

Columbia Daily Spectator, Volume CXVII, Number 106, 15 October 1993 — Students talk about impact of AIDS
[ARTICLE+ILLUSTRATION]

Students talk about impact of AIDS

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Contributing Writer

Sharing personal experiences and perceptions on AIDS, 15 students gathered last night in Schapiro Hall to hear an informal talk about the impact of the illness on the Latino community, in a discussion co-sponsored by the Schapiro-Furnald-Hogan House and the Barnard College Health Services as part of Latino Heritage Month.

Leading the discussion were Maria Rosado, BC '94, Jane Bedell, an intern at Montefiore Hospital, a South Bronx Clinic, and Polly Wheat, director of Barnard Health Services.

The growing problem of AIDS in the Latino Community demands discussion, Rosado said, citing the fact that Hispanics accounted for 32 percent of new AIDS cases in New York City last year.

Rosado discussed the divisive impact of common fears, stereotypes, and rejection, explaining how the traditionally private nature of the Latino family prevents open communication about AIDS.

Many people still wrongly believe that AIDS is confined to the poor, the uneducated, or homosexuals, Rosado said.

“People need to know that there is a tremendous diversity in the epidemic,” she said. “We have to undo these stereotypes.”

Several people who attended the discussion spoke about their personal experiences with AIDS, mentioning the illnesses or deaths of relatives or close friends.

“This is the first time I’ve heard AIDS seriously discussed,” said Ivelisse Rodriguez, CC ’97.

“I think it’s really good for people to address these questions. In this forum, we can get more personal,” Rodriguez said.

In the midst of the somber accounts many had to relate, Rosado

mentioned one positive aspect of the disease.

“After the initial shock and rejection, I think that AIDS can sometimes bring the family closer together,” she said.



SPECTATOR/KATE HAMLIN

Dr. Polly Wheat, director of Barnard Health Services, and Dr. Jane Bedell of Montefiore Hospital were part of an informal discussion on “AIDS in the Latino Community” last night in Schapiro Hall.