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World Vasectomy Day November 2020: Our mission and how you can get involved

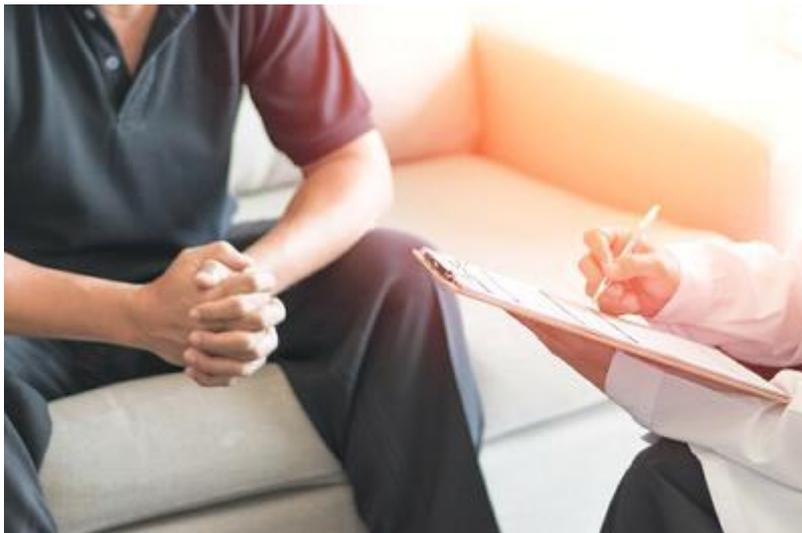
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Dr John Guillebaud, emeritus Professor of Family Planning & Reproductive Health at UCL and vasectomy advocate, shares information on World Vasectomy Day (WVD) and the continuing need for men to take a greater share in ‘contra-ception’.

What is World Vasectomy Day (WVD)?

World Vasectomy Day was devised in 2013 by Jonathan Stack, a journalist and film-maker, in association with Dr Doug Stein a urologist from Florida who has now done c. 48,000 vasectomies and trained many surgeons worldwide. These two continue as Co-Directors of the day, which in 2020 falls on Friday, November 20.

How did you get involved?

Readers of this blog may know that, almost uniquely among doctors, I planned my whole career entirely through anxiety about population growth - *too much human life, risking the*

future of all life on the planet. This anxiety was kicked off by one evening lecture titled “Adam’s Brood” while I was a second-year medical student. I realised then and still see my - and your - specialty of sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) as THE most important branch of medicine!

So, as ‘it takes two to tango’ and the very word “*contra-ception*” ought to include every male method, I arranged higher training in both OBGYN and surgery. I was among the first UK surgeons to provide vasectomies, starting in July 1970 at Oxford’s Elliot Smith clinic. After doing around 4000, latterly by the preferred no-scalpel vasectomy (NSV) technique, I was instantly enthused when I first heard about World Vasectomy Day.

What happens on the day and how does advocacy continue during the rest of the year?

We have a number of events worldwide leading up to WVD, and many on the day too, which you can learn more about on our [website](#). This year most of our activities were virtual and online due to COVID-19.

With 1000+ participating providers in over 30 countries, we believe we are the largest male-focused sexual and reproductive health event in the world. Almost 100 UK vasectomy surgeons were involved this year, joining in solidarity with others even if currently not permitted to operate. One tradition was maintained; the live-streaming of operations under local anaesthetic: there were volunteers from the US, Brazil and Canada whose wives were also willing to be interviewed live, with everyone in masks.

There was also the Vasectomy Doctor Summit on November 14, the open Symposium (November 18), plus a global gathering (November 20), with open access through our website.

Throughout the year within the WVD global ‘family’, promotion of vasectomy continues, especially by training surgeons in the NSV techniques and raising awareness worldwide, whilst WVD itself focuses on sharing information and advocacy.

Aren’t there still numerous countries where vasectomy incidence is essentially zero? Can a Day like this help?

True, but it’s gradually changing as more men recognise that it will not alter their manhood and whole societies come to see how it celebrates and inspires positive masculinity. Globally, we are discovering many more men who would have a vasectomy if it became an option, as they become more aware of the benefits.

What is the World Vasectomy Day Award?

Awards are given annually to individuals or entities, individuals, patients or doctors, journalists or broadcasters recognised as advancing vasectomy in their country.

With WVD co-founder Jonathan Stack, I have created the Elliot Smith Award, a cash prize and mentorship program offered to partners in emerging countries. This includes the provision of materials, demand generation support and subsidises their doctors. This year we have a deserving winner, CEMOPLAF the family planning organisation in Quito, Ecuador.

This will help them kickstart their innovative mobile program for outlying regions, where vasectomy is just ‘getting on men’s radars’.

Who funds the work of World Vasectomy Day?

We rely entirely on donations. Please [consider donating to this year’s award for CEMOPLAF in Ecuador](#). To adapt an old joke, you’ll be helping towards making it true that World Vasectomy Day can make a vas deferens! - to couples, and the planet.

At a time when so many of our values are under siege, a movement grounded in kindness and positive masculinity has never felt more urgent.

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FSRH is a faculty of the Royal College of the Obstetricians and Gynaecologists. It was established on the 26th March 1993 as the Faculty of Family Planning and Reproductive Health Care. Our specialist committees of SRH doctors and nurses work together to produce high quality training programmes, specialist conferences and events, clinical guidance and other SRH learning resources

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