



Statement Counteracting Bias, Prejudice, and Inequality

June 5, 2020

As a multidisciplinary, professional society dedicated to women's sexual health, ISSWSH has recognized from its inception the need to counteract bias, prejudice, and inequality. Founded for the purpose of scholarly discourse, professional education and ethical standards, and dissemination of accurate information about women's sexual health to the public, ISSWSH and its members have worked to advance the discussion and dispel myths about women's sexuality, necessarily crossing over into cultural and societal issues such as gender equality and sexual violence. Thus, ISSWSH recognizes that socio-political issues can become intertwined with public health, ultimately impacting individuals.

The recent events in Minneapolis, Minnesota (see news links below), less than 20 miles north of the ISSWSH main office, are arguably at the crossroads of societal culture, government, and health/welfare. While there are many acts of injustice that occur every day around the world, the treatment of George Floyd, by all reports a compliant and unarmed middle-aged black man who died while being forcibly restrained by a police officer, has been an inciting incident throughout the US, mobilizing public protest in large outdoor gatherings that have defied quarantine policies during the pandemic.

Beyond the tragedy of this one incident, there lies a torn and tattered tapestry of racial injustice and persistent patterns of prejudicial behavior that are, unfortunately, all too widespread. While our focus remains on promoting professional and public discussion and education about sexual health for women, ISSWSH's inherent values as a society mandate that we publicly affirm the efforts of both individuals and groups who speak out against inequality regarding race, gender or sexual orientation in any part of the world. To be clear, as a body of healthcare and research professionals who strive to relieve suffering and improve quality of life, ISSWSH condemns violence and lawlessness, whether instigative or reactive.

Further, no group or organization is monolithic. We praise the courageous and self-sacrificing members of law enforcement and government agencies, and healthcare and civil rights organizations. As individual members and as a professional society, ISSWSH grieves for the unnecessary loss of any innocent life and strongly stands with all those who seek to forge a more humane future.

For additional information, here are a few resources you may want to view:

[Human Rights Watch](#)

[National Public Radio](#)