



Editorial

Embracing diversity, ensuring equity: Holistic sexual health for a sustainable future

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Introduction

To ensure a promising future for all, it is imperative to shift towards a comprehensive and holistic approach to development. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), as proposed by The United Nations, provide a comprehensive roadmap to address global challenges.^[1] The United Nations has formulated 17 goals and targets to accomplish them by 2030 in order to ensure and enhance global welfare.^[1-3] Goal 3 of the SDGs focuses on health and well-being.^[4] One of the SDGs (SDG 3.7 - sustainability and sexual health) highlights the interconnectedness of human well-being and planetary health.^[4] Recognizing the crucial role of sexual health in achieving sustainable development is a moral and strategic necessity. SDG 3.7 has emphasized

ensuring universal access to sexual and reproductive healthcare services and inclusion of sexual health in national programs and policies.^[4] Similarly, goal 5 of the SDGs focuses on achieving gender equality and empowering women and girls.^[2] Goal 5 also places additional emphasis on sexual and reproductive health as well as safeguarding reproductive rights.^[2]

The intersection of sustainable practices and sexual health

The journey towards global sustainability requires a multidimensional perspective encompassing economic, social, and environmental aspects. A key element of this approach is promoting health and well-being, including sexual health. Sexual health is not merely a personal matter. Instead, it has substantial influences on communities and cultures, influencing family interactions, community well-being, and societal standards such as gender parity.^[2,4]

The connection between sustainability and sexual health becomes evident when considering the following factors:

1. Population dynamics: Enabling individuals with information and the

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- means to access contraceptives is a powerful tool in controlling population growth and enhancing overall well-being.^[5,6]
2. Gender equality: Promoting sexual health is essential to achieve gender equality by empowering women and girls to make informed choices about their bodies and reproductive health. When women have control over their reproductive health, they are better positioned to educate themselves and participate in the workforce and decision-making processes.^[7,8]
 3. Health and well-being: Sustainable development is deeply rooted in the well-being of people. Ensuring that individuals have access to sexual health services and information improves overall health outcomes, reduces maternal and child mortality rates, and fosters healthier societies.^[1,2]
 4. Human rights: Access to sexual and reproductive health services, as well as comprehensive sex education, is a human right. It enables people to make well-informed choices about their bodies and relationships, hence promoting a balanced and equitable society.^[2]
 5. Eradicating poverty: Addressing sexual health disparities can reduce poverty by enabling individuals to plan their families, pursue education and livelihoods, and break the cycle of poverty across generations.^[2]
1. Comprehensive sex education: Comprehensive sex education programs must be integrated into formal education systems worldwide. These programs should be age-appropriate, scientifically accurate, and inclusive, promoting informed decision-making and healthy relationships.^[9,10]
 2. Access to healthcare: Government must ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health services, including family planning, maternal care, and Sexually Transmitted Infection (STI) prevention and treatment. These services should be affordable, non-discriminatory, and culturally sensitive.^[2,11]
 3. Empowerment of women and girls: Policies and programs that empower women and girls to exercise control over their bodies and reproductive health are pivotal. This includes access to contraceptives, family planning information, and legal protection against gender-based violence.^[9,12]
 4. Collaboration: Partnerships between government, Non-Government Organizations (NGOs), academia, and the private sector can drive innovative approaches to sustainable sexual health initiatives. Funding, research, and technology can collectively amplify impact.^[13,14]

The practical implications

To harness the potential of the intersection between sustainability and sexual health, it is imperative for government, international organizations, civil societies, and the private sector to work in tandem. The areas of priority are:

Conclusion

The Sustainable Development Goals have created a new era of global collaboration and shared responsibility. Acknowledging the profound interconnectedness of sustainability and sexual health, we can transcend isolated approaches and adopt a comprehensive strategy for development. Equipping

individuals with knowledge and resources to make informed decisions about their sexual health not only ensures a healthier and more equitable world but also establishes groundwork for sustainable progress that benefits both current and future generations.

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