

Reproductive Rights and Sexual Rights

Reproductive rights and sexual rights; are fundamental human rights covering all humans, no matter woman, men, young or old. These rights are;

1- Right to Life

- a) No women's life should be put at risk by reason of pregnancy.
- b) No child's life should be put at risk, particularly not by reason of his/her gender.
- c) All individuals are entitled to have sexual health and reproductive health services.

2- Right to Liberty

- a) All persons have the right to be free to enjoy and control their sexual and reproductive life, having due regard to the rights of others.
- b) All persons have the right to be free from any medical intervention related to their sexual and reproductive health with their full, free and informed consent.
- c) All females have the right to be protected against all forms of interventions which may cause genital mutilation.
- d) No persons can be forced, without his/her consent, to have a sexual intercourse, even by his/her spouse. All persons have the right to be free from sexual harassment.
- e) No persons can be forced to give birth or to not give birth without her consent. Therefore, all persons have the right to protect herself against pregnancy and to abortion within legal procedures.
- f) All persons have the right to protect him/herself against taboos and misleading conducts concerning sexuality.

3- Right to Equality

- a) No discrimination can be implied to anybody in having sexual health and reproductive health services.
- b) No female can be deprived by oppression, of education, knowledge and services concerning sexual health and reproductive health.
- c) No female can be subject to discrimination in social life due to pregnancy or maternity.

4- Right to privacy

- a) Privacy must be assured and personal details must be secured in all sexual health and reproductive health services.
- b) All persons have the right to express their own sexual preferences, having due regard to the rights of others.

5- Right to Freedom of Thought

- a) All persons have the right to freedom of thought concerning their sexual and reproductive life.
- b) No persons can be restricted due to their thoughts, conscience and belief, in having access to knowledge on sexual health and reproductive health.

6- Right to Information and Education

- a) All persons have the right to access proper education and accurate information on sexual health-reproductive health provided in a gender sensitive, free from prejudices and impartial way.
- b) All persons have the right to have sufficient education and access to information on their sexual and reproductive lives, enabling them to decide with their own free will.

7- Right to Choose Whether or not to Marry and to Found a Family

- a) No person can be forced to get married due to any reason. All persons have the right to decide by his/her free will to marry or to live together. Therefore, all persons have the right to protection against getting married without their own will.

8- Right to Decide Whether or not to Have a Child

- a) All persons have the right to decide and to use by their free will secured and acceptable methods to protect against unwanted pregnancy.
- b) All persons have the right to decide by their free will about the number of children they want to have.
- c) All females have the right to information, education and health services that are necessary for safe maternity and safe abortion.

9- Right to Health Care and Health Protection

- a) All persons have the right to have comprehensive (including complex cases such as HIV, infertility) qualified, accessible and cost effective health services concerning their sexual health and reproductive health.
- b) All persons, particularly women and girl children, have the right to protection from traditional practices which are harmful to health.
- c) All women have the right to care during their pregnancy, birth and after birth.

10- Right to Benefit from Scientific Progresses

- a) All persons have the right to benefit from reproductive health technologies in matters of infertility, contraception and abortion and to have information (concerning legal procedures)

11- Right to Freedom of Assembly and Political Participation

- a) All persons have the right to assemble to defend their rights for sexual health and reproductive health.
- b) All persons have the right to create an association for situations concerning their sexual health and reproductive health.

12- Right to be Free from Torture and Ill Treatment

- 1. All children and women have the right to be protected against sexual exploitation (abuse, harassment, rape, pornography, prostitution).

Why Sexually Transmitted Infections (STI) are Important?

- All persons who have sexual activity and who are not protected are under risk with regard to STIs.
- Having no symptoms most of the times or having slight symptoms that do not derange the person is crucial in the spread of the disease. Therefore, the disease can spread fast and without notice in the population and can affect large masses.
- As people having STIs are inclined to keep it as a secret, the disease tends to reach serious levels and others can be infected by these people.
- A person with a STI has a higher risk to be infected by other STIs.
- If not cured, STIs can cause ;
Infertility in women or men (30-60 % of the cases).
Miscarriage, ectopic pregnancy (the risk increases by 7-10 folds).
Some infections, disability and death of new born babies
Cervical cancers
Social problems (divorce and economic load, etc.)
- Most of the STIs are curable and there are protection measures against them.

THE ONLY WAY TO BE PROTECTED AGAINST SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED INFECTIONS IS TO USE CONDOMS.

GENERAL MEASURES OF PRECAUTIONS TO BE PROTECTED FROM SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED INFECTIONS

- To use condoms in all kind of sexual intercourses.
- Monogamy is the most important measure of protection against STIs.
- Checked blood and blood products must be transfused.
- Personal care supplies such as toothbrushes, razors, blades must not be used commonly.
- Needles for circumcision and acupuncture, manicure and pedicure tools, needles and tools of epilation and tattoo must be either owned by the person him/herself or must be sterilized properly.
- Hepatitis B is a STI against which a protection can be secured by vaccination. The protection level of the vaccine is high and it is a must. A vaccination against HPV can be applied also.
- Necessary tests for STIs must be conducted in the early phases of pregnancy.

Resources:

- 1- Coşkun, A., Akyüz, A., Arslan, H., Aslan, E., Demirci, N., & Dinç, H. (2012). Kadın Sağlığı ve Hastalıkları Hemşireliği El Kitabı. Ed: Coşkun A., İstanbul, Koç Üniversitesi Yayınları, 474-488.

2- Beji Kizilkaya N (Ed) (2016). Hemşire ve Ebelere Yönelik Kadın Sağlığı ve Hastalıkları, Nobel Tıp Kitabevleri, 7-9.