

# Herpes is here on Capitol Campus

By Monica Auld

Herpes, the "new" disease everyone is talking about, is here on Capitol Campus. The medical department confirms that there are cases on campus, but also that student awareness is not as wide as it should be. So here are the facts:

Like mononucleosis, Herpes is a virus. There are many Herpes strains, but two of them, Herpes Simplex I and Herpes Simplex II are the most common forms. Herpes Virus Simplex I (HSV-I) is spread by kissing or direct skin-to-skin contact, while sexual intercourse transmits the Simplex II (HSV-II) from one person to another. HSV-II is more painful as illustrated by some of its victims in a recent Newsweek article:

"I had so much fever and pain that I had to go to bed. It was like scraping your knee and someone putting salt in it."

"I thought I'd died," says one Manhattan municipal employee. "I couldn't sit or bend over. I couldn't walk."

These are typical first attack reactions to genital Herpes (HSV-II). These symptoms range from headaches and fever to stiff joints and painful blisters that appear on or near the genitals. These lesions, which appear between 2 and 20 days after exposure, are yellow with bright red edges and may last for up to three weeks. Then they heal and disappear. The sad part is the virus remains dormant in the victim; it does not disappear.

Periodic reappearances of the lesions can occur in no par-

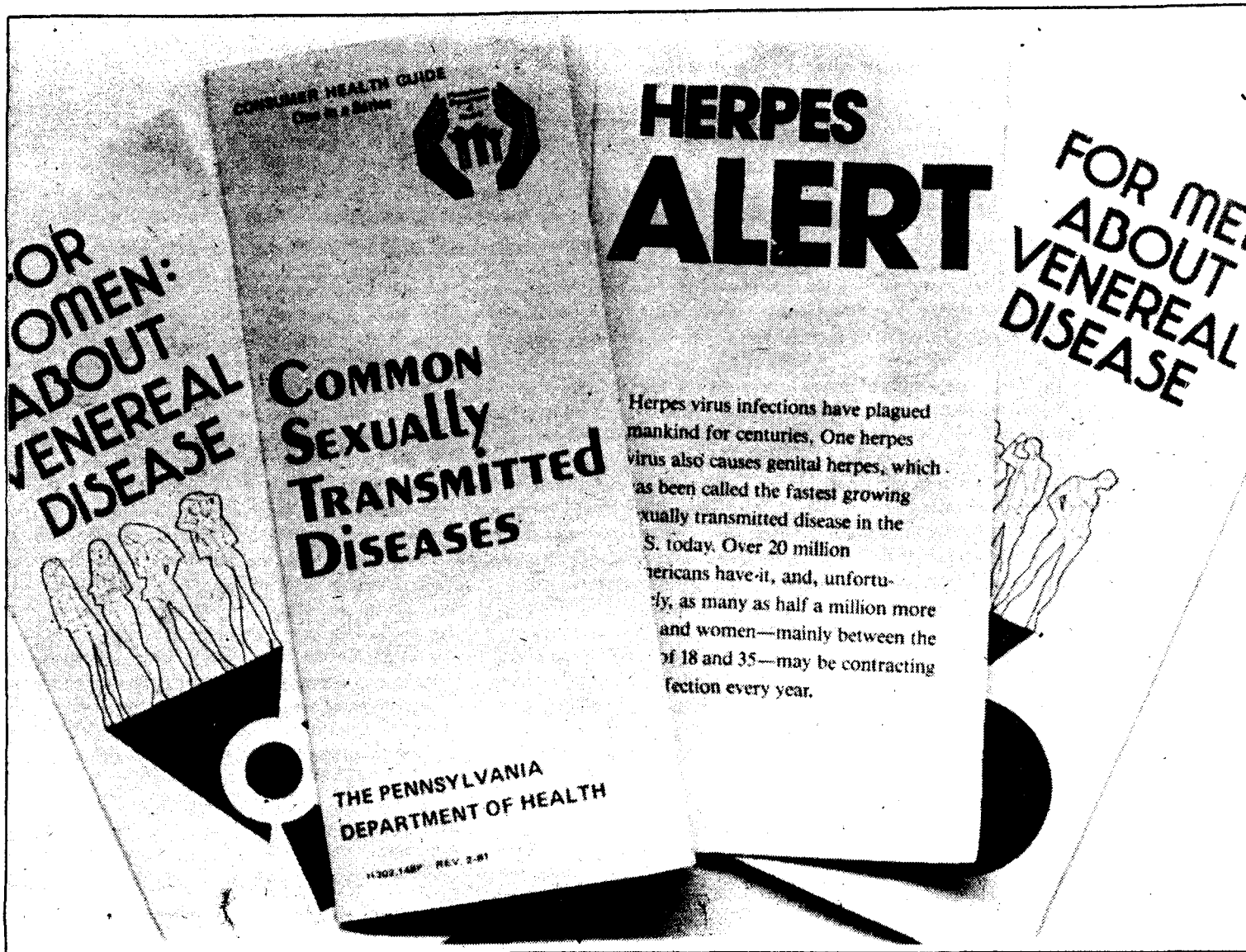


Photo by Michael Markle

break the psychological 'grip' of Herpes and help your body cure any attack that might occur."

While there is no cure for these types of Herpes at the present time, there are some concrete treatments that can help ease the pain and discomfort.

Herpes. Some experts estimate that the risk is eight times as great for women who have Herpes to develop cancer than those who do not. In addition, pregnant Herpes victims run a high risk of bearing a baby with skin problems or brain damage if the child is delivered vaginally. This can be prevented if the at-

destroying the virus and no vaccine able to confer immunity. The same facts are true...of the common cold...the body deals with a Herpes infection in the same way it copes with a cold: It mobilizes the immune system to cure. In fact, only about one-third of the people who acquire the virus ever experience the recurrent flare-ups thought to be always associated with it."

The key to dealing with Herpes then is to remain calm and if you suspect you are infected, get to a doctor as soon as possible. Early treatment will reap benefits later in life. If embarrassment is the reason you aren't checking it out, remember this: There are 20 million others suffering right along with you. Get help. There are professionals in the area who are specifically trained to understand your situation.

Tel-Med, a free tape service sponsored by Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Pennsylvania, has a 3-5 minute tape on Herpes. Simply dial the number in your area and ask for tape number 5101. It is an informative piece on symptoms and treatments for those who suspect they may have Herpes.

In Harrisburg, call 238-5100; in Carlisle, dial 243-0080; and in Elizabethtown, the number to call is 362-8833.

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Dr. Tom Ferguson

ticular pattern, but there does seem to be some connection between physical and/or emotional stress and the recurrence of the blisters. According to Dr. Tom Ferguson, contributing medical editor to the *Mother Earth News*, there is hope for management of Herpes.

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An ointment called Acyclovir seems to have the most profound effect on the virus. It speeds the healing of existing sores and may prevent the spreading of more of the lesions on the body. If used on primary (first attack) sores, the drug is more effective in controlling future outbreaks. This ointment is distributed by the Burroughs Wellcome Company, under the name of Zovirax, at about \$20.00 per tube which lasts about 3 days.

Herpes is a special problem for women. It has been suggested that there is a link between cervical cancer and

tending doctor knows in advance of the mother's condition and a Caesarean section will be performed.

The best way to keep Herpes at bay is to maintain a meticulous hygiene program. Victims should bathe frequently, keep areas that are infected dry, and above all else, should not scratch since this is how most infections are spread the fastest.

Is there life after Herpes? Ferguson seems to think it's part medical and part attitude.

"Many experts call Herpes incurable because there is—at present—no drug capable of