

# Family Education Trust

(Family and Youth Concern)

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## **End the spin about sexual health and tell the truth about safe sex**

*Leading GP calls for a more radical approach to address the sexual health crisis*

Sexually transmitted infection (STI) rates in the UK continue to climb inexorably in spite of increasing condom provision and education. Recent figures from the Health Protection Agency showed a further increase in the number of diagnoses in Genito-Urinary Medicine (GUM) clinics during 2004. It is universally accepted that the UK is in the midst of a sexual health crisis, with over a million new cases of STIs every year, and children as young as eleven getting gonorrhoea, genital warts and other STIs in increasing numbers. Among sexually active teenagers, as many as one in ten may be infected with chlamydia.

A new health education leaflet published today by the Family Education Trust shows why the government's response to the crisis is failing. Entitled *Sexual Spin: Sorting fact from fiction about sexually transmitted infections*, the leaflet demonstrates how a condom-based strategy for addressing the crisis in sexual health is doomed to failure. It aims to cut through the spin and get to the heart of the problem by facing the facts.

The leaflet's author, Dr Trevor Stammers, a leading GP and Senior Tutor at St George's Hospital Medical School commented:

“It is time to end the spin on sexual health and to tell the truth about safe sex – that it is more about the choice of partner, than whether condoms are used or not. Condom use is a risk reduction measure that has been well proven to substantially reduce HIV transmission but for most other STIs the evidence is far less clear.”

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Dr Stammers continued:

“The World Health Organisation has stated that the best way to avoid catching an STI is to stay faithful for life to one person whom you know is uninfected. Having regular sex, even with condoms, is likely to lead to infection within a year or two if you have a partner with chlamydia, gonorrhoea, genital warts, herpes or syphilis. For too long our emphasis has been on damage limitation. We now desperately need to shift our focus and concentrate on prevention.”

Family Education Trust will be distributing the leaflet via doctors’ surgeries, GUM clinics, pregnancy crisis centres and other services offering advice on sexual health.

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*‘Sexual Spin’ is available from Family Education Trust at the following prices:*

*10 copies - £2.25 (inc p&p)*  
*25 copies - £4.00 (inc p&p)*  
*50 copies - £6.50 (inc p&p)*  
*100 copies - £12.50 (inc p&p)*

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