

Herpes symposium informative, alarming

By Laura Henkes

The reason that HSV has not been considered an epidemic in the past, Dr. Holmes feels, is because there is no cure for it. Therefore, many persons who contract the disease do not consult doctors or clinics; as a result the statistics do not reflect the true number of incidences.

A new drug, called Acyclovir has recently been publicized as a treatment for HSV. Dr. Holmes stated that it is useful for "primary" infections in reducing pain and the number of infectious days in the cycle. But he quickly added that this is the only time it is useful—that it is of no consequence to those experiencing recurring infections or "initial" episodes of HSV-II.

Additionally, it is of no value in treating symptoms of HSV-I.

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Dr. Neville Vines, an associate professor of clinical psychiatry at the Oregon Health Sciences University expounded on the psychological effects of herpes.

"The isolation adds stress to an already stressful experience," he said. "Also, there is the threat of future pain. What about family or relationship situations when out of the blue there is some kind of recurrence of herpes that has been latent for years?"

One of the audience questions to Ms. Winter involved the use of condoms, which are generally thought to be effective in preventing the spread of venereal diseases. But, Winter cautioned, "I never recommend that condoms be used when there is an active infection. The variety of materials in condoms varies with brands. It is very difficult for us to say that the virus will or will not pass through a condom. My advice: Abstain when you know you have symptoms. Wear a condom all the rest of the time."

Dr. Frederick T. Fraunfelder, professor and chairman of the Ophthalmology Department at the Oregon Health Sciences University discussed herpes and eye infections.

He added that venereal diseases in general grow easily in the eye because of the kind of tissue in the eye, because the eye is in a wet environment, and thus easily transmitted. Unlike herpes which occurs in other areas, there are treatments which will be effective in treatment of herpes in the eye.

Complications arising from herpes prior to and after birth were identified by Dr. Andre J. Nahmias, professor and chief of Pediatrics/Infectious Disease and Immunology at Emory University School of Medicine in Atlanta, Georgia. One out of 4,000 babies will have herpes.

ONLY THOSE CASES DIAGNOSED BY PRIVATE PHYSICIANS. (Approximately 10-fold increase.)

YEAR:	1966	1972	1979
CASES:	29,560	83,620	260,890

NOTE: The general concurrence between physicians and health professionals at the seminar was that Herpes Simplex Virus (HSV) is currently an epidemic and is just as prevalent, if not moreso, than gonorrhea. Gonorrhea is officially considered to be in epidemic proportions, and there are approximately 2,000,000 cases per year.

you have been with someone recently; and this is very destructive, because this may not necessarily be the case."

Dr. Vines explained, "Most people pick it up when they are undergoing a great deal of stress. Stress builds on stress and the cycle becomes debilitating physically and psychologically." But Dr. Vines feels

that those suffering from herpes can take positive steps by "taking responsibility for their own illness; taking crucial steps to reaffirm their own power over at least part of their lives." This he feels, can partially be accomplished by bringing to the surface hurts and angers, and by expressing them in a positive manner.

As a final note, Dr. Vines gave some very practical advice: "There are no undesirable side effects from hugging; and you can't O.D. on it."

For approximately five years, the Herpes Research Clinic at Harborview Medical Center in Seattle has been working with comfort measures to help those experiencing herpes problems.

Herpes can be contracted by the baby, according to Dr. Nahmias, prior to birth if there is a leak or break in the sac or by passing through the birth canal upon birth. Premature births are also more common in babies with herpes. He added that of newborns with herpes, 82 percent of the time the mothers were asymptomatic (showing no symptoms).

One of Dr. Nahmias' concerns was in handling of the new-born baby by the parents, not realizing that cold sores are contagious, and thereby passing the disease onto the baby by touching or kissing it.

Overall, the symposium presented such a large volume of information, that it is important not only to persons who have or have had herpes, but also to everyone as concerned, knowledgeable individuals.

Additional information can be obtained through the agencies and also through "The Herpes Handbook," a 44-page book which is available for only \$2 from the Oregon Health Sciences University at 233-1131. The book may also be obtained by writing to: Herpes Handbook; OHSU-L220A;—Portland, OR 97201.

RESOURCES FOR HERPES & VENEREAL DISEASE

1. PORTLAND AREA H.E.L.P. CHAPTER
PO Box 14934
Portland, OR 97214

1982 Scheduled Meetings
At Providence Medical Center
In the Social Room
7:30 - 9:30 p.m.
April 12, April 26, May 10,
June 28.

No dues or charges.
2. VENEREAL DISEASE ACTION COUNCIL
1200 SE Morrison
Portland, OR 97214
233-1131
3. CLACKAMAS COUNTY HEALTH DEPT.
V.D. CLINIC
1425 S. Kaen Road
Oregon City, OR 97045
655-8568
4. HERPES RESOURCE CENTER/ASHA
PO Box 100
Palo Alto, CA 94302
(415) 321-5134
5. V. D. HOTLINE.
1-(800)-227-8922 (Toll-Free)
Weekdays 8:00 a.m. - 8:00 p.m.
Weekends 10:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m.