

A one-stop online hub for integrating the government's

sex education programmes

W Y Wan¹, S S Lee¹, N C L Chan², K Lee¹, W T Cheung¹, D F M Lui¹ ¹Red Ribbon Centre, Hong Kong, China; ²Radio Television Hong Kong, Hong Kong, China Contact e-mail: wywan@dhspp.net or aids@dh.gov.hk

Issues:

Sex education is a multidisciplinary subject, important for mainstreaming HIV publicity. With increasing popularity of the internet, a unified authentic source of sex education information for young people is needed.

Description:

A sex education project in form of an online youth magazine was pioneered by the Red Ribbon Centre (RRC) of the Department of Health AIDS Unit, in collaboration with the Radio Television Hong Kong (RTHK), an independent public broadcaster. The contents of a pre-existing computerised telephone system, the "Dr Sex Hotline", introduced by the Government since 1996, were used as the building blocks for the sex education information in the new initiative. Complementary features included: (a) online games, (b) video clips, (c) opinion polls and (d) Q&A by emails. Experts from the medical profession, law, church, social science, community organisations specialising in sex education and the academia were recruited as resource persons for interacting with young people using the new service. A launching ceremony for the website www.SexEdonline.tv was held on World AIDS Day 2003.

Lessons learned:

Internet is a fast-developing platform for health promotion. A conventional sex education hotline was integrated to an internet-based initiative of the media partner, to form a new sex education project appealing to the younger generation through the publication of an online magazine. Collaboration with media partner and a panel of resource persons had helped to instil innovations in sex education within the framework of health promotion.

Recommendations:

The coverage of sex education can be expanded through the increasingly popular medium of internet. Identifying media partner and a panel of resource persons can harness professional expertise and promote community participation. The internet can serve as a convenient source of authentic information for sex education for the younger generation.

