The male in the head: Young people, heterosexuality and power.

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Women, Risk and AIDS; Men, Risk and AIDS

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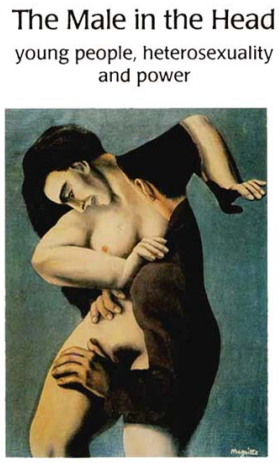
The Male in the Head
young people, heterosexuality and power

Holland, J. Ramazanoglu,., Sharpe, S.; and Thomson, R.



Janet Holland, Caroline Ramazanoglu, Sue Sharpe, Rachel Thomson

Young people talk frankly about sex and relationshi
detailed investigation of the social construction of se
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moving accounts of sexual risk and safety provide th
theory of male dominated heterosexuality. The proc
constructing this theory and the problems confronte
research on heterosexuality are described in The Ma
which presents the main empirical findings of the W
Risk and AIDS project and the MRAP-Men, Risk and

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'Don't die of ignorance' - I nearly died of embarrassment: Condoms in context

Janet Holland, Caroline Ramazanoglu, Sue Scott, Sue Sharpe, and Rachel Thomson

Negotiation of sexual encounters is a complex process with many different outcomes. In this paper the relationship between knowledge of risk and safer sex practices is examined through an analysis of young women's reported experience of condom use, from which it is clear that gendered power relations construct and constrain the choices open to young women.

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Sex, risk and danger: AIDS education policy and young women's sexuality

Janet Holland, Caroline Ramazanoglu and Sue Scott

The authors review the history of the AIDS epidemic in medical science, social research and public policy, highlighting the way in which women have been perceived and represented in that process. AIDS education aimed at young heterosexuals is evaluated in the light of the findings of an investigation of the sexual knowledge and practice of a group of young women.

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Learning about sex: young women and the social construction of sexual identity

Rachel Thomson & Sue Scott

Sex education is an interactive process in which young women actively engage with, resist and accommodate a range of contradictory messages and models. In this paper the way young women experience 'learning about sex' related to their sexual practice and expectations of sexual pleasure is examined. Available models of female sexuality and influences and information sources including the home, peer groups, popular culture and experience are discussed. Understanding the social construction of sexual identity has important implications for the negotiation of safe sex.

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Janet Holland, Caroline Ramazanoglu, Sue Sharpe & Rachel Thomson

Women develop and live their sexuality through an interrelated range of pressures; personal, social, physical. The authors examine the continuum of pressure, from social expectation to male physical violence, which shapes women's sexuality, sexual identity and sexual health. They describe and illustrate the boundaries of sexual pressure and violence, and the degree to which women

are able to negotiate these boundaries. Modes of resistance and types of experience, both negative and positive, which can enable young women to take control over their own sexuality and sexual experienceare examined.

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Pressure, resistance, empowerment: Young women and the negotiation of safer sex

Janet Holland, Caroline Ramazanoglu, Sue Scott, Sue Sharpe & Rachel Thomson

We reflect here on the sexual politics of safer sex by considering ways in which young women can become empowered in sexual encounters. Selected case studies illustrate difficulties which young women face in taking control of their sexuality and sexual experience. Some become assertive individuals, but their experiences demonstrate that empowerment for women must be a collective project shifting the balance of power between men and women throughout society.

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Sexuality and ethnicity: Variations in young women's sexual knowledge and practice

Janet Holland

In this paper the author describes the sample of 150 young women who took part in the WRAP study, focusing on similarities and differences between young women from different broad ethnic groups - white, African-Caribbean, and Asian. We discuss their experience and knowledge of sex education, AIDS and AIDS education, and consider family and cultural influences on sexual behaviour. Their perceptions of men, women and sexual relationships, and understanding of risk and safety in sexual encounters are examined. Despite differences in class, cultural, religious and educational background there was perhaps a surprising degree of similarity in the young women's responses. The paper concludes by drawing out implications of the findings for policy and practice.

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Wimp or gladiator: Contradictions in acquiring masculine sexuality

Janet Holland, Caroline Ramazanoglu, & Sue Sharpe

As young men struggle to attain masculinity, they are drawn into the exercise of power over women, but at the same time exposed to the possibilities of failure. Using depth interviews with young men aged 16-21, in this paper we explore their

strategies for defending themselves against vulnerability in the process of acquiring heterosexual masculinity. These strategies include adopting the protective coloration of the peer group, impugning a woman's reputation, objectifying women (the 'bastard' syndrome), and seeking out the sexually knowing older woman. Without young men necessarily intending that this should be so, these strategies reproduce and reinforce the exercise of male power over women. We trace the operation of these strategies in the young men's accounts of their own experiences.

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