

sify guilt and conflict at this time. Peer groups can be and are extremely useful during this phase, since they can be supportive in their sharing of similar feelings. Free discussion among the patients in an abortion unit has a salutary effect. Adolescents report that older women who can be perceived as motherly and uncritical are very helpful.

Lack of Information and Fear of the Procedure

This is a significant issue for a high percentage of adolescents who need information about the nature of the procedure and its implications. Clearer understanding and attention to the nature of fears and fantasies may reduce anxiety and even complications. Often patients are afraid to ask questions about pain, anesthesia, subsequent fertility, and some of the details of the procedure. They may fantasize a more drastic procedure which is related to guilt or need for punishment, or to previous experiences with doctors or hospitals. The counsellor is often less threatening than the physician, and the adolescent may feel freer communicating with a person she perceives as more helpful, supportive, and understanding than the physician may seem to be at this time.

CONCLUSION

The majority of adolescents can cope with the stress of an abortion with little difficulty. (No med-

ical or surgical procedure is stress-free, and without implications.) However, good counselling when an unwanted pregnancy occurs can affect the development of self-image and views of femininity in significant ways.

For the adolescent, failure of resolution of the unwanted pregnancy crisis can potentially arrest development progress. The message of pregnancy must be understood and taken seriously if repetition is to be avoided. It is important to remember that the pregnant adolescent is a child potentially bearing a child.

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Correction

Gilcrest B., and Baden, H. P.: Photodistribution of viral exanthems. *Pediatrics*, 54:136, 1974.

The legends for the two illustrations were reversed. Figure 1 is a patient with chickenpox and Figure 2 is a patient with echovirus 9 infection.

Photodistribution of Viral Exanthems

Barbara Gilchrest and Howard P. Baden

Pediatrics 1974;54;769

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