

SILENT HEALTH



In displaying our work (as I displayed my body previously for each of the medical, the familial, the media and the male gazes) I am aware that these images can shock. Breaking out is not a painless process for anybody, cracking the mirror for myself I am automatically challenging your view too. If I don't find a language to express and share my subjectivity I am constantly in danger of forgetting what I already know.

Jo Spence in 'No, I can't do that, my consultant wouldn't like it', by Jo Spence and Tim Sheard

In a photo therapy session I re-enact my powerlessness at the moment of diagnosis. Jo Spence, Rosy Martin, 1984

'No, I can't do that, my consultant wouldn't like it' is published in **Silent Health: Women, Health and Representation**, which brings together images from a recent show (of the same name) by four women photographers at the Camerawork gallery, with other writings on women, health and representation. Collectively, the essays and images call into question the ways in which ideas of health, sexuality, age and femininity have been constructed, historically and into the present, and examine the impact those conceptions have on women's lives in the workplace, in the home, in relationships, in the hospital, etc. *Silent Health* is available from Camerawork (081-980 6256)

GPs - COUNTING THE BUCKS

The GP newspaper *Financial Pulse* recently advised its readers of the benefits of providing contraceptive services. Sad to say, but not too surprising, the article was talking about *financial profit - for the GPs*, not health benefits for women. According to the article, 'the key to profiting from contraception lies in realising that there is more to it than simple drug prescription.' Currently a GP can claim up to £12.30 a year for pill prescribing - and up to £42.25 for fitting an intra-uterine contraceptive device (IUCD). Although the big setback is that it only applies to women, the article hints that an entrepreneurial doctor can get around this by suggesting a man wanting contraceptive advice returns with his partner, thus enabling the fee to be claimed. This is, of course, so long they don't want to rely on condoms, since GPs get no money to supply this method (the safest and cheapest) of contraception. If they follow the recommendations of the *Financial Pulse* (note the title) we can expect more GPs to be fitting more IUD's, despite the evidence that there is a higher risk of PID to women who use this method, and fewer willing to discuss contraceptive caps or diaphragms. Meanwhile family planning clinics are being closed daily as the Tory assault on the NHS continues - and now GPs are being offered the spoils.

The information in the above article was taken from the WHRRIC newsletter, available from WHRRIC, (071-251 6580)

DES Action Ireland

As a result of an action programme initiated by the Council for the Status of Women in Ireland, DES Action Ireland was officially launched at a conference this September in Dublin, to highlight DES issues nationally. Among other topics, the conference discussed the responsibility of the pharmaceutical companies and the possibilities of EEC legislation after 1992. The conference also coincided with the opening of the first DES Clinic in Ireland, in the National Maternity Hospital. For more information about DES Action Ireland or if you have any questions about DES contact DES Action UK, c/o WHRRIC (071 251 6580).

For Thrush - Don't Bleach

In September, the Guardian published a 'First Person' account of one woman's battle against thrush. After trying a host of treatments, she found the cure - 'Take this bright blue squeegee bottle fill it with a mild concentration of bleach...' (and squirt it into your vagina). Only at the end of article is there a warning: 'Bleach should be tried only under a doctor's supervision'. Six days later, a very small item appeared stating that the Guardian wished to emphasise that the bleach therapy should not be attempted by anyone at home as the danger of corrosion of delicate membranes is obvious. What is even more obvious is that the original article should have made this clear!

REGIONAL NETWORK OF LESBIANS IN HEALTH CARE

After the huge success of the 7th National Conference of Lesbians in Health Care in September, there are plans to set up a network on a regional basis, to reduce the invisibility and isolation currently experienced by many thousands of lesbian health carers. The network will also communicate on issues of lesbian health, lesbian mothering, lesbians and mental health and HIV/AIDS. For more information contact the Network on (0532 628 571)



POSITIVELY IRISH

Positively Irish grew out of a meeting last year by a group of Irish workers in London drugs services who were concerned about the increasing number of Irish people with serious drug problems - and therefore increased risk of HIV infection. By tackling the issues within a specifically Irish framework, they hope to reach those who, away from home and often without money, are alienated from the mainstream services by the institutionalised racism in Britain against Irish people. PIAA will be also playing a special role for Irish people in British prisons for more information contact the PIAA c/o the Brent Irish Centre on (071-738 4191)

NO MORE HYSTERECTOMIES

This informative book by US gynaecologist Vicki Hufnagel aims to offer women alternatives to hysterectomy. However, even though it's a British edition, it is very unlikely that women in Britain will find gynaecologists who have the same philosophy - or use the same methods as Dr. Hufnagel. Still, it's excellent reading for any woman, especially for those who are told they need a hysterectomy and are not happy about having the surgery. Published by Thorsons, 1990.