

Male Sexual Health

Male sexual health was defined by the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development in Cairo and the 1995 Fourth World Conference on Women held in Beijing. The conferences expanded the right to family planning to include the right to better sexual and reproductive health. On the basis of the World Health Organization's definition of health, the Cairo Programme defines reproductive health as:

a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and ... not merely the absence of disease or infirmity, in all matters relating to the reproductive system and to its functions and processes. Reproductive health therefore implies that people are able to have a satisfying and safe sex life and that they have the capability to reproduce and the freedom to decide if, when and how often to do so. Implicit in this last condition are the right of men and women to be informed and to have access to safe, effective, affordable and acceptable methods of family planning of their choice, as well as other methods of their choice for regulation of fertility which are not against the law, and the right of access to appropriate health-care services that will enable women to go safely through pregnancy and childbirth and provide couples with the best chance of having a healthy infant (paragraph 72).

(Published by the United Nations Department of Public Information – DPI/1877 – February 1997)

Reproductive rights are further elucidated by the UNFPA (source: UNFPA website):

Attaining the goals of sustainable, equitable development requires that individuals are able to exercise control over their sexual and reproductive lives. This includes the rights to:

- *Reproductive health as a component of overall health, throughout the life cycle, for both men and women*
- *Reproductive decision-making, including voluntary choice in marriage, family formation and determination of the number, timing and spacing of one's children and the right to have access to the information and means needed to exercise voluntary choice*
- *Equality and equity for men and women, to enable individuals to make free and informed choices in all spheres of life, free from discrimination based on gender*
- *Sexual and reproductive security, including freedom from sexual violence and coercion, and the right to privacy.*

In this sense, the term "male sexual health" comprises satisfying sexual function including the social aspects of partnership and gender identification, the psychological conditions of libido and arousal, as well as the physiological reactions of

erection and ejaculation, but also the undisturbed function of androgen production and sperm maturation by the testes leading to the ability to induce a pregnancy in the female partner.