

# Group discusses AIDS awareness

**Abe Estimada**  
Oregon Daily Emerald

Fourteen students representing countries ranging from Finland to Nepal attended the AIDS Awareness Group's workshop Thursday night to discuss how the disease is perceived in their home countries.

The workshop also provided information for international students on AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases, as well as on contraceptives.

"In many of the Asian countries, especially Japan, it is a taboo to talk about AIDS," International Student Association Co-Director Susanne Steffens said. "The Japanese perception is that AIDS is an American disease and a form of population control."

The AIDS Awareness Group was established to provide an open forum for international and American students to dispel misconceptions and answer questions about the virus, Steffens said.

International students from the Asian countries generally agreed with Steffens that sex and AIDS were not as openly discussed in their home countries as in the United States. Most of the international students agreed that AIDS was a growing concern in their countries.

"I remember getting instruction in grade school about sex, but it was very vague," said Kae Ishikawa, an international studies student from Japan. "They tried teaching us sex using a flower, but we thought it didn't look like a penis or a vagina.... Most of our information came from the media, magazines, and talking with friends."

Jennifer Bunker spent one year studying in Japan. She believes that AIDS became a big problem in Japan when some Japanese businessmen caught the disease through sex trades in Southeast Asia.

"They would come home, but they wouldn't tell

their partners," Bunker said. "Since the sex trade was underground, AIDS also became an underground subject."

College students in Japan had some knowledge about the disease, but it was still perceived as an outside problem, Bunker said.

Azra Rahim, a biology student from India, said if she talked about AIDS in her home country, she would be labeled a "bad person." The assumption in India, Rahim said, is that people who know about AIDS must have some personal experience with the disease.

"The accepted norm is that you can only have sex after you're married," she said. "That's not the case. There is a lot of premarital sex. There is no awareness about AIDS. There is no access to condoms. There are no documented studies. We don't know how many people are infected."

The 15-member AIDS Awareness Group is in the process of becoming part of the International Student Association in order to obtain funding, said Arnim Fischer, an architecture student from Germany.

Last January, the First International Student Health Conference on AIDS met at Portland State University to help educate international students about the disease.

Ten delegates representing the University were among the 100 health care educators and students from around the state to attend the conference, Fischer said.

"From that conference, we realized there was a need here for international students to become more informed about AIDS," he said.

As a result of the conference, the group was founded last March by Steffens, University instructor Alice Lachman, and himself, Fischer said.

# Angry roommates can seek mediation

**Ken Yanhs**  
For the Oregon Daily Emerald

Anger and conflict mediation workshops designed primarily to teach students how to deal with roommate disputes will take place on Nov. 1, 2 and 6 at the Bean Complex from 6 to 7 p.m.

Designed mainly to promote more successful roommate relationships, the workshops are being organized by the University's Mediation Program and will be free of charge.

The workshops will train students on how to handle anger and how to face conflicts that may arise due to housing circumstances, said Mediation Program Director Jacqueline Gibson.

"Most of us are conflict avoiders," Gibson said, adding

that the workshops would help roommates solve problems by becoming more aware of what is wrong with the environment in which they are living.

Problems become more apparent during this time of the year, she said, due to the stress related to midterms.

The workshops will provide students with tips for handling roommate relationships more effectively, Gibson said. To accomplish this, roommates must learn how to deal with anger and communicate effectively, she said.

"We will give specific techniques on assertiveness, so that roommates don't become more and more resentful to the point where it destroys their relationship," Gibson said.

It would be ideal, Gibson said,

if both roommates could admit that there is a problem that needs to be confronted and come into the workshops together, wanting to resolve that conflict.

"If roommates come together, what they could learn would be behavior they could agree upon," she said.

Shannon Kypke, a resident of University housing, said she agrees that the workshops would be a good way to find a solution to a roommate conflict.

Kypke said that a problem with her roommate last month became intense enough that she had to move out of her residence hall. She said she wasn't aware that there were ways she and her roommate could have sought mediation to resolve their differ-

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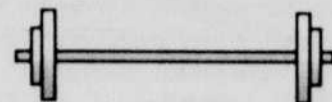
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