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## **Movies condone drugs and unsafe sex**

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**4 October, 2005**

## THE ARTICLE

### **Movies condone drugs and unsafe sex**

**BNE:** Researchers have blamed Hollywood movies for the rise in sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), unplanned or unwanted pregnancies and a culture in which drugs are seen as an acceptable way to relax. A team from two Australian universities, reporting in Britain's *Journal of the Royal Society of Medicine\**, analyzed the portrayal of sex and drug use in the most popular movies of the last 20 years. Observers recorded data regarding "sexual activity, STD prevention, birth control measures, drug use and any consequences discussed or depicted". The report concluded: "Drug use, though infrequent, tended to be depicted positively. The social norm being presented is concerning given the HIV and illicit drug pandemics in developing and industrialized countries."

The journal article singles out the 2003 James Bond movie *Die Another Day* and the thriller *Basic Instinct* as key offenders. These movies often depicted unprotected sex with first-time partners without any reference to condoms, AIDS or birth control. The Julia Roberts movie, *Pretty Woman*, was the only movie in the study to mention condoms. The study also found scant regard given to the dangers of drug use. It revealed: "Movies with cannabis and other non-injected illicit drugs...tended to portray their use positively and without negative consequences." Lead researcher Dr. Hasantha Gunasekera suggested Hollywood should be more responsible in its movie output, behaviors from which are seen, assimilated and copied by billions around the world.

\* <http://www.jrsm.org/cgi/content/abstract/98/10/464>

## **WARM-UPS**

**1. MOVIE DIRECTORS:** You are now a Hollywood movie director. Walk around the classroom and talk with other “directors” about the movies you have made and want to make; the stars you have worked with and want to work with; and your attitude towards sex scenes and the portrayal of drug use.

**2. MOVIES:** Should Hollywood movies educate or entertain? In pairs / groups, discuss what you think movies should show or not show regarding the following:

- Sex
- Sexually Transmitted Diseases
- AIDS
- Birth control / condoms
- Unwanted pregnancies
- Marijuana use
- Sex before marriage
- Guns

**3. CHAT:** In pairs / groups, decide which of these topics or words are most interesting and which are most boring.

*Hollywood / movies / sexually transmitted diseases / unwanted pregnancies / drugs / sexual activity / birth control / HIV / James Bond / Julia Roberts / cannabis*

Have a chat about the topics you liked. For more conversation, change topics and partners frequently.

**4. CONDOMS:** Spend one minute writing down all of the different words you associate with condoms. Share your words with your partner(s) and talk about them. Together, put the words into different categories.

**5. MOVIE OPINIONS:** How far do you agree with these opinions on movies and Hollywood’s responsibility towards sex and drugs? Talk about them with your partner(s).

- a. Hollywood is all about entertainment, not education.
- b. Any industry that causes a rise in STDs and unwanted pregnancies should be monitored and regulated.
- c. Hollywood glamorizes drug use and cigarettes. People should be able to sue the Hollywood movie industry.
- d. Movies without sex scenes would be boring.
- e. Hollywood movies do not tell people to have unprotected sex. Movie-goers should know the risks themselves.
- f. Hollywood movies simply reflect what happens in real life.
- g. If actors make little speeches about safe sex and the dangers of drugs, the dialogue would become unnatural.
- h. All movies should show only scenes involving healthy relationships.

## BEFORE READING / LISTENING

**1. TRUE / FALSE:** Look at the article's headline and guess whether these sentences are true (T) or false (F):

- |   |       |
|---|-------|
| a. Researchers said Hollywood movies have caused a rise in unsafe sex.      | T / F |
| b. Researchers discovered that Hollywood movies discouraged drug use.       | T / F |
| c. A study analyzed the content of pornographic movies.                     | T / F |
| d. Researchers expressed concern at the social norm movies presented.       | T / F |
| e. James Bond movies all give the message of safe sex.                      | T / F |
| f. The movie <i>Pretty Woman</i> was singled out for its negative messages. | T / F |
| g. Researchers said movies tended to portray drug use positively.           | T / F |
| h. The lead researcher said people do not copy what they see in movies.     | T / F |

**2. SYNONYM MATCH:** Match the following synonyms from the article:

- |                |               |
|----------------|---------------|
| a. blamed      | marijuana     |
| b. relax       | highlights    |
| c. portrayal   | criminal      |
| d. depicted    | wind down     |
| e. illicit     | meager        |
| f. singles out | depiction     |
| g. condoms     | taken in      |
| h. scant       | incriminated  |
| i. cannabis    | prophylactics |
| j. assimilated | illustrated   |

**3. PHRASE MATCH:** Match the following phrases from the article (sometimes more than one combination is possible):

- |                                      |                                  |
|--------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| a. unplanned or unwanted             | in the most popular movies       |
| b. drugs are seen as                 | non-injected illicit drugs       |
| c. the portrayal of sex and drug use | is concerning                    |
| d. Drug use, though infrequent,      | with first-time partners         |
| e. The social norm being presented   | given to the dangers of drug use |
| f. The journal article singles       | pregnancies                      |
| g. unprotected sex                   | by billions around the world     |
| h. The study also found scant regard | an acceptable way to relax       |
| i. cannabis and other                | tended to be depicted positively |
| j. assimilated and copied            | out the 2003 James Bond movie    |

## WHILE READING / LISTENING

**GAP FILL:** Put the words in the column on the right into the gaps in the text.

### Movies condone drugs and unsafe sex

**BNE:** Researchers have \_\_\_\_\_ Hollywood movies for the rise in sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), \_\_\_\_\_ or unwanted pregnancies and a \_\_\_\_\_ in which drugs are seen as an acceptable way to relax. A team from two Australian universities, reporting in Britain's *Journal of the Royal Society of Medicine*, analyzed the \_\_\_\_\_ of sex and drug use in the most popular movies of the last 20 years. Observers recorded data regarding "sexual activity, STD prevention, \_\_\_\_\_ control measures, drug use and any consequences discussed or depicted". The report concluded: "Drug use, though \_\_\_\_\_, tended to be depicted positively. The social \_\_\_\_\_ being presented is concerning given the HIV and \_\_\_\_\_ drug pandemics in developing and industrialized countries."

The journal article \_\_\_\_\_ out the 2003 James Bond movie *Die Another Day* and the thriller *Basic Instinct* as \_\_\_\_\_ offenders. These movies often depicted unprotected sex with first-time partners without any \_\_\_\_\_ to condoms, AIDS or birth control. The Julia Roberts movie, *Pretty Woman*, was the only movie in the study to \_\_\_\_\_ condoms. The study also found scant \_\_\_\_\_ given to the dangers of drug use. It revealed: "Movies with cannabis and other non-injected \_\_\_\_\_ drugs...tended to portray their use positively and without negative \_\_\_\_\_." Lead researcher Dr. Hasantha Gunasekera suggested Hollywood should be more responsible in its movie \_\_\_\_\_, behaviors from which are seen, assimilated and copied by billions around the world.

*norm*  
*culture*  
*birth*  
*portrayal*  
*illicit*  
*blamed*  
*infrequent*  
*unplanned*

*mention*  
*key*  
*output*  
*illicit*  
*singles*  
*reference*  
*consequences*  
*regard*

## **AFTER READING / LISTENING**

**1. WORD SEARCH:** Look in your dictionaries / computer to find collocates, other meanings, information, synonyms ... for the words **'birth'** and **'control'**.

- Share your findings with your partners.
- Make questions using the words you found.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

**2. ARTICLE QUESTIONS:** Look back at the article and write down some questions you would like to ask the class about the text.

- Share your questions with other classmates / groups.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

**3. GAP FILL:** In pairs / groups, compare your answers to this exercise. Check your answers. Talk about the words from the gap fill. Were they new, interesting, worth learning...?

**4. VOCABULARY:** Circle any words you do not understand. In groups, pool unknown words and use dictionaries to find their meanings.

**5. STUDENT "SEX AND DRUGS IN MOVIES" SURVEY:** In pairs / groups, write down questions about Hollywood's responsibility in producing movies with positive messages about sex and drugs.

- Ask other classmates your questions and note down their answers.
- Go back to your original partner / group and compare your findings.
- Make mini-presentations to other groups on your findings.

**6. TEST EACH OTHER:** Look at the words below. With your partner, try to recall exactly how these were used in the text:

- |                |               |
|----------------|---------------|
| • rise         | • singles out |
| • acceptable   | • first-time  |
| • portrayal    | • scant       |
| • consequences | • illicit     |
| • infrequent   | • responsible |
| • pandemics    | • assimilated |

## **DISCUSSION**

### STUDENT A's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student B)

- a. What were your initial thoughts on this headline?
- b. Did the headline make you want to read the article?
- c. Do you agree with the concerns contained in the article?
- d. Do you like movies that contain sex scenes?
- e. Do you think there should be greater censorship of explicit scenes?
- f. Do you think Hollywood's producers and directors should be more careful when portraying the use of drugs?
- g. Do you think you have ever copied any actions you saw in a movie?
- h. Do you think Hollywood movies should educate people about the dangers of unsafe sex and drugs?
- i. Why are drug using, smoking, womanizing men shown as "heroes" in movies?
- j. Do you think the US Government should regulate the content in Hollywood movies to ensure a healthier society and world?

### STUDENT B's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student A)

- a. Did you like reading this article?
- b. What do you think about what you read?
- c. Are you surprised at anything you read in the article?
- d. Do you think the quality of movies would decrease if all sex scenes were banned?
- e. Why do you think the researchers found no movies that showed drug use negatively?
- f. Do you think movies could be used to combat HIV/AIDS?
- g. Does Hollywood have a social responsibility?
- h. Do Hollywood movies show westerners as sex-mad drug addicts?
- i. Do the movies from your country show unsafe sex and drug use?
- j. Did you like this discussion?

**AFTER DISCUSSION:** Join another partner / group and tell them what you talked about.

- a. What question would you like to ask about this topic?
- b. What was the most interesting thing you heard?
- c. Was there a question you didn't like?
- d. Was there something you totally disagreed with?
- e. What did you like talking about?
- f. Do you want to know how anyone else answered the questions?
- g. Which was the most difficult question?

## **SPEAKING**

**MOVIE CONTENT:** In pairs / groups, decide on a policy about what should and should not be allowed in movies. The items you must agree on are listed in the left hand column. Determine whether your policy is for educational or entertainment purposes.

ITEMS	POLICY	EDUCATION / ENTERTAINMENT
Scenes of people having sex		
Full frontal nudity		
Topless women		
Condoms		
Cannabis		
Syringes and drugs		
"One-night stands"		
STDs		
AIDS		

Change partners and tell each other about your policies.

Discuss which three policy ideas should be adopted and how they might be made more acceptable to movie-goers.



## LISTENING

Listen and fill in the spaces.

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The journal article \_\_\_\_\_ the 2003 James Bond movie *Die Another Day* and the thriller *Basic Instinct* as key offenders. These movies often depicted \_\_\_\_\_ sex with first-time partners without any reference to condoms, AIDS or birth control. The Julia Roberts movie, *Pretty Woman*, was the only movie in the study to \_\_\_\_\_ condoms. The study also found \_\_\_\_\_ regard given to the dangers of drug use. It revealed: "Movies with cannabis and other non-injected \_\_\_\_\_ drugs...tended to portray their use positively and without \_\_\_\_\_ consequences." Lead researcher Dr. Hasantha Gunasekera suggested Hollywood should be more responsible in its movie output, behaviors from which are seen, \_\_\_\_\_ and copied by billions around the world.

## **HOMEWORK**

**1. VOCABULARY EXTENSION:** Choose several of the words from the text. Use a dictionary or Google's search field (or another search engine) to build up more associations / collocations of each word.

**2. INTERNET:** Search the Internet and find more information on Hollywood movies. Share your findings with your class in the next lesson.

**3. MOVIE REVIEW:** Write a report on a movie you have seen recently. Report on things that might negatively influence people and things that give a positive message. Show your reports to your classmates in your next lesson. Did you all write about similar things?

**4. LETTER:** Write a letter to the head of the Hollywood Movie Association. Make suggestions for how movies might be used to both educate and entertain. Read your letter to your classmates in the next lesson. Did you all write about similar things?

## ANSWERS

### TRUE / FALSE:

- a. T      b. F      c. F      d. T      e. F      f. F      g. T      h. F

### SYNONYM MATCH:

- |                |               |
|----------------|---------------|
| a. blamed      | incriminated  |
| b. relax       | wind down     |
| c. portrayal   | depiction     |
| d. depicted    | illustrated   |
| e. illicit     | criminal      |
| f. singles out | highlights    |
| g. condoms     | prophylactics |
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### PHRASE MATCH:

- |                                      |                                  |
|--------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| a. unplanned or unwanted             | pregnancies                      |
| b. drugs are seen as                 | an acceptable way to relax       |
| c. the portrayal of sex and drug use | in the most popular movies       |
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| e. The social norm being presented   | is concerning                    |
| f. The journal article singles       | out the 2003 James Bond movie    |
| g. unprotected sex                   | with first-time partners         |
| h. The study also found scant regard | given to the dangers of drug use |
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### GAP FILL:

#### Movies condone drugs and unsafe sex

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