

People are going to bring to sexuality all their problems, their rôle problems of, 'Am I a woman?' 'Am I a man?'; their love problems of 'Am I loveable?', 'Am I aggressive?', 'Am I homosexual?', and their needs for children and their need still to fight back at their parents.

I believe that sex education in schools is going to be of enormous value and is extremely important but it is useless if all it tells you is anatomical detail. I once saw a film which showed you how to place dutch caps and other methods of contraception; every time the ovum came out of the ovary and down the tube the piano played a little melody in the background, which quite honestly is not my idea of sexual education. In my view sex education is the ability of the child to learn at the age of one month, two months, three months up to whatever age you like, the whole conflict of love and sexuality from his parents, from himself and his brothers and sisters as well as to make use of the words and dialect to discuss his feelings, his attitudes, his motivations, his reasons for behaving in the way he does with people who are trained in discussion. What schools must do is not only to back up in the widest sense the training that the parents have given but also to increase the communication that is so very much needed, so that people can use the gift of speech to work out the meaning of their feelings. I must mention again places like the universities of Keele and Leicester which are trying to raise the levels of sex education in this way. But it is not enough to have group discussions at one level of adolescence; what is needed is to follow this up with the person-to-person relationship which is the only true way of helping adolescents in difficulties. Places like advisory centres are needed where the person-to-person relationship can be built up, where the level of work is carefully appraised and where the diagnostic techniques are efficiently performed so that referrals for further treatment can be made where necessary. Lastly, there must be places where persons can be sent, in need of more long-continued treatment.

## Discussion

**Dr Cook (Exeter):** Does the presence of clinics giving free advice to unmarried people lead to an increase in promiscuity? Does this have any effect on venereal-disease rates?

**Dr Spicer:** We have little evidence to show whether birth-control advisory-clinics will or will not increase promiscuity. Sociologically, it could be argued that this might happen if clinics were like boutiques where girls could go and buy a cap as they would buy a hat. On the other hand, if there is adult recognition of the responsibilities of sexual experience so that the young person is helped to gain an insight into her own feelings, I do not think this will happen. We all know that there is an increasing v.d. rate in this country, but perhaps the increase is not as great as the figures show because people are now going to clinics much more than they used to, I am sure this rate will go up but I do not think that this is an argument against sexual experimentation although I do think it is an argument for understanding of the individual's needs and rights.

**Question:** Do you think sex education should be started in primary schools?

**Dr Spicer:** An interesting survey was done by New Society on how much instruction student teachers received on sex education; I am now working as a counsellor in a teacher

training-college and one of the things I find most interesting is the fact that some of these colleges are still unaware of the fact that the children coming into primary schools have a particular and entrancing interest in the whole business of babies being born, probably because of the arrival of their brothers and sisters. Instruction in the primary school is as important as, if not more important than, that in the secondary school but in a different way, and for slightly different reasons.

**Dr Morgan (Bristol):** Although sex education is often given by people who are particularly good at this sort of thing, it may be given by people who become interested technically, and this in turn may lead to misunderstanding and sexual experimentation. I think there is also pressure of the herd; in my experience, on a housing estate young girls have intercourse with boys whom they do not love and do not care for, because they are pressured into it. To my knowledge there are few abortions and practically no adoptions, and I think this might be a corrective to the figures mentioned by various authorities. I wonder whether sex education should ideally be done in families, but in many families that is impossible so the people who give sex instruction in the primary schools should really be hand picked.