

Resolution 1394 (2004)¹

The involvement of men, especially young men, in reproductive health

Parliamentary Assembly

1. Traditionally, issues of reproductive health have been considered “women’s issues”, an area where the role of men was the forgotten factor. As women are the ones who become pregnant, they have, all too often, been made to deal alone with the potential consequences of being sexually active – be it decisions on contraception or even abortion, or bearing and rearing children. Many men, especially those in stable relationships, do take on their share of responsibility for reproductive health choices and fully support their partners. However, even after the advent of HIV/Aids, some men – especially young men – shirk their responsibilities.
2. There are several areas of reproductive health which should (and do) concern men as much as women: family planning, men’s sexual health (sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV/Aids, and other illnesses such as cancer) and men’s reproductive health (especially the rise in male infertility).
3. The 4th World Conference for Women (Beijing, 1995) Platform for Action recognised the need for men’s participation in sexual and reproductive health when it stated that “equal relationships between women and men in matters of sexual relations and reproduction, including full respect for the integrity of the person, require mutual respect, consent and shared responsibility for sexual behaviour and its consequences”. On this basis, issues of reproductive health should no longer be considered “women’s issues”. Men should be encouraged to get more involved in family planning and in looking after their own sexual and reproductive health.
4. To this end, education, information and advice on reproductive and sexual health has to be specifically targeted at men and their needs. In particular, family-planning providers, governments and NGOs should look at ways of reaching out to young men and supporting them in their reproductive and sexual health choices.
5. The Parliamentary Assembly thus calls on the governments of Council of Europe member and Observer states, in co-operation with appropriate partners, to:
6. The Parliamentary Assembly thus calls on the governments of Council of Europe member and Observer states, in co-operation with appropriate partners, to:
 - 6.1. put into place special awareness-raising programmes to encourage men – especially young men – to take responsibility for their sexual behaviour, understand and support women’s contraceptive choices and increase communication between partners;
 - 6.2. promote the use of condoms as a protection against sexually transmitted infections (including HIV/Aids) and ensure that effective contraception is easily accessible at low cost to women and men, but especially young men and boys;
 - 6.3. target sex education programmes at young men and boys including in schools by professionals (for example from family-planning clinics), helping them to become aware of their own sexual and reproductive health needs and related family issues, such as the necessity to avoid teenage pregnancies;

1. (see [Doc. 10207](#), report of the Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men, rapporteur: Ms Zapfl-Helbling). Text adopted by the Standing Committee, acting on behalf of the Assembly, on 7 September 2004



- 6.4. improve men's access to reproductive health services, ensuring that family-planning services offer men-only sessions at their clinics as well as encouraging men to attend clinics with their partner(s); testing, treatment, advice and counselling on a range of sexually transmitted diseases (including HIV/Aids), other genito-urinary conditions and family planning should be available at such sessions;
- 6.5. actively pursue research into new male contraceptive methods, as well as into the causes of and possible treatment for male infertility and genito-urinary conditions;
- 6.6. evaluate and review policy and practice on encouraging the involvement of men, especially young men, in reproductive and sexual health, with a view to reducing the incidence of sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV/Aids, and improving men's and women's health.