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OPINION

SEXUAL BEHAVIOUR

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OPINION ON AN APS PREFERRAL TO THE NAC
CONCERNING A PROJECTED SURVEY OF ADOLESCENT
SEXUALITY

The APS, Association pour la Prévention du Sida / Association for the Prevention of AIDS, has requested the National AIDS Council, in a letter dated September 24, 1990, to give its approval to a socio-psychological survey focused on "Prevention targeting young men involved in sexual activity with same-gender partners".

The National AIDS Council has studied the information provided to it on the project and, at its plenary session of December 19, 1990, heard a presentation given by Doctor Rekacewics, the President of APS.

As part of this survey, it is planned to interview young men and adolescents at length on their sexual and private lives, the representative sample being between 14 and 22 years of age. For reasons intrinsic to the underlying logic of the survey – ranging from the need to find subjects who agree to be interviewed, to the necessity of ensuring a degree of spontaneity in responses – supporters of the survey wish to be exempted from the requirement to obtain parental authorization prior to interviewing minors, and it is on this ethical point that they have requested an opinion from the National AIDS Council.

The National AIDS Council perfectly understands the reasons given. But, without going into the fundamental merits of the case, the Council is also aware of the legal dimension entailed by this request and does not feel able to approve the survey, since such approval would be devoid of legal force in the event that parents take action against the researchers for having interviewed their children without their permission.