

Open Letter to the President Dilma Rousseff

February 4, 2011, World Cancer Day.

I read in **The Globe** 05.02.2011, page 13, a story on the subject. Data already well known, were once again cited: in Brazil, 4.800 women a year die of cervical cancer and 18.430 more women are affected of the same evil.

To draw a parallel, it may be remembered that the great tragedy that hit the mountainous region of Rio in the month of January totaled, among dead and missing, less than half of the 4.800 deaths from cervical cancer. It is worth noting an important point about these numbers: the cervical cancer kills this number of women (about 5.000) annually for decades.

At another point in the story: "The cancer has reached more young people. Changes in habits can make people leave the group at risk... However, early diagnosis and access to treatment are critical". This information reminded me of the Action Plan for the Reduction of Incidence and Mortality from Cancer of the Cervix (available at: http://www1.inca.gov.br/inca/Arquivos/sumario_colo_uterio_versao_2011.pdf), released in November 2010. Page 8 of this document begins like this: "The National Program for Control of Cervical Cancer in Brazil is based on the early detection of cancer in asymptomatic women, a process known as screening".

At no time this document makes it clear that the cervical cancer have HPV as its basic element and that this infectious agent is primarily a sexually transmitted disease. So, as an STD, condom use during sexual intercourse, significantly decreases its transmissibility.

In this document, cervical cancer is mistakenly separated from other diseases caused by the same HPV, such as condyloma acuminatum, intraepithelial neoplasia / cancer of the vulva, vagina, anus, penis, recurrent respiratory papillomatosis, among other diseases.

The relationship between sexual activity and cervical cancer is not a new thought. In 1842, two doctors of Verona, Rigoni & Stern, already quoted that this cancer was transmitted through sex, because, in their research, was found that this disease was rare in nuns and virgin women, when compared with rates among widows and married women.

The documentation by molecular association of HPV and cervical cancer has become reality in the 1980s. In 2008, the German doctor Harald zur Hausen was awarded the Nobel Prize in Medicine for his research into cervical cancer and the involvement of HPV. However, many "authorities" in the field of public health in Brazil has not yet realized the association between HPV / STDs and cancers and many other diseases caused by HPV. Still, many who deny the HPV vaccination among the population in most need of care, attended by SUS, do not hesitate to vaccinate their loved ones and indicate the procedure for clients of private clinics.

Even the examples of countries like Australia, United States, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Spain, Switzerland, Portugal,

Austria, Norway, Denmark, Sweden, Mexico, are ignored by those who have the power to compose committees in the area. Researchers from Australia, for example, published, two years ago, the impact of HPV vaccination among young people of that country.

While the world is already working with primary prevention for years, namely to prevent HPV infection in young people, preferably before the onset of sexual activity, documents of the Ministry of Health of Brazil insist on having as objective only the early detection of cancer. That is, the precursor lesion or disease is already established. Both actions are not exclusive, however, are strengthened. Especially because, unfortunately, there are already thousands and thousands of people infected with HPV soon will develop precancerous lesions and cancer.

As the world invests heavily in prevention, in Brazil, 80% of the budget of the Ministry of Health are to pay for treatment of diseases.

Why this letter to the President of the Federative Republic of Brazil, Mrs. Rousseff? Because technicals have so far failed to give efficient answers to the question of sexually transmitted diseases.

I am convinced that a political decision on the part of a woman who has spoken under the auspices of innovation, technical and administrative efficiency, strengthening actions in science and technology, seeking to advance equity for women's rights can lead change on the understanding that primary prevention is the primary objective to reduce (hopefully, eliminate) the incidence of cancers caused by HPV infection and its complications (including hepatocellular carcinoma) of hepatitis B virus and other STDs.

Finally, one last thought, as I already stretch. The National Department of STDs, AIDS and viral hepatitis has the Vaccine Advisory Committee, but it is not possible to identify activities that are not unique to HIV. Vaccination in the public system (SUS) for hepatitis B is restricted to people under 24 years old. Above this age, it will only be possible if the person is classified as "lesbian, bisexual or transgender" (<http://www.aids.gov.br/node/40143>). So, who say he is heterosexual, is out of the group that can be vaccinated.

The International Women's Day (March 8) this year coincides with the Carnival. It is possible that the events of women's empowerment get lost in the middle of the female sensualization, as exploited by the media at this time. So, as a way to truly celebrate this date, the president Rousseff could open the Congress of the Brazilian Society of STD, on May 18, 2011 in Curitiba, where the central theme to be discussed will be "The impact of STDs in woman".

Niteroi, February 7, 2011.

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