

BRIEF SEXUALITY-RELATED COMMUNICATION

Recommendations for a public health approach



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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ASSESS	Awareness, Skills, Self-efficacy/Self-esteem, and Social Support
BSC	Brief sexuality-related communication
CDC	United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
CINAHL	Cumulative Index to Nursing & Allied Health database
CREA	Creating Resources for Empowerment in Action
FGM	Female genital mutilation
GDG	Guideline Development Group
GRADE	Grading of Recommendations, Assessment, Development and Evaluation
LNK	WHO Library and Information Networks for Knowledge
MCA	WHO Department of Maternal, Newborn, Child and Adolescent Health
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
MSB	WHO Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse
MSM	Men who have sex with men
NGO	Nongovernmental organization
PICO	Population, intervention, comparison, outcome(s)
RHR	WHO Department of Reproductive Health and Research
STI	Sexually transmitted infection
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
WHO	World Health Organization
WONCA	World Organization of National Colleges, Academies and Academic Associations of General Practitioners/Family Physicians

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Sexual health is gaining more and more attention from public health practitioners and health service providers because of its contribution towards overall health and well-being in both adults and adolescents. Health risks arising from unsafe sexual practices and sexuality-related human rights abuses such as sexual coercion together contribute to the global burden of disease.

Both research and consultations over the last decades have identified sexuality-related communication as an issue that requires urgent attention. While clients would like their health-care providers to discuss sexual health concerns, health workers lack the necessary training and knowledge to feel comfortable addressing such issues. There is a lack of clarity in the field as to the role of sexuality communication in primary care.

In 2008 the World Health Organization (WHO) commissioned a set of case studies on the integration of sexuality counselling into sexual and reproductive health services to serve as background to the development of this guideline. In 2010 an expert consultation convened by WHO's Department of Reproductive Health and Research (RHR) recommended the development of a guideline to facilitate the integration of this counselling into primary care services. A Guideline Development Group (GDG) was established in June 2012 comprising members working on sexual health in low- and middle-income countries, from all WHO regions and with equal gender representation. The GDG included academics, psychologists, doctors, public health specialists, lawyers and social scientists, all with expertise in developing programmes or offering clinical services to promote sexual health and well-being. It also included representatives of key constituencies with overlapping sexual health and rights expertise. Under the guidance of the GDG, a systematic review was undertaken and evidence from it was assessed by an independent researcher and a Grading of Recommendations, Assessment, Development and Evaluation (GRADE) methodologist using the GRADE framework. The GDG developed one good practice recommendation and two policy recommendations drawing on the expertise of the group and peer reviewers, the

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