

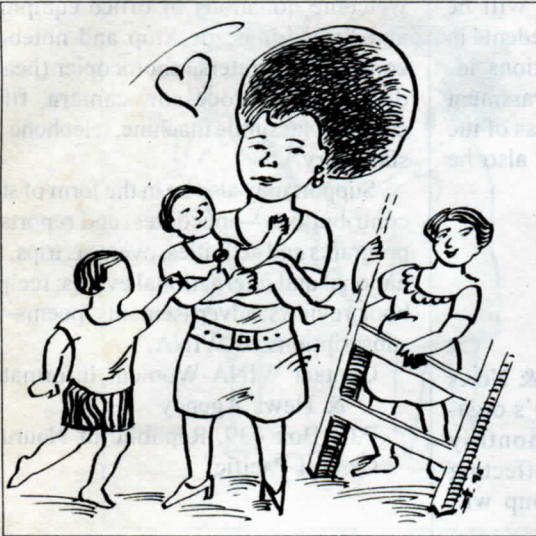
## The Disadvantaged Sex

The World Health Organization (WHO) report *Adolescent Health and Development: the Key to the Future* states that millions of adolescent girls worldwide are discriminated against in schools and workplaces, leaving them vulnerable to sexual exploitation and AIDS. WHO calls for equity between the sexes, mainly through education and better health services.

The lack of adequate education and training for girls, in particular, damages their capacity to develop and expose them to great risks of illness and injury. Girls are often kept at home to help with household chores and look after younger siblings. Their schooling is given less priority than that of boys. They often marry young and are unable to continue with formal education.

Adolescents of both sexes are at great risk especially in tourist areas where young people are sought as sex partners on the assumption they are less likely to be HIV positive. In many countries, 60 percent of all new HIV infections are among 15- to 24-year-olds, with a female to male ratio of two to one.

source: *Consumer Currents*, November-December 1994;  
P.O. Box 1045, 10830 Penang, Malaysia



## NORPLANT COMPANY SUED FOR REMOVAL DAMAGES IN THE US

Since 1991, when Norplant entered the US market, nearly one million women have used the contraceptive. Some 400 of them are now seeking to join a class-action lawsuit against Wyeth-Ayerst Laboratories, the company that sells Norplant in the US. Their major complaint is that they suffered severe pain and scarring during removal of Norplant from their arms.

"This is a method that went on the market only in 1991 and is supposed to last five years, so this is just the beginning," said Jewel Klein, the lawyer who filed the suit in Chicago in September 1993 on behalf of an unidentified plaintiff. A Cook County judge certified this as a class action in June 1994 so that any woman who had suffered injury from removal of Norplant was eligible to join in the lawsuit.

The lawsuit seeks damages and an injunction to prevent Wyeth-Ayerst from selling the contraceptive to doctors who have not been trained to insert and remove it. Klein estimated that between US\$20,000 and US\$50,000 in damages would be sought for most of the women.

Wyeth-Ayerst said in a prepared statement that the incidence of difficulties with Norplant removal was below the 6 percent rate predicted by the company based on early studies. The statement also said the company believed the class-action litigation was "inappropriate" because the removal of Norplant is an individual procedure affected by many variables, including the way the capsules were originally inserted, the procedure used for removal and the particular patient's circumstances.

source: *Women's Global Network for Reproductive Health Newsletter*, No. 47, July-September 1994

## ALTERNATIVE HEALTH CONFERENCE

A World Conference on Alternative and Biological Medicines will be held in Guatemala, Central America from July 31 to August 4.

The conference will be the first meeting of this kind. It aims to share information on the latest scientific findings and achievements that alternative healing practices have contributed.

All areas of focus will be presented by scientific experts of national and international recognition, including homeopathy, homotoxicology, music therapy, bioenergetic nutrition, magnetic therapy, electro acupuncture to name a few.

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