## State gonorrhea rates declined; UNL varied

Gonorrhea rates declined in Nebraska last year for the first time in 15 years.

Celeste Knipmeyer, Community Health Service supervisor, attributes the decline of almost 1,000 cases to "contact interviewing."

The State Health Dept. started interviews in 1971, Knipmeyer said, and because of their success the disease is finally subsiding. In 1973, gonorrhea cases were up to 5,017 compared to 4,207 reported cases in 1974.

### Contact interviews

Contact interviews involve personal discussions with those who are treated for gonorrhea to find out who they have had sexual intercourse with in the previous 30 days.

Interviews began four years ago at UNL when the State Health Dept. started a widespread campaign against gonorrhea.

Although state figures show a decline, Knipmeyer said the number of reported UNL gonorrhea cases has fluctuated.

"You can't expect UNL rates to decrease," she explained, "because they are already extremely low-about .4 per cent."

Knipmeyer conducts many of the interviews with UNL students, and most of them have been cooperative, she said. "Ninety per cent of the students are willing to share the name of their contacts."

### Center contacts

After names are secured, these people are contacted by the University Health Center, the State Health Dept., or the person with the disease.

Most students want to personally tell those they have infected, Knipmeyer said, but if they are reluctant to do so, someone from the health center

If a student who has gonorrhea does not want to tell contacts who are not UNL students, Knipmeyer said, it is the responsibility of the State Health Dept. to do so.

If a UNL student suspects that he or she has contracted gonorrhea, he should go to the health center for a test-usually a Gonorrhea Culture (GC). A test costs \$1.50 for males and \$2.50 or \$4.00 for females at the health center.

State pays for treatment

If the tests are positive, she continued, the

penicillin required for treatment is paid for by the

There is no easy way to determine if a person has contracted gonorrhea, Knipmeyer said, and symptoms are minimal, which can explain the skyrocketing rates in the past 15 years.

The popularity of birth control pills also might explain the increase in gonorrhea cases. Few men use condoms, Knipmeyer said, which would protect both the male and female.

Symptoms for gonorrhea in males including burning and unusual discharges, Knipmeyer said. But 80 to 90 per cent of females with the disease have no symptoms. Many times the only way a female can discover the disease, she said, is when a male contact tells her she has been exposed.

Although symptoms eventually disappear, the disease still remains and serious complications may follow, such as sterility, blindness or heart and brain

damage. Non UNL students who are worried about possible gonorrhea symptoms may be tested at one of the State Health Dept. Clinics-Lincoln-Lancaster Health Dept. or the Family Planning Clinic.

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