of course it was your husband or your wife and you decided you do not mind taking that risk.

A But, medically, I don't think you can advise a person who is ill to pass it on.

Q. The opinion you just expressed are both for persons with the disease and people who are just carriers.

F/A Yes.

Q. What is the present prevalence of STD's in Trinidad?

F/A What do you mean, what are STD's.

F/A Sexually Transmitted Disease: Do you know any figures, there are so many of them?

Q. Is it high, medium, low?

M/A I think I'll say it would be high.

Q. Would you say it has decreased or increased.
F/A It has decreased a lot in the last 20 years with the treatment and use of anti-biotics, e.g. I know that 25 years ago you saw a tremendous amount of ectopic pregnancies due to infection in the tubes and that is very low now. But recently, there has been an increase in gonorhea; we mentioned this earlier in the evening and some of it resistant.

Q. Please describe the relationship between Sexually Transmitted Diseases and AIDS.

M/A The relationship .......

Q. Do you think that AIDS patients should be blamed.

F/A That's where the business of the church comes in.

Q. And your opinion is what.

F/A That they should be blamed!! They didn't invent the virus.

M/A I don't think they should be blamed, I don't think it is a matter of blaming them - its a matter of health care, people accepting that they have it and helping them along the way but I don't think that one should adopt an attitude of blame.

F/A In a case of where a patient knows that he or she has AIDS and deliberately passes the infection on, I think blame can be laid there.

F/A I think I have a real problem because when I think about it, I put it like alcohol and all those other things, these addictive things, you know what I mean, I suppose I just blame the condition in man, honestly, the condition in man that makes us do things in such an unbalanced way that things get out of hand and that's what I blame. For instance, the virus to my mind, if what they're telling us is true, the virus could have been there but had they not been undisciplined behaviour because they are homes who will never get AIDS because they are disciplined people, that is to my mind that I am looking at it in a logical fashion and had these homos not been so promiscuous in their behaviour that would not have happened, that's where I attach blame because then you to leash a scourge on the human race because of your undisciplined behaviour, that's the way I look at it.

F/A I don't look at it like that at all. What happens in the country where it has always been heterosexual.

F/A But again we talk about promiscuity.

F/A Not really, we don't really know. In Africa it is heterosexual.

M/A But as a medical practitioner. I can't really see you being able to allocate blame, we got to treat diseases and that's it.

F/A No, the only problem is somebody who deliberately passes the thing on.
F/A  That's why I think it should be deemed a communicable disease.

Q.  What does that mean?

F/A  I am only presuming that they are asking this question as they are trying to get to our feelings as human beings not doctors. Because as doctors we have no feelings, we are not judge, we are not jury, and that is what we always have to divorce ourselves from but as personal people. I have to say that everytime I come across a disease that is a scourge, be it AIDS, be it whatever, be it plague, be it diarrhoea, be it gastro enteritis, I get that way, I do get that way because they are reasons for these things happening and I still believe whether it is a homosexual or heterosexual disease, we are claiming that in every situation where the disease has spread, it has spread because of promiscuous behaviour and I am angry at behaviour that is unbalanced, that is, the only thing that I am angry at and I am going to attach blame to.
What is the best way of treating AIDS patients, a special place or in the General Hospital, or at home or where else?

It depends on the condition of the patient, or as I say the thing can be evident in so many ways, I can't decide on that at all.

... I think that when the situation is becoming terminal, they should be a special place because of the prejudices inherent in society.

I think so! I think it is also best if you have terminally ill patients for counselling purposes they should possess resources. There was a time when Caura was built for Tuberculosis and it was a beautiful hospital set in quite a beautiful setting.

Then we might get to the stage where we will be able to accept it as a disease which may be able to be treated at home, one day we will reach there.

Yes, but it is too difficult. We have to keep remembering that lower-income group people can't handle it. We have a real problem in this community. We can't even look after the aging who are in good health.

Ture enough, ture enough!

Do you worry about AIDS?

No.

Not incessantly, we take each day as it comes.

What are your biggest concerns about AIDS?

The rapidity with which it is spreading.

I don't believe it, it is like drugs. I am saying are we talking too much and is it really happening, I suppose in a way maybe I might be asking too ...

Maybe what is worrying me in a way is that the public is being given the impression that AIDS kills but there is safe sex and I am a bit concerned about this safe sex. But what is happening
is that the man who is promiscuous or the lady who is promiscuous feels safe and therefore the promiscuity continues. I believe that it has to be explained to people that there is no such thing as 'safe sex'. There is sex for sex sake and if they want to take a bit of precaution they could do certain things but there is no such thing as 'safe sex', not in promiscuity, not in ...

I would absolutely agree that we are living in a promiscuous society and it is not only at carnival.

This morning one of the ..., she was twenty-something she calls it 'musical beds', that's the term she used, this is a woman about 21 years old, she described it as 'musical beds'.

You see, ...

She is saying that ... there is no value put to it. People may look at it and say you are promiscuous but in truth and in fact, there is an inner sense about the behaviour. Inner sense in inverted commas, in that most people don't really view themselves as really being promiscuous because for instance they may have a relationship with one person at one time say, one week, or one month or three months that relationship finishes and they move on to another person. They don't really view that as promiscuous behaviour, but that behaviour changes with extreme rapidity.

Same thing as when you have sex on any one day with three people.

Yes and that happens too.

How has AIDS affected your community?

Only in that patients are much more reticent to get treatment for simple surgical procedures because they might get AIDS. They see themselves more at risk getting it from a doctor or a dentist than they would get it from a sexual partner and that's the truth.

Particularly the dentist.

Yes, particularly the dentist.
But that is only a more educated section of the population I would say. I think the mass of the population really needs educating. Literally brain-washing constant but interesting television programmes, I would say.

I would say that is true, actually because the middle-class people and not so low-income people that go to dentists for obvious reasons, the ones who go to the non-dentists, the quacks, I am sure they don't ask the same questions they ask me.

The fact that they are going to the quacks tells you that they are not aware of the dangers.

In addition to the advice about education what else do you think you can do about AIDS and its spread?

As a person or as a professional?

Talking about it freely I notice that a lot of people are talking more openly amongst the more educated people.

I would say ... I have two young children and I would say I think it would be more constructive to expose my children to sex education and AIDS at that time in that it is a complication of sex, I see AIDS as that sort of complication that goes on. I would imagine that if they are educated properly about sex education at a reasonable age in life. ... sort of situation not looking at a video film or getting dirty photographs and been exposed to the lecture on AIDS and its spread I think it would be very much more constructive.

As an adjunct to that I think in fact I know that children start asking about sex at a very early age and therefore we must not put taboo on sex, and since only a few parents are equipped or not fearful about talking about sex to their young children then it has got to be done maybe in school maybe on television, it has to be done. We are too fearful about educating children about sex.

Not only that, I think we should be asking them more questions letting them do the talking to us and telling us what they know and what they think. We do a lot of talking at them and nobody really asks what comes out at the other end. What it is they actually learn from what we are saying. So it should be structured in such a way that they have their talk sessions too and actually tell us or tell each other.
Q. What's your evaluation of the education campaign that is being carried out now?

A/M Is there one?

Q. Well you did say earlier on that you had seen programmes on television.

A/M I did not know there was a campaign, I thought it was a sort of ad hoc thing that somebody put on the television.

A/F It is ad hoc in a way.

A/M I don't think that there is any structure to it, I think somebody just put that on television, when they need a filler on television they put something on, it is not really a structured thing. It is not repetitive, it is not necessarily all that good. There was a more structured thing with drugs. Do you remember that thing with ...

A/M ... Stalin's advertisements.

A/M Right, with the fellow with the whip and ... that was requested. I think that did some good but I have never seen anything like that about AIDS.

A/F We have a big problem here with television. Some of the best programmes that will do most for the community are never advertised, you come upon them by accident. This particular one that was done by the Canadians. By what's the name of the ...

A/M David Suzuki. ...

A/F ... the Japanese Suzuki the best thing I have ever seen on AIDS educationally, scientifically every person I asked, the day after I had seen that programme had not seen it.

A/F Because nobody knew it was going to come on.

A/F Nobody knew it was on and that programme should be repeated over and over again.

A/M I recently was in London and I was watching the television and on came a Children's Hour, and
A/M and there was an AIDS Update, the programme called ... and this young lady, she was a young lady, early teens, was telling the children in a way they would understand, what is the relevant, what is the update on AIDS, what they had just discovered. It was an informative programme, taught by a teenager to teenagers, and it was a regular weekly thing and it was meant to inform, it wasn't meant to frighten, it wasn't meant to scare, it was meant to say to people you would get it, it was something about a disease which everybody knew about, taken for granted they showed you how you would get it and what is happening to AIDS making it, if you like, more obvious a more intellectual exercise and a way to treat it.

A/F Apropos of that I would like to say that instead of trying to devise local programmes which cost a lot etc. etc., there is a lot of free educational stuff available in England and all over the place and we should get it and use it. There is a lot of documentary material available that can be used while we are waiting to make our own programmes which we can't afford to make anyhow, and use ... like this Update on AIDS, once a week whatever you want.

A/F Do you think there would be a problem, you know there is always a problem with the ethnic this and the ...

A/M I don't think ... for a programme like that it requires much for a local person to produce ...

A/F I think these programmes should be used, the things they have shown nobody has objected to them, except that nobody knew it was about AIDS, they would turn on their button if they knew, they don't know the programme is on the television.

A/M I think what I believe should be done, I maybe wrong because I am not a communications specialist is that repetition is of course important, you can't produce a programme once and expect that the population knows. I know in Trinidad once it is gazetted, you are supposed to know, this is what happens in Trinidad. You will hear them say but it was gazetted so you should not have parked your car on Richmond Street today, and it seems that that is the format in Trinidad, nobody tells you, you are supposed to find out. Well in fact, in AIDS you are supposed to be
A/M told and you are supposed to be told vociferously and repetitively because its implications to our society and our children are such that it can't be left to a person to find out, it has to be told.

A/F Just like drugs, alcohol, making ...

A/M The drugs campaign was a very good one and it certainly left an impression on me.

A/M It is petered out now, you are not seeing them now again

A/F Certainly, it used to be on going ...

A/M ... all the time, all the time.

Q. In the last context of question, what message would you like to covey to the medical officer of health?

A/F On going persistent education on AIDS using television. People do not read in this country, unless you use this, that (gesturing to a weekly) and the problem with this is the headline would make you look at it but when you read it is a scandal sheet literally calling the names of people and describing them, that is not education on AIDS.

A/M That is a 'weekly'.

A/F Yes, I have never seen this one before but people read the weeklies so they can be a force for education, but not that.

A/M What one should say to the Ministry is that there should be an organised campaign whereby they integrate their campaign at all levels, G.P levels, community levels so that we are aware where we fit into it and we are aware what is expected of us; and it is pointless producing three shows on television and expecting the population to take any interest because they would come in and say did you see that show on television and you would say - No, what show - and it dies right there.

Q. If the political authorities were here what would you tell them vis-a-vis a message that you want to promote?
Politicians understand economics more than they understand diseases and I would try to point out to the minister the economic damaging aspects of this disease because in New York there are now saying they need federal help because in New York the amount of AIDS case they reckon by 1992 would be such that the whole budget in New York would be taken up just treating these patients. The economic problems of treatment of these is enormous and I think that this would impress a politician now.

Q. What message would you give to parents?

A/M Set an example.

A/F I think that is terribly important, the role models.

A/F Set an example.

A/M There are certain socio-economic groups where the father is allowed and accepted that he can have several ladies and he will say if you ask him how many children he has he will tell you - I have three with this one, and I have another one there, and I have three with that one, and I have a quick son - it is an accepted thing in Trinidad and we have to break that pattern somehow, I don't know how we are going to do that.

Q. What message should we convey to your friends?

A/F Exactly, what we have said.

Q. What message should we convey to the general population?

A/F I think we have said it all during this evening.

A/M I think what should be said to the general population is be very frank and very truthful, what is AIDS, what transmits AIDS and then pose the question to them - Are you transmitting AIDS, are you going to be prepared to get AIDS, are you taking the risk?

A/F Let them ask themselves.

A/M It is a disease, where a lot is known, it is not anything 'hairy fairy'. Nobody sent it from ..
... from Africa and it didn't come from the monkey and all out of space things, it is in Trinidad. Wherever it came from, it is here and we have to deal with it here.

And I think asking the questions is a very clever thing, I saw something on television about people who steal ... shoplifters and it is the cleverest thing you have ever seen. Has anybody seen this? About shoplifting - you go to pick up something and a question is asked - Are you a shoplifter? He went right back and put it on the shelf. Clever things like that can be devised, like that. That holds people's attention. Television is the most incredible media if used, we don't know what...

In fact we have one channel 9 and 14, and this might not be appropriate to this conversation but it is a channel that is not been used any longer and it could be used for educational purposes.

It is there already.

All of these transmitting ...

Even if it was repeated too, one hour in the morning and one hour say, seven 'o' clock.

It could be transmitted to schools and that sort of thing.

But I think with the adult you want to use the popular channel, tuck it in between the popular programme so they don't have a chance to turn off because when channels 9 and 14 were functioning, only the intellectuals as they call them used it ... I used to look at it all the time and they would say that boring programme. Use the popular programmes man! Let them have it, just like they did for drugs and alcohol and so on. Tuck it in! Tuck it in!

After 'Young and Restless', before 'Young and Restless, in between 'Young and Restless.'

Yes.
A/M The Americans have a nice way of doing things, they make a story around it.

A/F And look for somebody to ..., don't wait to devise a programme in the next year, this is happening all the time. Use programmes that are already made, that other countries have used that are appropriate. This business that we have to make our own programmes. You do that, yes, but ...

A/M There was a beautiful ad in Britain about anti-smoking. There was this ad on cinema screens and television where this girl was in a bar and she was smoking and she was a real 'good-looker' and these two fellows are watching her and she is smoking away and then the chap says Oh, she looks good and stuff, and then it ended up by saying heah, but when you kiss her, it is like kissing an ashtray.

A/F I love that!!

A/M That sort of ad.

Interviewer: Thank you very much ladies and gentlemen.
FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS ON AIDS

TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

Session VIII
28 August 1988

HOMOSEXUALS

SYLVIE COHEN
Consultant
EUROPEAN ECONOMIC COMMISSION

Group moderator
CLAUDETTE FRANCIS
Like said difficult but difficult in the sense difficult in the sense that we are scored, there is absolutely no kind of togetherness, if we have a problem we'll have to deal with it 1 on 1 (that right, you deal with your problem, I deal with mine - we have no place to go and socialise, we remain closeted that is why the number of closeted cases, it is so high.

What about the rest of you guys?

I think it is... What ... is saying is very true. The problem with homosexuality, not only in Trinidad and Tobago, I think in the whole Caribbean, I believe unlike America and these places, there is a body, that you can go to even though you are discriminated against - There is some sort of unity - right, in the Caribbean it is scorn terribly, first of all because people think more backward and more colonial than any thing else. They have not been exposed to what homosexuality have been like anyhow, they have their traditional ideas. While the rest of the world is changing in the West Indies nothing is being done really. What my friend here on the left said about - promiscuity - I would think it is not only related to Trinidad alone, I think homosexuality in the whole homosexual life, I feel it is a promiscuous life generally because and it has something to do I feel with the man, with man, I mean man and woman gets married, a man always has it's deputy, I think man has some in nates of promiscularity and may be I am wrong but I tend to feel so and am normally most homosexuals tend to be promiscuous, I think it is because they are unsecure about their relationship, maybe because they feel that the nature of the relationship or no strings attached you know you don't really have to be absolutely faithful, fortunately you do come up on some very nice
FEMALE: society in the West Indies, the way they think about homosexuals is very backward.

QUES: We are talking a little bit about partners. We are talking about the Community's response - the scorn. We are talking now about partners and let's continue to talk about that. There are some people who would have one partner and other people who would have several and you were saying in this room from you all, how many of you have single partners and how many of you have many partners? Let's go with the single partners first.

ANS: Well, right now I am single but I had a single partner before.

ANS: Well, the others - so you have been able....

ANS: But before I met that person I was quite active, I had other partners but before I met that person but during that time I was seeing that person it was always a one partner.

ANS: But do you prefer a regular partner as against many?

ANS: Yes, I prefer.

ANS: What about the other guys?

ANS: I prefer a regular partner, but for some reason you cannot trust, you cannot really trust them because you may put your feeling towards them and they just let you down. You may look at this first, I don't think it would work from beginning, you see this person and I don't think it would work but I'll take a chance, That's how desperate you get, you want to have someone, you want to have one person, you want to have someone
Let's talk a little bit about your awareness about aids. Have you heard about the disease?

Yes. Oh! Yes.

Where did you all hear about it?

Where did you all hear about it?

I heard about it on the Television first. Being in the occupation that I am in we have a lot of lectures and thing on the situation and it's very striking when one understand what aids really is about, it's a terrible situation.

It's a terrible situation but I find the public in general is not really aware about the disease.

How did you become aware of it?

I read it through literature listening to the radio, looking at documentary and all and I was very curious because I wanted to know if I had aids, it doesn't matter if I was tested positive or negative. I just wanted to know if I had the virus and I went about going to the doctor, having tests done but I was very curious.

I'm not hearing from you at all.

Let me repeat the question again. "If you are aware of it and where you heard about it."

Watching TV and thing I heard about it and knowing people who died with it, seeing it is a very dirty disease.
ANS: I read a lot about it.

MALE: From other friends.

QUES: You read?

FEMALE: I hear mostly all about it from television. I normally try to keep track with what's going on and right they have developed some protein they said that prolongs your life. Something it helps to kill the virus and it's being tested I think, some proteins and I always try to keep in touch with the situation.

QUES: O.K. What about you?

FEMALE: Where are you hearing it from?

ANS: Well, television, Radio, they keep on broadcasting it also it have posters, tracks telling you to stay with one partner and practice safe sex, use the condom.

QUES: Do you think you know enough about aids?

ANS: I don't think anybody would know enough. Iould never know enough, because the people who discovering all kind of various things, everyday they are discovering new they not sure about this e.g. the the incubation period, you have to be sure, one minute they are telling you about 1 - 5 years, then they say it could go as much as 1 - 10 years. So there is always something new coming out about it.

QUES: You were saying.
ANS:  I would say there aren't any place right now where one can go now although there is the centre and the UWI clinic at the hospital, I think that is not enough, there should be as we would say - there should be a place where one can go and obtain information on the virus and you know like if for instance, If I have the aids virus, when I am getting counselling and I don't think that there should be only 1 or 2 places where one must go - the information should be available every where but as an individual say someone does not know much. Now aids, it is a disease I would go to a nurse, to my doctor or to any health clinic or institution, first and foremost.

MALE:  One place where you can have it is at a book store you can have it just by the counter right there and any one who feels like picking up a pamphlet to find out about the symptoms you could kust pick it up and walk out or distribute it.

QUEST:  O.K. we are talking about different ways of proving information through pamphlets, through professional people talking and so on. Which sources of information would you most likely use if you are attempting to educate yourself. What would you use, which sources of information?

ANS:  Well, more people watch television and thing right, I find it should have more programmes on aids on television and on radio. You hardly see any, maybe twice a year you may see a programme about aids and like how the virus is caused.
QUES: Some of you said that you've been discussing it with friends, tell me a little bit about that.

FEMALE: Now I have been discussing it with my former and present partner. Now my present partner is very much involved in the aids education and so forth we discuss it constantly and I have been in contact with people who have died from the disease and see them dying. I have had not too long ago, just about a month now, a very close friend died, I had known that he was ailing actually he was a nurse and that we used to discuss it very often and I knew that he was sick, I knew that he was dying and yet he said nothing, I tried coaxing him, he still did not come out and say anything and it was not until thin, gaunt, dying that he decided to call me and tell me he really was sick and he wanted to come and stay by me only then because his family did not want him.

QUES: What about the rest of you? Whom have you been discussing it with and what have been the discussion like?

FEMALE: Well, close friends, begging them to stick with their partners and don't run around because it's very dangerous outside there and if you have to do anything, use a condom.

QUES: Have you discussed it with your partner?

FEMALE: Yes.
Now, if there is such discussion there must be some perception or seriousness of the illness?

How serious do you think the illness is in Trinidad and Tobago

Well, the authorities concerned with educating the public with the Aids virus and this and that and the other, they really don't give out information as such. They would say a particular number is infected and that time, it might be three times the number so they don't educate us enough to know how much of the public is infected with the virus, so you just have to guess.

So you think it's serious, or....

And that's another thing. I mean the authorities concerned they are not educating us enough which they should. I think they have a lot to do with people understanding the virus and that sort of thing. They play a very very important part and they're not doing it. So we have to learn elsewhere. I think the government has a very important part to play with educating the public or the people of their respective countries about the virus, you know and.....

And how serious it is?

What about in the gay community, how serious it is in the gay community?

It should be most serious within the gay community, but I don't think that it actually is, because
FEMALE: What's your opinion?

ANS: Well, everybody is talking about their healthy lives and all this nonsense so, I would say the number of persons infected might be a bit erroneous.

FEMALE: But would you say it's a serious problem in the gay community.

ANS: Yes, it's a serious problem by the number of gay people that was killed by it. But we don't know how much people are infected. Like we can't say more gay people are infected of the disease. As we know it is true that most homosexual men are ..... certain statistics show that most homosexual men have the virus because it's more most homosexual men who probably go and get the tests or whatever.

FEMALE: So you're saying there are other explanations as for why it's coming up on the side that homosexuals seem to be .... all of they seem to be having the virus. Let's talk a little bit about the transmission of the illness. Earlier on people were talking about the need for basic information and so on. What do you all think cause the Aids virus? What's the cause?

ANS: It's when the virus attacks the immune system whereby you're being susceptible to any illness.

FEMALE: Keep going, keep going (Pause) O.K. somebody help him out. What do you think causes the Aids?
ANS: Exchange in body fluids.

2nd MALE:

1st. Well, that's not sexual intercourse? Yes,

2nd. Yes, Yes.

1st Male: Well, if you say that, you talking about sucking tongues too because body fluid is exchanged. I am not educated to know if you could get Aids through kissing.

QUES:

FEMALE: You don't know.

ANS: No, maybe you could throw some light on that.

MALE:

QUES: Well, we'll do that later. Let's keep the discussion here.

FEMALE:

ANS: Let's say an ulcer in your mouth or a sore on your tongue or something like that. And like a cut in your gum. That was as far as we were educated.

QUES:

FEMALE: Proves?

ANS: I don't think that has been proven.

MALE:

QUES: What hasn't been proven?

FEMALE:

ANS: I mean, that by kissing or like if somebody has a cut in the mouth and somebody kisses you. I mean, I am just hearing talk about that. But I don't think it has been proven.
ANS: O.K. What about the others. Is there a difference?

MALE: Yes. there's a difference between the Aids virus and Aids. For one, to get Aids you must first be infected by the virus. Now, one could have the virus, and be a healthy carrier for years, probably never having full-grown Aids. Whereas once you have Aids, your day are numbered.

MALE: But what I'm saying is once you have the virus, it puts you in a ratio of probably 2:1 that you could eventually get the disease, because you already have the virus. So there's no telling whether you would live long or you wouldn't live long because you have the virus, so any minute, you just have to wake up with the disease.

MALE: Now if you're an Aids-related complex person, from what I know, the doctor would advise you into taking precautionary measures. Not to really prolong life but to ensure your safety, then.

MALE: And to ensure other people's safety.

MALE: No, your safety from your immune system being infected more. You have to stay as healthy as possible. He would tell you, for instance, to take a lot of proteins and vitamins and all that kind of thing. What sexual practise.... even self you're a person who don't like to use the condom, he would tell you to start using the condom to prevent yourself from....

QUES: But we're talking about a difference between the virus and the disease. Having the virus and
watch somebody else who knows how long this 
person is carrying this virus, you know.

QUES: So you think it's hard. What about the rest of 
you?

FEMALE: Not it would be difficult, from what has been said, 
but being around the gays, I could look sometimes and 
tell whether one has been in contact with the virus. 
Providing that you know the person for a number of 
let's say years, then you would be able to have a good 
idea.

MALE: I never see someone with the virus, so I really 
can't tell what they look like.

MALE: I would like to have more experience of the virus, 
so I could learn more.

MALE: Now, I think we're a bit confused because we're 
talking about people with the virus. We have to 
differentiate whether it is people with the 
virus or people with aids, because there is a 
difference.

MALE: With Aids - people who are on the way out. I would 
like to be around people like that.

QUES: Can someone who looks healthy, can they have the 
virus and pass it on? If they had the virus could they 
pass it on? They're looking healthy, they have the 
virus, can they pass it on to another person?

FEMALE: Definitely Yes, because I told you earlier on they could 
be looking healthy and who knows they might be about to 
"conk out" soon.
another man, so it could be transmitted easier. And not only that, I don't think they're honest enough to admit that they're bisexual or whatever. That's the most positive group in our society. They never come to terms with their sexuality.

**QUEST:** O.K. which set of people are at least risk for contracting the virus?

**FEMALE:** It seems like the women, I think so. Especially lesbian women. I have never heard a case of 2 lesbians or a lesbian woman dying unless one was bisexual. Women are at risk more than men. Because a woman could never tell when her husband is doing that because he would always keep it a secret. Sometimes, there are men married with fifteen - sixteen children and then they coming home to sleep with their wife, so a woman could never tell. Her husband might have it, then he sleeping with her with a next woman, with a man so nobody knows nothing. He's keeping it a secret so I figure women are most at risk.

**QUEST:** What about people least at risk?

**FEMALE:** Everybody is at risk.

**MALE:** But there must be people who are most at risk and some people who are least at risk. So who are the people who have less risk.

**ANS:** The people called "drag queens".

**QUEST:** Let's be serious. Is there a group that is least at risk?
QUES:
FEMALE: But having the disease increases the chances of getting aids or it doesn't matter.

ANS:
MALE: It increases, Yes.

QUES:
FEMALE: What about the rest of the guys? What about you.

ANS:
MALE: I can't because if you have VD you would let us say within a week and you go to the doctor and get it take care of. I wouldn't say if you have VD or Veneral Disease your chances but as (name) rightfully said you may have contracted aids with along with the veneral disease, would put you at the risk at contracting the aids virus as well. For you to have contracted the veneral disease it would mean then you did not use a condom as it is or so. You are at risk Yes.

QUES:
FEMALE: Do you think you are at risk of catching aids?

ANS:
MALE: Yes.

QUES:
FEMALE: Why?

ANS:
MALE: Because of our sexuality the chances in doing things already and we would check on ourselves and by some of our sexual practices we can contract the virus.
if I have aids? It's always on your mind. I would say they are scared about dying too.

**QUEST:**
**FEMALE:** You all are talking a lot about feelings. What about symptoms? Do you know any of the symptoms?

Is there a cure for aids?

**ANS:**
**MALE:** That we know of? No So far, No.

**QUEST:**
**FEMALE:** How soon you think there would be a cure?

**ANS:**
**MALE:** In the near future you have to wait a next twelve years or a next generation or something so to get a cure hopefully so the technology they have now they do not have the type of technology to analyse this thing because they do not know where it started or how it come or nothing like that. They do not know how to kill it. It have nothing to cure they always making up some kind of pill and it always have some side effect. Hopefully soon I would say. I was listening to a pastor and he said it is a punishment from God that there is no cure.

**QUEST:**
**FEMALE:** Any other opinion?

**ANS:**
**MALE:** So you have to repent and turn to God you have it. So you have it.

**QUEST:**
**FEMALE:** O.K. Let's keep moving. Let's talk about the cure of patients. How is the aids patients treated in Trinidad?

**ANS:**
**MALE:** Like a dog. "With Scorn". With a lot of Scorn.
FEMALE: What is the hospital treatment like? Tell me a little about that?

MALE: It's very clumsy. They screening you off. I mean to say, you have to be incubated, yes, but they screen you off. The nurse would come with her surgical gloves because they have to protect themselves. But she would not be polite, you know, she would just come, if she have to turn you over, she rolls you over, pulls off the sheet, take the linen and carry it to burn, you know. She wouldn't console you, read a little psalm for you and all this kind of thing. You know, give you some words of encouragement. They don't do that. They just come in, do what they have to do and leave. And you know something else too, I think the nurses in the hospital have not been trained to deal with this new disease. This is a new disease. They themselves have been, strange enough, of all people, they themselves have been misinformed. They probably feel that if they come too close to you they just catch the disease just like that. And of course I think they're very biased too. A lot of them are biased and they treat you because they scorn. And of course the whole hospital situation in Trinidad is frustrating generally. Some nurses, they're very trained to deal with the disease and everything, but it's just their mind. They figure well you was in this nastiness, why should you get nice treatment like anybody else, you know what I mean. That is how they thinking. They don't treat you like a normal patient. They would want to rough you up and...
In my opinion home is the best place, if home is home. The only time you should go out is if you are scorned or if you have no where else to go and in such an instance the best place would be a hospice. Not just any hospice but a hospice run by people who are aware of the disease, how it is caused. People who are dedicated towards the fight against aids. Homosexuals, I mean because it would be easier for a homosexual to speak to a homosexual than to a heterosexual, if you follow me. In that setting run more by homosexuals, because the majority of the people who would be..... well not so much now again, but the majority of the people right now would be gays. Gays would be more scorned than heterosexuals with the disease.

FEMALE: O.K. Let's talk about testing for HIV and willingness to test. You've heard of a test for Aids? Remember there is no right or wrong answer. All opinions are acceptable. Keep going, let's hear.

MALE: Well, I haven't heard of a test about Aids.

FEMALE: O.K. What about you guys?

MALE: A test for the Aids virus, not test for Aids?

FEMALE: O.K. We test for the Aids virus. What does the test tell you?

MALE: It tells you you have the antibodies in your blood From what the doctor told me,. They said although you might be tested for the virus and
MALE: No, I have known people who are just simply afraid of taking the test, period. Not because of the institutions but because they may be exposed to the virus.

FEMALE: So that you're saying nobody has any problem going to the places you described to have the test done.

MALE: Well, there's a problem with CMC, but I don't think there's a problem going to the UWI clinic.

FEMALE: What's the problem with CMC?

MALE: CMC has always had a reputation that it is not confidential enough. It has always had the reputation and it continues to have that reputation.

FEMALE: Please describe them, the ideal place you would imagine, to take the test.

MALE: At an institution which alone where you just go to have the test done. A specific institution where the test is carried out.

I think the ideal place would be CMC but, they have to improve on the things that (name) mentioned a while ago.

FEMALE: Some people have problems going to these places even though they mentioned problem of confidentiality, there might be other problems that I don't know.

MALE: I think the main problem is the confidentiality. It is always a problem of sexually transmitted diseases, because you go to get your VD test and
FEMALE: What do your friends say about taking the test? Other people who you know, what do they say about it?

MALE: The same thing that he said. Unless it's mandatory that they have to take it. I think most people are terrified to take the test. And then again why take the test here if you don't have a support system after you've been tested positive? I won't advice anybody to take the test if they done have a support system after you've been tested positive. And there's no support system here. Well, a lie. There is little spirits of support around but those people are overworked because it's a small number of people. And if you can't even go to your GP for support, because the GP is going to give you a referral to those same people who are overworked now already anyway. So why tell people to go for the test, because there's no support. What's going to happen psychologically as he said. When he goes through, he is going to go through this traumatic experience after being tested positive. Who is going to help him?

FEMALE: O.K. What do you think of the attitude of people who say they don't want to go for the test? They don't want to know?

What do you think of the attitude? Do you think it's a good attitude or a bad attitude?

MALE: In our system, because of the what they have I think it's a good attitude.

It's a bad attitude in many ways but it is also a good attitude.
FEMALE: O.K. You wanted to say something about asking your partner to take the test.

MALE: Well you know if I don't want to take the test myself, I won't be selfish or bold to ask my partner. If I know I went, I was brave enough to go and I took the test and yes it says negative, and I'm probably not sure about my partner, yes I will ask him. If he's really serious about the relationship, yes, of course. Protect me I would feel really nice coming from the doctor and he tells me negative. Although it doesn't really mean too much.

FEMALE: If the test was positive, assuming you took the test and it's positive, how would you feel? What would you do, now?

MALE: I guess I'll go and plan my will.

FEMALE: And after that?

MALE: Well, you know when you get news like that you have to sort of adjust your life to suit. Well no joke but that is serious, right. You cannot have long-term projections anymore.

FEMALE: O.K. Keep going, keep going, then. Well how would you feel? You have taken the test it is positive, how would you feel and what would you do?

MALE: Well, being in a high risk group you know, I think all homosexuals should live, you know, keeping in the back of his mind that he most likely is positive, because right now over 80% of the homosexuals here are Aids positive, you know. So you would be preparing oneself for this.
MALE: I think Yes. I think I will. Once there's communication between us. I would tell him I would even terminate the relationship.

MALE Why because you're selfish. What about your partner! What about his feelings towards you that does not terminate the relationship because you have Aids. That's for him to decide. That is very selfish.

FEMALE: O.K. Guys, let's talk a little bit about the practice of prevention, your perceptions on that. How would you describe your friends sexual activity at present. Yes, your friends. How would you describe their sexual activity at present? (Pause) A few more words than that.

MALE: Me, my friends are very promiscuous. Some of my friends. Very promiscuous.

FEMALE: What about the rest of you? How would you describe your friends' sexual activity at present.

MALE: Activity. No, I think we have to make a distinction between friends and acquaintances first. I think we should use peers more than friends.

FEMALE: O.K. Let's say peers.

MALE: Peers. Well, I don't really follow the sexual activity of my peers.

FEMALE: O.K. Anybody else? Have you an opinion on the sexual activities of your peers? (Long pause)

Is there anything you can do to avoid Aids? Getting Aids?
awareness of Aids virus affected your sexual behaviour?

MALE: Yes, a lot.

FEMALE: How? How has it affected you?

MALE: Because I was a person, I never used the condom. I was never accustomed in using the condom. But since the introduction of the Aids virus, I have started. I have also cut down on some of my sexual practices. For instance etc. etc.

FEMALE: No, it's O.K.

MALE: Now, for instance it I(I'm just drawing a reference, don't take me seriously, please) now for instance if I like rimming I know that rimming. If I like blowing, as we call it. If I like blowing, I would stop blowing. You know, so I am cutting down my sexual practices.

FEMALE: Anybody else? Has it affected everybody?

MALE: Other than the condom, you know, we could start using the condom. When I heard about it, I made sure and started using the condom. That's after my relationship. Whichever couple of month.

FEMALE: What about you, (name?)

MALE: Explain what you mean.

FEMALE: Well, like what we are asking you about number of partners and all this.

MALE: Oh, yes. Well, yes, you have to cut down on the
MALE: Until they get a cure, I think.

FEMALE: Have you all heard of safe, safer sex practices?

MALE: Yes.

FEMALE: What's it all about?

MALE: Well. They tell you use the condom, for one. No water sports in the sense of some people have. Water sports meaning some people like for another man to urinate in them during intercourse. That's what I understand from water sport.

MALE: Water sport means you have to be careful by rimming and if you, if you are giving a blow job you must not let the person discharge in your mouth. That's all I know.

FEMALE: O.K. anything else? Anything else you may know about safe sex?

MALE: Masturbating. What happens to masturbate?

FEMALE: Well safe sex practices. Masturbating is a practice. We're talking safe sex practices.

MALE: We have mentioned already what we have heard about safe sex. We have spoken about the condoms are being selective with who you have sex with and stuff like that so I think it mentioned already. We can move on now.
FEMALE: Anything else? Anybody else?

Let's talk about condoms use. Our friend over there has been adamant. Condoms. Condoms. Have you ever tried to use condoms? Or made your partner use condoms?

MALE: Yes, I use condoms.

FEMALE: Where do you get it from?

MALE: I buy it in a Pharmacy.

FEMALE: Anywhere else?

MALE: The Family Planning have, but I don't like the quality. It's very poor quality, so I prefer to buy it at the Pharmacy, get a better brand, better quality.

FEMALE: Do you still, do you continue to use condoms everytime you have sex?

MALE: If you're sure about your partner, well, you could take the chance.

FEMALE: Do you think there's a difference between the one's that you get free, and the ones that you buy?

MALE: I think so, yes. I have seen the difference.

FEMALE: What's the difference?

MALE: Once I was using one of those cheap ones that you get at the family planning association and it burst easily. And I recognize that the one you get at the pharmacy, I buy a particular brand called the "Rough Rider" and it could take on a lot of strength.. wear and tear.
MALE: When I first started, I never used to use condoms. I really started using condoms with the scare of Herpes, when Herpes came about. But then, you know, there was treatment for Herpes, so I stopped using condoms again until the scare of Aids came about.

MALE: Well me, I never liked using condoms. Is only now I never liked using the condoms. I also believe in flesh to flesh

FEMALE: Is there anyone who is not using condoms? Are any of you not using condoms?

MALE: I know of people who do not use the condoms still, in spite of they being at risk.

FEMALE: And why don't they use it?

MALE: They say, you know, that it's not the same feeling, that they're very uncomfortable using the condoms. Some of them blatantly say that if they have to get the Aids, Then would let them get the Aids, but they're not using condoms.

FEMALE: Is condoms a safe protection against Aids?

MALE: I won't say you're safe. I won't say it's 99% safe but at least it's plenty better than none. It's the safest known... it's the most known protection against Aids right now. And everybody, you know, that's what they have to use. Everybody saying that it still cannot help, you know, but it's the best that they have at the moment.

MALE: Have you ever been in a situation where you wanted to use a condom and your partner did not?
MALE: Yes, I think we all have.
FEMALE: How have you handled that kind of situation?
MALE: You just don't use the condom.
FEMALE: Anybody else?
MALE: That was before.
FEMALE: O.K.; O.K. That was before, you you say you have been in that situation. How do you handle it? Now let's talk about now.
MALE: Nobody says that to me now. They won't be mad to tell me that.
FEMALE: What would happen if they do? If they said no. If they insisted.
MALE: It's a hard question.
MALE: Yes, the question is difficult because they, they brings about people in general. Now if I am faithful if I have one partner and he doesn't want to use the condom. I know that we have to use the condom, well, we're not going to have sex. But if you meet somebody casually and they resist the condom use, and you're really desperate.
MALE: Honey, pick up your clothes and go, yes.
FEMALE: What would you do? Have you been in that situation that you wanted to use the condom and your partner didn't?
MALE: No.
FEMALE: You were saying?

MALE: It's an embarrassing situation.

FEMALE: How so?

MALE: Well, I think, you know, if two people are having or making love and one wants to use a condom and the other one doesn't want to use a condom, it makes the one who wants to use the condom, it puts the other person in a kind of position, where psychologically he would feel as though you know, he's not clean. Or he's not you know, although he would know for himself he hasn't any fear of Aids or anything like that. But it could put him, psychologically, it would put him, make him feel embarrassed, you know.

MALE: I think that person shouldn't feel embarrassed especially in this time you're living in where you know, there's so much talk about Aids and you're asking to protect yourself and stuff like that.

MALE: The fact that you're using a condom means that you're protecting yourself, and if the partner whosoever it is does not want to use the condom, I think you should be strong enough to say, "Alright, then no sex".

MALE: I take it when you say "no sex", you mean don't penetrate that could be an alternative, yes.

MALE: That will be the other alternative. Unless you just so want to say, "Get up and get out my house".
I suppose one could introduce the idea before, because you have fore play and all this kind of thing, but outside in the road is a slam bam thank you ma'am thing is a quick, is a ten minute. It has to be very swift in finishing, you know.

MALE: It would depend on place, time and one's state of mind. One could be under the influence of alcohol and wanting to use a condom but you know, because of being under the influence of alcohol or any other drug at such, well, you can easily be swayed into not using the condom.

FEMALE: Would you recommend the use of condoms to any one?

MALE: Yes.

FEMALE: Why?

MALE: It is the only safer way of having sex now.

FEMALE: Anything else?

TAPE 2

FEMALE: All right we're going again. Please describe in your own words what "Promiscuity" means in Trinidad and Tobago.

MALE: Can I answer?

FEMALE: Yes, we'll start with you.

MALE: I have a lot of things on what promiscuity means. Promiscuity in this country basically... in our setting or just in Trinidad and Tobago generally?
promiscuity. I know you had said it a few times. Would you like to say anything else?

MALE: As (name) said before, slam bam thank you ma'am.

FEMALE: No names please.

MALE: Ph, sorry. Sorry.

FEMALE: Anybody else?

MALE: I think when you say promiscuous, you're saying he or she is going around with Tom, Dick and Harry. Where you get it, you take it.

FEMALE: O.K. Most people think homosexuals are causing aids in Trinidad and Tobago. How do you all feel about that?

MALE: I think they answered that question already. They said bisexuals.

FEMALE: How do you all feel of people saying that you, your group are spreading the Aids virus in Trinidad and Tobago?

MALE: I say, I would just leave it, whatever they say, and let them see for themselves who is really causing it?

FEMALE: O.K. anybody else?

MALE: You see, they could say whatever they want, because they would continue to say whatever they want. So as my friend here says you'll just have to wait. We know better. So it doesn't bother me. I don't think it bothers you.
partner, who might be bisexual, because they're not sure about him. What do you think of bisexuals in Trinidad and Tobago?

**MALE:** Oh gosh! What I think about them. I think they're well, that's the group that nobody is recognizing. It's the largest Gay group. They call themselves bisexuals, but I think they're Gay like hell. It's hard to really get at that group because they are closeted. It's the most closeted group. Homosexuals are obvious people; heterosexuals are obvious people, but the bisexual group, one never knows who is bisexual.

**FEMALE:** Excuse me, one at a time.

**MALE:** Sorry, I think homosexuals are not really obvious. They're definite people. Yes well, they know what their sexuality is, and they're not really closeted. Heterosexuals, they are ... they are straight. The bisexual, one never knows who is bisexual. So that is the group that is the most dangerous and harmful group that needs to be touched.

**MALE:** I would reinforce that, I mean, whereas homosexuals, even though they might not be out, they, because they are aware of their circumstance and their sexuality, they have been learning to deal with it. Bisexuals, on the other hand, they might be dealing with their homosexual, the homosexual side of it, if you know what I mean. They might cut down on the amount of homosexual encounters they might have, yea, but the encounters that they might have every so often might be very dangerous and I don't think
FEMALE: O.K. You wanted to say something? What a lot you? Do you think bisexually is on the increase in Trinidad?

MALE: Well, I would tend to agree with (Name).

FEMALE: You agree. In what way? What's the part you're agreeing with?

MALE: I agree with everything he said. Another thing too, young people now growing up are very sexual. They're much more so than when we were younger. Boys coming out now, they have this sexual thing about them and they don't have any hang ups. So it is very very easy for them to get into homosexual pattern. They mightn't be homosexual totally, they might be doing..... I don't want to say vice, they experiencing. It's a new generation of people that want to explore their sexuality and they coming out into a certain life style, they mixing the people and then they going back with their girlfriend and I mean, it's happening there as well. They need .... they don't have the kind of education in schools, or whatever, that deals with their sexuality really, pointed on sexual behaviours and particularly about homosexuality and bisexuality. Sexuality training in school always deals with heterosexuality behaviour and family life, things like that it does not deal with a man having feelings for another man, or a woman having feelings for another woman, you know. So when he feels this way, he goes out. The best way for him to find to get his experience now, you're not getting it at home or at school, is to
MALE: As this Gentleman says, when you get a fever or something, you're always planning that it might be manifestation or something. Everybody goes through it. I mean, we're being silent here, but when you get a cough, everybody is terrified. You know, that's the reality of it. We're all terrified about it. If you lose a pound, or if you start to get a little cough or diarrhoea, because we have a little adrealin count? We think it's that.

MALE: I mean it does not worry me to the sense that it worries me. I don't sit down, thinking about it, you know. You hope that in using any precautions they they recommend, that it doesn't happen to you. At the same time, you feel very sad when you hear a friend of yours or somebody succumbs to it and stuff like that.

FEMALE: What about you? What is your biggest concern about AIDS?

MALE: Well as he said, you know, I don't tend to worry about it, not much. But the mere fact that you're liable to contract it, I mean, it's always there in your mind I had an experience once with mum. I remember that I took in with headaches and pain in one day just like that. I mean I was healthy, going about the daily routines and things normal and all of a sudden I just get these headaches and pain all over my body and I had to end up in hospital, right after that I was weak, I lost rapid weight, you know And I was looking at her face, I don't know, I could actually tell what she was thinking, you know.
MALE: One of my biggest concern is not so much contracting Aids. If I contracted Aids and O.K. the treatment or support groups is O.K. and I die nice and I get the proper respect and I don't go through the things, the nasty things that takes place, it won't be that bad, you know. But I am very concerned about what would happen. What happens to me, do I have to go through all the terrible treatment that I heard other people have been. You know, given and stuff like that? What would my family do, how would they feel and stuff? I think that is the major concern.

MALE: My next concern too, is for people who have died from the disease or whatever it is. So, I think it is important for people or their families to have some kind of counselling as to exactly what ailment the person died from. When the person has aids as well, I have a fear that people here have died not because they have had Aids but because they are HIV positive, and because of the traumatic experience, they have gone into a sort of stage a manifested stage of Aids. Something, whether it's ark or whatever it is, because what happens between the stage of after you've been tested, you start to get ill and you go to the doctor, and they test you.... the only test they have here is the HIV test, so if somebody dies a month after they're been tested HIV positive, is that right, is that normal, should that have happened. Did that person die of Aids or did that person die because it is the faulty of the State? And the State or who ever it is did not do anything to inform that person or the family or whatever it is that the person right now
of Health has an ad running on Aids, as well. There have been one or two programs done by the Ministry of health.

**FEMALE:** Any others? Any written material that you've gotten produced locally? The newspapers or anything like that.

**MALE:** The Ministry of Health has no pamphlets.

**FEMALE:** O.K. what more would you like to know about Aids?

**MALE:** When would a cure be made available? They won't be able to give us a specific time.

**FEMALE:** The length of time Aids has been around?

**MALE:** Whether there are any treatments available in this country, so people would know. Because I don't think people who are ill here or who might become ill and might not have the resource. People might not know exactly if there're any treatment here available for it. Any of the symptoms, any of the infections.

**FEMALE:** Anything else you would want to know about with regards to Aids?

**MALE:** What really causes the Aids virus?

**FEMALE:** What else?

**MALE:** The symptoms I would like to know. What is the symptoms. What really happens when you have the virus. Say like the first few months or the first
What is the best way to get the information to the gay community? What is the best way to reach your community?

**MALE:** Well, you can't hold a seminar and say, "All you gay people out there, just come". You can't do that. The best way to get out information about what is the first stages is by TV and radio. That's the only way you could do. You can't hold a seminar and put an advertisement in the TV and say "All you gay people out there, you want to know if you have Aids". You want to know what is the symptoms? Come. You can't do that. The best way is for television and radio.

**MALE:** They could also have a documentary on TV for about three months. Let's say every two days around eight to nine at nights. Or at seven to eight in the morning. Anything nice, because the person may have to go to work. So you always have that information readily available.

**FEMALE:** Any other ways? Who would you believe most?

**MALE:** Our peers.

**FEMALE:** Anybody else?

**MALE:** Not necessarily our peers. Somebody comes and they show you, whether that person is homosexual or not, but they come and show you that they're really interested, you could see whether somebody is really interested in you or not, you would believe them most.
FEMALE: I think the question is not too good in the way it's phrased. It's who would you believe in most? There's the counselling situation and there's the face to face, where you could select who you are, speaking to and the mass media situation.

MALE: Oh gosh!, it's too late for the face to face. That's my opinion. My personal opinion. That is four years after face to face is great, it is great. Fantastic.

FEMALE: You cannot say it's too late. You have the communication campaing. You have one part is face to face, the counselling and the other one is television, the media.

MALE: Well, we have never had any media specifically oriented, you see. We have never had it.

FEMALE: That's why we asking you. So how what other ways you want it and who would you believe if another way comes up?

MALE: I still don't understand this question.

MALE: I say face to face providing that a friend of mine told me where you come and meet somewhere and talk about it in about 10, 15 of us. Get into a room and talk about in, providing that there is someone there he knows everything about it.

MALE: Well of course you would believe the media as well, presentation is tastefully done. You wouldn't have somebody who looks like a 45 year old bigot sitting on the television and say that, "Well, all yuh gay men, al yuh must understand that we, we compassionate
is interested in his own welfare and the welfare of his peers, then maybe they might incorporate some sort of informational program yet towards homosexual. I'm doing it for my peers, Yes. I've also written a play on the topic that I hope stems to be an educational forum, I know it is. I am also involved with the hotline, as well, trying to get volunteers for the hotline, gay volunteers, because we must have an input from our own peers. I'm speaking specifically for my peers, but I wish that everybody else would also demand the kind of help-care facilities and education for their own individual peers. Not only homosexuals, because we are all affected.

FEMALE: What has been the response of gay communities to Aids? O.K., well go back to that question just now. What messages would you like to convey to the Ministry of Health? What message would you like to communicate to the Ministry of Health?

MALE: There should be more public awareness. That they tell the public more set up institutions where people, you know, set up institutions for gay people. Things like that.

FEMALE: O.K. anything else.

MALE: Emphasis right now on education is more on the heterosexuals. They should point their finger now more so to gays as well.

MALE: Let them know that we think that they don't really have our welfare at safe. They don't really care about us. I think they don't really care much, or
need. Sometimes I feel what we do here is meaningless, but I hope that it isn't, because the homosexual community is bigger than we think it is, and the bisexual community is indeed much larger than we can ever imagine to angle. So unless we get up and get.... Anyway I have a suspicion the politicians don't care about the public anyway. They only care about themselves. They have always been selfish and they continue to be selfish.

FEMALE: Let me make a statement in here. Political authorities make policies and set down laws, with that kind of thing in mind, what would be the message you would like to send to the political authorities?

MALE: As a homosexual?

FEMALE: Yes.

MALE: That is very difficult, because they do not condone homosexuality, they would never condone homosexuality... seem as though they are compassionate or sensitive towards it. I can't say that. I really have to think about that.

FEMALE: Anybody else? (Pause) What message would you like to convey to your relatives? (Repeat questions).

MALE: I don't know what to say.

FEMALE: Anybody else?
MALE: And I would say I do not have a problem with that, you know because my mother would entertain... if I bring home a gay man, my mother would entertain the gay man just as she would entertain a strange friend.

FEMALE: O.K., What would you say to your friends and partners?

MALE: Unite and demand proper health care and education. That is the only way we're going to look after ourselves.

FEMALE: Any other message?

MALE: Unite, I think that is the important thing.

FEMALE: And what would your message be to the general public?

MALE: Aids is a killer, Aids is a killer. Be careful.

FEMALE: Any other message?

MALE: I think the public has to realize that we are not a lethal group... not as lethal as they point us out to be. We don't go around biting people, or attacking or mauling anybody, because those are the misconceptions that the general public has. We are regular people like anybody else. The only thing with us is that we have a particular sexual preference. That's about it. So they should learn to care and understand.
they fall sick or so abroad. Or at least there's talk of some treatment abroad I mean AZT is very popular abroad, they talk about it. But no local person has ever come across here and mention the word. Never mention AZT!! And AZT seems to be at least some kind of treatment, early treatment of the disease. Whether or not it's going to prolong your life for 10 years or 10 months, but I mean, even a glimmer of hope would be better than nothing. There has never been a programme where there is a glimmer of hope. Never! All the promotion, it talks about the myst death. It try to procure family life, then it talks about dealth. But there is no in-between, you know, find it is amazing because there is an ... that article... a foreign article that read in the magazine for the plague. The work of the optimist in Aids research is far better than the work of the pessimist, but it seems the opposite way around here. Why is that so? And we are a developed Third World country.

FEMALE: Is it likely.... How likely is it that the gay community in Trinidad and Tobago would create some kind of support group to care for Aids patients?

MALE: It is very likely, very soon. If I have to die for it, it would happen. Because nobody else is going to do it.

FEMALE: Any other response? O.K. Is there anything you want to add that we have not asked?

MALE: We didn't talk about the gay community and religion.
FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS ON AIDS

TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

Session X
9 SEPTEMBER 1988

PERSONS WITH HIV VIRUS

SYLVIE COHEN
Consultant
EUROPEAN ECONOMIC COMMISSION

Group moderator
CLAUDETTE FRANCIS
SESSION X: HIV
INTRODUCTION:

MALE: I am 22 years of age, unemployed and live with my grandparents, so far since I found out of my illness, I am a little mind over matter, I have begun taking it on and I began feeling worse day by day. Since I have been taken by the doctor things has changed and I am feeling a little bit better, but the only problem I seem to have now is my grandmother. Last night she found out I have aids and the decision is I have to leave and I have now where to go and seems to be bothering me a lot. On top of that she knows that I am a homosexual, she never like the life style I live. I don't know what to say again, this is something I have to live with.

FEMALE: I am 33 years of age, I worked with the Public service and have four children.

MALE: I am 19 years of age, I work at Inland and Security Land, I live with my grandfather and he's a widow.

FEMALE: I am 21 years, single and live on my own also has a daughter who is 3 years. I am unemployed.

MALE: I am 39 years of age, I worked with Works as a watchman, has 3 children one with a girl who lives south, and one with another lady who has it. They come and tell me the girl has the thing, so the doctor asked me how I would feel about that. I wouldn't put her down or abandon her, I would stay around and make she feel as a woman.
QUESTION: Could you tell us the most serious disease facing Trinidad and Tobago today?

ANSWER: I would say the most serious disease facing Trinidad today is the aids disease, the coke.

MALE Aids, cancer and diabetes.

MALE Aids, cancer diabetes and drugs.

QUESTION: Where did you first hear about aids?

ANSWER: First, where I hear about aids is I was working Diego Martin and the bossman invited me up by him to help him off load a sea land, and there was a news flash stating that Trinidad has just found their first aids victim, otherwise I would have known nothing about it.

FEMALE I heard the public talked about it, I can say exactly where. I heard the public saying about the new disease spreading around.

FEMALE On television, newspaper.

MALE I hear it on television.

QUESTION: How much do you think you know about it?

ANSWER: I don't know too much about it, I don't know how it came.

MALE I would like someone to tell me how it came about.

FEMALE I know you can get it through sexual contact, through cuts one person having one, breast feeding.

FEMALE I heard on a documentary on television, there's no cure for aids, but there are different medicine that can help the person.
MALE I think I can learn about it still because just knowing you can get it through sexual contact, blood transfusion, cuts and bruises, needles but I feel some where along the line there is more to that.

QUESTION: If you wanted to get more information where would you go?

ANSWER: There are clippings, booklets, you can read the papers look at documentaries on the television, and each time when you listen to these things you learn more.

FEMALE I think the information is not accessed to most members of the public, if you go to a meeting or a health centre you would not get a hand out. There are documentaries on television but you won't get one every week.

MALE If there is a person who has patients, you can go and sit down and talk to him. As the lady said you can hardly get it so from on television, sometimes America brings a little on it.

QUESTION: Some people mention television, pamphlets etc, if you have a choice which one would you use to get your information?

You can go to the doctor he would have more information.

MALE I would not say the doctor, because the doctor has a lot of work to be done, most of the times I visit the doctor when I am ill it has to be on a Wednesday, most of the time it is urgent, there was a time when I took ill, pain all over my stomach and I said to myself I am going by the doctor, I had to remain with all the pain because he was not there, He would not see patients unless it is emergency, that is why you can't say doctor because you would not know if he would be able to do it, it seems that he's busy. I think the doctor is out.
FEMALE: I think there should be more than one person like the doctor, even we asked the doctor what is going on, we can go further to ask more information, where scientist is working on it more.

MALE: Then the documentary, they tend to be short, you would not get a documentary where you would be able to get more information for a certain length of time, like a hour or so. You would find you would get a documentary for half an hour or even 15 minutes, you would not get it for a length of time to help you.

MALE: I suggest the pamphlet and the doctor is the two best, you should be able to get a group gathering with a video on aids and everyone sitting watching and then giving their verdict.

QUESTION: Have you ever had a chance to discuss it with anyone?

ANSWER: Yes

FEMALE: Only the doctor and he's the only person I usually attend too.

MALE: I have friends who I used to dance with and they found out about me and I started getting a lot of phone call at home, they keep on saying I am hearing you are at the hospital, I heard you are dying, I hear you dead it's a whole set of different confusion you are hearing. When they really found out he has it but he's home, they say he's not strong as before when he used to come rehearsal. One good friend I really had, he was like a brother to me, but it is very hard for him to know that is going to happen. He started to wonder if he has the thing what to do, he just started to panic, it makes no sense panicking.
QUESTION: Were you saying you can discuss it with a friend?

ANSWER: Yes, my partner.

FEMALE

QUESTION: What was the discussion like?

ANSWER: I would speak to Dr. Clairbourne and he would speak to me and I would speak to my partner. He decided that we already have it and we have to live with it. It is only a few months that we have took the test, otherwise we do not bother about it.

FEMALE

I spoke to the doctor about it, after my husband died, the doctor called me and told me to come and get a test and anything could be possible, he then told me there's nothing to worry about it do not affect female. I did a research and I get some information and I went and told my parents about it although they are christians it did not really bother them so much. My sisters who live in the States I told her she sent me magazines with the information and I accepted it. They do not really bother themselves if I would die. I remember one time I was sick and I could not get to work on time and another time the employees had to get a medical they just look at it and they say they would not put it on file, that only happen because I had two friends who had known about it, but my friends are no longer employed and I would have to go through the normal routine since the office is very strict.

QUESTION: How serious do you think the problem is in Trinidad and Tobago?
MALE

ANSWER: It is very serious.

FEMALE

It is serious especially when you don't know you have it. The person who give me it I did not know until I get it, and that someone else would give someone else and so it is spread.

MALE

Next thing some of them would know they have it and they are shame to come and take a test.

FEMALE

I think this is a very serious problem, I don't think the public have been aware that aids has been around for a while and that even people are living with it until 70 or 80 years they might not know they have it because of their life style. I think they should be aware if they have symptoms or they come in contact with it they should take precaution so it could be a cut down in the population.

MALE

They should let the public go and take blood test in the medical centre. They should encourage the public to take a test for example looking at me you would not know if I have it or not.

QUESTION: What kind of people you think are most likely to get it? Why?

ANSWER: I think homosexual because they are doing the wrong things a man was made for a woman not a man for a man that is the way it all started.

FEMALE

I would say normal people like myself, it have bisexual out there they are both men and women and it have women like myself, we don't have to be a lesbian to get it. You can go with a man and you would not know he's bisexual. It is spreading to anyone normal it don't really have to be homosexuals. But now the spread is really among homosexuals.
FEMALE: There is a lot of bisexuals in our society, looking at the homosexuals people say they are the one spreading the virus this is how it is based now because women would not go with a bisexual.

MALE: Sometimes a woman would not go with a bisexual, sometimes she might have a man doing that and she would not know,

QUESTION: Are there any kind of people are mostly accused?

ANSWER: The younger people.

MALE: It is true because for the time I have been outside there I have been hearing people dying from aids and it is the younger ones from the ages 18 years to 23 years.

QUESTION: Have you ever heard of any other groups who have the aids?

ANSWER: Children, babies because people who don't know they have it and come and have a baby, next thing you go into the hospital and thinking you are normal next thing you heard the baby died.

QUESTION: What are the chances of someone you know getting it? What are the chances of someone you know are least likely to get it?

ANSWER: People who have been married and wild and unfaithful to their partners.

MALE: I would say nuns and priests.

MALE: Stick to one person and one partner
**QUESTION:** What are the chances of someone you know could get aids?

**ANSWER:** Out there now people can get it through sexual contact.

**FEMALE** Very rare you would hear by cuts and bruises, I don't know anybody personally who got it that way.

**QUESTION:** What do you think causes aids?

**ANSWER:** I really don't know what causes it and why it is so hard to dead.

**MALE** It comes like cancer.

**MALE** I don't know how it came about but it can live within the body cells.

**FEMALE** I went to a seminar, and Dr. Gomez really explained it is a virus that attacks the immune systems. I think I would like to see a programme like that on television where they really show you how the virus is surviving and going on the normal levels.

**FEMALE** At times you would feel good and then next time you would feel feverish and have the cold and also the sickness you get are very funny one time you are good and the next time you are sick. There are few times I have been sick and I thought I was coming down with a cold or virus and now he explained it to me.

**QUESTION:** How do you think it is transmitted from one person to another?

**ANSWER:** We have been hearing more about sexual contact, needles and transfusion of blood. I heard about the cuts and bruises but I don't think you can get it by that.

**MALE** Babies, they could born with it and without it.

**FEMALE** I think my husband get it from blood transfusion,
was sick and he needed blood, and after a week he started to get a rash on his skin and he complained; he is feeling a difference in his body. During the year 1981 he started getting all kind of things on his skin and it would leave marks all over. He took a test and it proves nothing. We was wondering wondering who gave him the blood, either an Indian person. The doctor told him if the blood did not match it would have turn into a reaction but he kept saying he is feeling a difference. There was a time I got the cold and I was feeling very weak I got could not get up from my bed not knowing I had the aids virus.

**QUESTION:** Can you get it from someone who has the virus? How?

**QUESTION:** Can you tell from looking at a person if he or she has it?

**ANSWER:** Absolutely not, because you might not have anything on your skin for example me you would not know if I have it or not.

**ANSWER:** You might not be able to tell, someone might be looking good and they could have it.

**QUESTION:** Can a person who look healthy who as aids pass it on to another person? Why? How?

**ANSWER:** It depends on how they feel, if they feel they want to go to bed and one does not know the other is infected, when the different fluids is passed on we know for a fact that the other person has it.
FEMALE I would say yes because I could be walking through town and I could see a nice person and he don't know I have it and I put myself with him.

FEMALE I think we got it from healthy looking people.

MALE There is a difference, my opinion about it is a person who has aids have different signs a healthy carrier and an unhealthy carrier. The healthy carrier looks some what like me, and the unhealthy carrier would look some what like he's sick.

QUESTION: Could you suggest the difference by looking?

ANSWER: What I would say looking at me you can see that I am sick, but looking at him he's not sick but if we go down the road together, people would say this guy is sick but they would not know what he's sick from.

FEMALE When you have the virus you don't look sick, when you have the disease you lose weight especially in your face and other parts of your body, you would get the cold always coughing there's a lot of things, there is a big difference. having the virus and the disease.

FEMALE When you have the virus your body would still have some resistent and you could cover up but after a time your body would keep going down and down.

QUESTION: Do you think by having the disease could increase someone chances of getting aids or it does not matter?

ANSWER: To me it does not matter.

MALE

FEMALE To me it matters, because if you don't take care of it it can get worse.
For instance you take the aids test example V.D, I think it is two test means the same.

Do you think having a Veneral Disease could increase the chances of getting aids? Or you think it does not matter?

If someone has Veneral Disease and they don't have aids it could be cured, they can go and get medication. If you get aids it would not be able to be cured, if someone has Veneral Disease they would have to be more careful in the future and therefore the chances of getting aids would be less.

Let us talk about the HIV test, what does the test tells you?

Having a blood test tells you how high it is in your body, if you are positive or negative, if you have it or not.

It tell you the antibodies for the HIV virus, it does not tell you how long you have it.

Where did you take the test?

I took my test at CMC and getting the result was a very big problem, I never get it until I was called and told I was infected.

I find they take to long before you can get the result, because I had to go back a few time well.

I think so too. I think it should be stopped for the length of time you waited a lot of people could get infected.

Not only infected, but just the mere idea of having it.
FEMALE

Cont'd

The frustration waiting and hearing your partner has died.

QUESTION:

Did anybody take the test anywhere else besides CMC?

ANSWER:

MALE

My girl took a test upstairs UWI.

QUESTION:

Are there anybody had any problems taking the test in the places you'll have identified?

ANSWER:

MALE

When I went to take mine, the male nurse who was to give me the test, he said why are they sending people to take the test and they can't do anything about it. It was at the Caribbean Medical Centre.

QUESTION:

Have you any people you know going to take the test had any problem?

ANSWER:

MALE

My girl did not get any problem. We went and take the test and they told us to come back a certain time for the result and we came back and get the result.

FEMALE

I know someone right now want to go and take the test, the doctor said I must be sure the person to whom I was with has the virus before I get the test because they said bottles was scarce.

FEMALE

I know someone who wants to go and take the test, they said if they were asked they would say someone has died, for them to be sure the test was given to the person.

MALE

I understand some people went to Dr. Clairborne, but he said they should come back in six weeks time and when we came he continuously telling us to come back.

FEMALE

There are many problems going to CMC, when you go people feel you are coming for a VD test, it is a government place. That alone would stop people from going to CMC, they should
**QUESTION:** Describe what you think is the ideal place for taking a test?

**ANSWER:**

**MALE**

I think the best place you can go is by Dr, Clairborne.

**FEMALE**

Dr, Clairborne cannot do everybody, so it is the same means. My grandmother who don't know so she would put him out, but she don't know she's safe, but she thinks she's unsafe and can't use anything he has. This is how they feel even the nurses in the hospital would hesitate to come and see about you,

**FEMALE**

They can set up a place at the Mt. Hope Centre, nobody is using there.

**FEMALE**

If the public gets to know about the centre, they would hesitate the same way just like the CMC. You see a crowded place nobody would not know what you are going for, there are many sections and you could go to your section.

**QUESTION:** What do your friends say about taking the test?

**ANSWER:**

**MALE**

I have no friends,

**MALE**

My friends would say I am not going to take the test because if I find out I have it I would get frustrated and go and drink something or go and jump some building, so to avoid all of that we are not going for any aids test.

**QUESTION:** There are people who would like to pretend that they do not know, what do you think about this attitude?

**ANSWER:**

**MALE**

Stupid.
I think this attitude is very stupid why do they don't want to know. I figure everybody should know about it.

Because of knowing what will happen?

Knowing you would not pass it on to anybody else, that is if you are not wicked. You can go to the doctor and he can check you out.

I think most of the people who say they don't want to know is because they are afraid of some time they can come in contact with someone who has it, so they prefer not to know.

I would say some people would not like to know.

What do you think of the attitude?

I think the attitude is very wrong because if you have it you can go to a doctor and check it out it is better than spreading it.

You have an idea that you have it, you are getting symptoms and you don't know if you have it, go and find out, take a test, so you would know what to expect.

Some people say if they know their results and it is positive and they would want to go out and spread it what do you think of that?

I think that is nonsense becasue people are trying to get a cure for it and by you finding out that you have it, and wanting to go and spread it, you are making it harder for the doctors and them. There isn't a cure as yet and you bringing a lot of infected persons is very hard.
There are no beds in the hospital, it would be difficult for the doctors. It doesn't matter what kind of carrier you are when it is ready for you nothing can stop it.

Yes, it have those kind of people, there are some kind of people naturally wicked if they know they have it they would go and spread it. Some time they might jealous you because of what you have example the material things, they might say you feel you are to high and they would go with you and give you the aids and that is it for you.

It is a physiological problem, when they get it they would say why I have to get it, I don't deserve it, they would think they have been treated unfairly and everything must go down with me. People who have been found to carry the virus, we should all get some kind of psychological help,

At first I was quite frustrated, and Dr. Clairborne spoke to me and it calm me down. What really calm me down is when I found the Lord and he accepted me, I have desired to do more things in life than just studying this disease. There's a lot of things I would like to do in life but don't know where to start.

Why did you take the test?

I took the test because of my partner she was positive.

I had no other choicie but to go and see Dr. Clairborne and I was positive,

I went and take the test because I heard my partner had died and this really shaked me up. The same night he died I went down to CMC and they took the test, I was very shaky and frightened,
I took my test because I was to go on a tour to Canada and they request I have to get a medical.

Before my husband took sick we had gone to my doctor and she ran some test to find out if we had some kind of sickness. When he was sick in the hospital the doctors could not find out what it was, after he died and I went she was out of the country and I went back to her as I was pregnant. She sent me to the hospital with a letter to doctor (Dr, Selby Well) to run some test to see if he had anything.

Have you asked your partner to take the test?

Many times, but eventually he took the test.

Actually I don't have any partner, since I found about it I never saw the guy who gave it to me.

Let us talk a little bit about breaking the news, just as the news was broken to you having to tell someone else, how did you learn you had the virus?

I had known that I had it through a friend of mine who passed it on, we had sexual contact and I noticed that some kind of things coming out on my skin and it come to me that something is wrong somewhere. There was a picture on television showing an Early Frost just what was on my skin I saw it on the persons skin and I say there's no escape. The following day my friend came and he left and he had the same things on his skin.
When I heard my partner died, I went for the blood test and the doctor asked me how do I feel about it. I told him I would not really tell myself I have it, but if he died from it therefore I have it, that is in case the test comes and it is positive I would not be so shaky,

The doctor called me in and told me I had it, one thing I must say I hope if he had to deal with other people if he could put them to sit. I was not aware that females could get the virus, and I could die, that is the sort of concept that I had. I had to laugh afterwards.

How long was that?

That was in 1985.

In keeping of what you are hearing now what would you think of the way you have been told by the medical person?

My own was good because when I first heard about it I got a kind of shaky. When I reached in front of the doctor and he explained to me, I kind of cool down afterwards. It was no problem.

My own was good.

When Dr. Clairborne told me I find it was so very easy.

Did you get all the answers that you wanted to know?

Yes, I got everything.

Yes I wanted to know but I did not ask.
MALE

The questions that I asked I get all the answers.

QUESTION: Support, did you get any kind of support, emotional support?

ANSWERS: Yes, not really because I know he was busy at the moment.

FEMALE

At the time I should have sat down and talked to him, also as I was pregnant.

QUESTION: Have you known any other person who had the virus and told you about the experience with the doctor?

ANSWER: Yes, my partner, she keeps saying she's frightened to go to the doctor, everytime she attends the clinic she feels frightened. When she comes to me with that I get down courage.

QUESTION: Could you describe the ideal situation to give the news to having the virus for counselling example, How do you think counselling should be done?

ANSWER: Persons who find out that they have the disease or the virus they should see the doctor first. There should be a group like ourselves talking and expressing our feelings how we go about life. You would feel it not only you alone out there, it has a lot of more like yourselves.

FEMALE

I think it would not be necessary for a doctor to tell you about the virus, unless he's going to examine you. There might be a counsellor or a social worker who can call you in and explain everything. May be you can have a blood chart showing you the blood group so you can have a clear idea what it is going on. The doctors can save that time sitting down together with you.
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>QUESTION</th>
<th>ANSWER</th>
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<tr>
<td>How did you react to the news?</td>
<td>First it was frightening, but when I spoke to Dr. Clairborne everything was cool.</td>
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<td>First it was very shocking to the girl, she started crying, I went to her and tried calming her down, telling her what is the sense crying it is already there, and you can change it.</td>
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<td>I was not surprised, I sat and take it like a man.</td>
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<td>I was dazed it was like watching a movie, I took the test and I did not expect it to be positive.. After I was told I wondered why me, because my husband has died and I have the children to see about.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Like the emotions what kind of things did you do?</td>
<td>I have a friend who is a nurse she works in maternity when my husband was sick she had see about him. I went over and told her about the situation, I even told my parents because they live in the same building. They accepted it, they could not make any fuss about it.</td>
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<td>After I got over the news, I went back to my usual self because there isn't any cure for it, I started back my dancing until I feel ill.</td>
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<td>After I get over it, I got a job and started to live my normal life.</td>
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<td>How does it affect your life in general?</td>
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ANSWER: Well people and my partners started spreading rumours around. After my partner died they started spreading rumours, but they are not sure if I have the virus. After a time it started to affect me then I forget about it and went on my own, but everything is back to normal now.

FEMALE To a certain extent it make me a better person, I am a Christian, I have a lot of friends, the kind of thing I used to do before I have stopped doing it like going parties, drinking now I am more health conscious of myself. I only eat vegetables, take exercise, dress better, now I live by myself, I think as an adult, it really help me a lot.

MALE It affect me a lot because I have no where to stay, no parents, my mother has died and my father is away, it is just myself and my brother down here, he's the only one I can turn too, but now he's taking aside with me. You find that I would be on the streets, no one to turn too for help.

FEMALE The only difficulty I had with it is when I am walking the streets they would tell me I have aids and I would watch them and smile. The main problem is with my daughter and her grandmother, she was staying by her father mother and they found out that I have aids they started treated me funny until one of her daughter is a nurse and she talked to her and tell her she should not treat me like that. It take a good while before when I go there they started offering me drinks telling me to come and have a seat. My daughter I couldn't support her because I was not working, and her grandmother took her, I began grieving because I wanted to see her.
QUESTION: You talked about people finding out, did you tell anybody?

ANSWER: FEMALE Yes, I told my brothers.

MALE I told my grandfather and my mother does not know anything as yet.

MALE The only person who knows about it is me and the girl, nobody else.

MALE I told my good friend and he told me nothing could be done, and after I told another girl around my me and she bought the news to my grandmother last night.

QUESTION: Why did you chose that person or person that you told?

ANSWER: FEMALE I told my brothers because we are very close, they are all that I have. I could trust them to tell them anything and they won't say anything. I feel good knowing that I have them and I could tell them anything and they won't tell anybody. When they see me they would ask me how are you going and I would say okay..

MALE I told my grandfather because he's the closest to me. He suggest I should really tell my father.

MALE I told my friend because he was the only person I could turn to. If I tell my grandmother is all...hell break lose, before anything could happen I think I tell someone that I could trust.
QUESTION: What was the discussion was about what did you focus on when you were telling the person?

ANSWER:

MALE He really came to me and said that he got the news that I have aids but he said it I turn and watch him and said yes, but he thought I was joking, he said are you serious I said yes. When he realise that I was serious he started to get hilarious and panicked more than me, I just watched him and laughed.

FEMALE My brothers told me they have heard something about Michael because they had known him, I said yes, I went and take the test and it proved positive. I said I do. not have the disease aids, I am not going to die I only have the virus. I am healthy and alright so do not worry about me.

MALE Well the rumours started to spread about my partner so my grandfather insist that I must take a test and everybody else even my father got the rumour and he told me to take the test, so that is how everybody got to know.

FEMALE I had to explain to him, I told him the doctor called me in to do a test and the test was found positive, and the little information I got from the television we discussed it.

QUESTION: What do you think about the attitude towards person about the virus?

ANSWER: Well, I would look at different, if someone put themselves towards getting it they can look at that person very funny. The average man on the street, you can't look at him and say he has it, sickness is there for everybody.
MALE Cont'd People who look at other people and frown up their faces, could get it. It is there for anybody.

FEMALE So far I have been fortunate, knowing that I have the virus have been very nice to me and they haven't shown me any bad face. When I was having my baby I had to be isolated in a room, the nurses there were very nice. They had to wear special clothes to protect themselves, there was one nurse I always meet, I have never known her before, she's so nice until we have became friends now. The main problem in the public is that lack of knowledge, for instance you have cancer, it is most dreadest disease and a lot of people has cancer in Trinidad and Tobago. People don't shun them, even though you can get aids from anybody, it is a contagious disease, it is only contagious only if you have sexual intercourse or blood transfusion, or needles. A lot of the public do not really understand that they think you can get it from someone who is affected and you sit on the same chair.

QUESTION: What do you think about the attitude towards people with the disease?

ANSWER: Since my grandmother found out she hasn't spoke to me for the day, it was just as I was leaving home to come here, I told her I was going Holiday Inn, and she said alright. That was all I don't know what she would say when I reach home. She is the only person knows and she would not tell anybody.
QUESTION: How would you describe the sexual activity at present?

ANSWER: I had a kind of fear and they say that you can use condoms, then I said to myself suppose I have sex with someone and they get aids and die, I would have a kind of fear.

QUESTION: How is your awareness of aids affect your sexual behaviour?

ANSWER: With me as soon as I am finished I get a feverish feeling, so I keep far away form it.

QUESTION: Do you think a person with aids virus should stay away from sex?

ANSWER: It depends on your feelings for instance it is very hard to stay away because sometimes you get the urge. You have to remember yourself too because when you have finished you get a bad feeling, and you have to take a rest.

MALE

I would say you shouldn't have it because it increase your chances if you are a healthy carrier to become an aids victim. It makes no sense having sex because you had enough of it.

FEMALE

We can't say people shouldn't have sex because the partner you are with should be aware of it and if he or her is willing to take the risk it should be provided with the necessary protection, there sex life will have to be limited.
QUESTION: Is there someone with the virus anything one can do to avoid giving it to other people?

ANSWER: The safest thing is to use condoms or keep away from sex.

MALE

MALE Use condoms.

QUESTIONS: Could somebody who has the virus could give somebody it those two people who are having sexual contact could they get it a second time, if we stay together?

QUESTION: Have you ever heard of safe sex practices?

ANSWER: No.

MALE

MALE I have heard about it but I don't know what it is really all about.

FEMALE Safer sex, is like using condoms.

QUESTION: Which sexual practices are likely to spread the virus?

ANSWER: Oral sex.

MALE Anal sex.

QUESTION: Which sexual practices are not likely to spread the virus?

ANSWER: Sex with condoms, no oral sex.
QUESTION: Have you tried any of the safe sex practices that you make reference to before?

ANSWER: Yes, condoms.

QUESTION: Do you think it would be a permanent action to use condoms or that is just for now?

ANSWER: I think is something just for now, that is my way of thinking.

FEMALE This is my way of thinking, if I have to get married to my partner and he don't like using condoms. He may use it now and then to me it would nto be a bother, I don't know if it is risking the chances and I could still get it.

QUESTION: Is the condom for the time being or permanent?

ANSWER: A friend of mines who has aids for some time now, he said he used a lot of super condoms and nothing has ever happened.

QUESTION: What would you recommend to someone who wants to avoid aids?

ANSWER: Have their partners and their selves checked out.
FEMALE If you are going into a new relationship, both of you should take a blood test, you must take one too because your partner might feel funny you asking him to have a blood test.

FEMALE Do not enter any sexual relationship without knowing your partner. This is the only way you can do it is by getting a test done.

FEMALE I would advise that person to stick with your partner.

QUESTION: Have you ever tried using a condom?

ANSWER: Yes, I tried many time but it was not satisfying to me, but I had no other choice but to use it.

MALE Maybe if I had tried a condom I would of been home all now.

QUESTION: Have you ever asked your partner to use a condom?

ANSWER: Yes, but I never really liked it.

MALE Yes.

FEMALE Yes.

QUESTION: Some of you said you like using condom, where did you get it?

ANSWER: From pharmacies, drugstores, I think there should be a place where you can get it,
FEMALE: You can join the clinic.

MALE: You can get it from Family Planning.

QUESTION: Do you think it has an effect when using it? What kind of effect?

ANSWER: Yes, because you have to stop and fix, it is kind of annoying.

QUESTION: You said you like to go out flat, is it a difference?

ANSWER: When you go out flat, you feel better than using the condom, but now as they say you have to use the condom, you have to use it. There is no feelings in the condom.

MALE: Then again sometimes you go to a pharmacy to buy condoms and probably when you reach home the condom is rottened, and you go and having fun then next thing you know condom burst and you don't know anything.

MALE: The first time I used it I feel I did not do anything, I walked out the hotel room. I wasted time.

QUESTION: Do you think there is a difference in condoms what you get free or what you buy?

ANSWER: I never get any free, I always buy,

MALE: I think in pharmacies they don't give you "Suntan" they only give "Rough Riders etc", you could get that in Family Planning,
MALE

QUESTION: Do you still use condoms?

ANSWER: Yes.

MALE

I don't have the use for it.

QUESTION: Are you using condoms more than before?

ANSWER: Yes.

MALE

Is that the cause because of the awareness of aids?

ANSWER: Yes, so my partner would not get infected.

QUESTION: Is it a safe protection against aids?

ANSWER: I would not say a 100% percent safe, I would say about 50%.

MALE

Doctors told me to use it, when you use it, it won't be so safe but you can still try using it. So I tried what he said and I am using it.

QUESTION: Why did you say it is not 100% safe?

ANSWER: It depends to me how much pressure you apply, my partner said some of them is rotten, some of them could be new.
QUESTION: Have you been in a situation where you wanted to use a condom and your partner don't want you?

ANSWER: No, my partner wanted me to use one and I did not want to use one,

MALE Since I know about it my doctor tell me to use condoms but my partner said she has no feeling with the condoms, sometimes we would sit and talk and I would tell her the doctor said I have to use the condoms, she would say, if he says so well go ahead, and from that I started using it.

QUESTION: Would you recommend condoms to anyone?

ANSWER: Yes, civilian or anybody,

MALE I would recommend it to the public because there is a lot of things happening with the virus.

FEMALE I would recommend it knowing the state that I am in right now.

MALE Do you worry about aids?

ANSWER: Well I don't really worry because I don't have time to worry. The same time I take to worry I used it in excercise, condition the mind, the only time the worry comes is when I have to visit Dr. Clairborne, then I would think that I have it.
FEMALE  It only bothers me when I am sick otherwise I sometime forget that I have it.

MALE   I don't take it on because someone right round the corner has it and did nto drink poison.

MALE   The only thing that bothers me is that I am down and out.

FEMALE  The only time it bothers me is if I am sick and down in bed flat.

QUESTION In terms of aids what is your biggest concern?

ANSWER: Getting medical treatment like Paps Smear and other test done because you going to different Health Centre you are told that people should take necessary precautions, you feel more obligated and you have to inform them and they make you feel bad. My biggest problem is going and getting medical care, than going to face the public,

MALE   Stressing on the barber shops, they need to be educated on these things to because the equipments that they use can be infected by another person.

QUESTION:  What more would you like to know about aids?

ANSWER: I think I would like to know everything,

MALE   I would like to know if you can get through kissing,

FEMALE  I would like to know how it came about and the various cure for it.
MALE

It effects your immune system, a common cold is a virus too, you can use Vitamins C to build up your resistance and you start feeling better once your resistance is up. Could this happen with the same aids virus?

FEMALE

If after a certain time that woman becomes pregnant what are the chances of her baby not having it?

MALE

Zinc could fight against bacteria into your system what would you advise one to use zinc to help build up your system and natural juices direct from a fruit or a vegetable.

QUESTION:

What would be the best way to get the information across to you?

ANSWER:

The only way I can see that if I bounce up people like myself, a conversation might come up and we might find out that all of us is in the same bracket.

QUESTION:

What is the best way of getting this information across to you if there was no Dr, Clairborne?

ANSWER:

What I would have done is right abroad and speak to doctor who knows about it and send me or come and speak to people like us using pamphlets
**QUESTION:** You assume he is the only person to know about it or are there any other person here?

**ANSWER:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FEMALE</th>
<th>I don't know of any.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MALE</td>
<td>No I don't know.</td>
</tr>
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</table>

**QUESTION:** Do you know of any doctor who can give you the information?

**ANSWER:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FEMALE</th>
<th>The doctors you talked to them and they don't know much, you have to get a specialist who can tell you about it. The social workers have information.</th>
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<tr>
<td>MALE</td>
<td>There is one guy and through my grandfather I found out he is a Canadian, I get in contact with him and spoke to him.</td>
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**QUESTION:** If you had the opportunity to speak with different kinds of people what would be the message you would sent? Seeing that you could talk to the Ministry or the Ministry of Health what would you say to them?

**ANSWER:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MALE</th>
<th>I would ask them for a place where people in a position like me at home if they could get a home for them.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FEMALE</td>
<td>When you go to the doctors and they give you a prescription and you go into the Hospital to get the tablets, these medicine are not available.</td>
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</table>
MALE

That happen to me many times, I go for tablet and never have any in the dispensary, therefore you have to go out in the drugstores and it will cost over a hundred dollars and more. Right now my brother is trying to get some tablets at the dispensary and cannot get it, So I have to suffer until he gets it.

FEMALE

The authority should think seriously in terms of medical care for the aids patient, I think not a great effort is made to educate the public, the fact is that people do not have access to the information. All schools should have that, even public places. We should have more access to things even the blood test not just one centre, not only CMC there must be more, and people must know to ask their doctor to get the test done for them.

FEMALE

I think in this country the public is not notified much about it, they are not trying hard enough. They should be giving pamphlets and not sticking it all over the place.

QUESTION:

Assuming you can talk to the Policticains, like Robbie and Atwell what would you say to them? Polictician make laws and it is set down by policies assuming you can talk to them, what would you say to them?

ANSWER:

I would say get rid of them, let them get out of this place because I can't understand like the young lady was saying the dispensary, imagine you are going into the dispensary for your own health or someone dying and you can't get the working people paying tax and the same people paying tax cannot get these things.
Look my grandfather two months ago he was in a little scrap with a fellar, he tried to rob him, hit him with a piece of iron in his back, the doctor gave him pain killers. What you think is pain killers it is Panadol. Imagine going into the dispensary for Panadol and you can't get it.

They are taking out Medical Surcharges out of my salary and you cannot get a prescription in the hospital.

There should be more money to see about the search and facilities for the AIDS patients and also let someone force them or pressure them into making a discrimination against the AIDS patients.

I figure Robbie especially should be more educated about this thing, this is something serious he figure that the only person has the disease is homosexual and bisexual. But he need to be more educated on this because a civilian like me happen to get in contact with it and I am a man. I need help my partner need help this young I need help regardless of what it is you have to put this behind your back. His family could be in danger even he could be in danger, I am suggesting that because I heard some remarks in town from certain people I against those homosexuals but you can't be down on them so because oth people are in danger too.

I would like to tell the Politicicians and Robbie to be and think about people like us, not only of the public a the things the public need are seriously.
QUESTION: Your partners what would you say to them?

ANSWER:

MALE
The only person is the girl because I have it and she has it.

FEMALE
I would say because the both of us have it I would say we have to stay together, if you want the relationship to break up don't feel bounded tome because both of us have it.

FEMALE
I have a friend he knows that I have aids, well he has been with me for quite a while assisting me with my legal papers after my husband died, he has been supporting me over 3 years and I do not expect anything from him because I would not like to start a relationship and then he gets aids and die. He can feel free to marry someone else or go with them he's not obligated to me. We are very close.

MALE
A widow in my case has no sex partner presently, what would you advise should he find a sex partner in the position as him or should he find someone like me?

FEMALE
I find they should form a group where you can speak to that partner comfortable, somebody who you can talk to have a relationship with. Some people feel they don't have long to live.
QUESTIONS:

Assuming you can talk to your parents and relatives what would you say to them?

ANSWER:

As far as what I would tell my grandfather I would say since he build up a kind of attitude since he find out I have it, I can't sleep on the same bed with him, since I was a little child I have been sleeping on the same bed, The wardrobe was for both of us, my clothes he to come out of the wardrobe. If I hang my jock shorts on the line he would pass under it and make a big query about that, I told him he can get it like that it must be direct contact, I try keeping away from him, he usually take o food and put it in the plate I have my personal things if that plate break I have to buy another

FEMALE

My family has accepted it, I have 3 sisters awe they all live in New York, my mother told my sis also my aunt had known because she fixed up my I am very grateful to them for caring about me, they are sick I cook and help them out. My far not treat me bad, they would ask me how I am f They are always interested.

MALE

I wouldn't tell them about my personal part I say just be careful because they are very funny they don't know when something is confidential,
FEMALE  I would say be careful take necessary precaution when having sex, always have safe sex.

QUESTION: What would you say to the general population?

MALE  Be careful.

MALE  People like Dr. Clairborne, Mr. Bartholmenew they are on top they knwo about this thing more than anybody else. How this meeting is organised I find they should organise more with patients and workers of the same company or firm in order to save civilian out there from getting it and precaution the homosexuals and bisexuals.

FEMALE  Be careful take precaution and try to find out as much as possible about aids and don't think you can't get it. Think about us.

END OF SESSION