



VANCOUVER - On April 28-30, 2011, Simon Fraser University's (SFU) Gender, Sexuality, & Women's Studies Department is hosting "The Medicalization of Sex," an interdisciplinary, international conference at SFU's downtown campus.

"The Medicalization of Sex" refers to the ways in which science, medicine, and the pharmaceutical industry shape sexual 'normalcy' and 'deviancy,' 'function' and 'dysfunction,'" says Dr. Thea Cacchioni, professor at SFU.

Dr. Cacchioni researches the medicalization of sex from a sociological, feminist perspective. She successfully testified against the approval of the drug Flibanserin at last year's FDA advisory hearing in Gaithersburg, Maryland. Flibanserin was a failed anti-depressant drug proposed to treat low sexual desire in women. But with low efficacy and several unsexy side effects, the risk to benefit ratio did not measure up. And as Cacchioni questions, "Do we need a pill to raise women's sexual desire? Norms of sexual desire vary from era to era and culture to culture and sexual desire is shaped by a range of socio-political and interpersonal factors."

The Medicalization of Sex conference will examine issues beyond the search for the "pink Viagra" as well, for example: the rise of cosmetic genital surgery, the development and promotion of the HPV vaccine, science and medicine's involvement in 'ex-gay' movements, and the question of informed consent in the surgical alteration of intersex infants.

The conference will feature more than 60 cutting edge speakers from all corners of the globe including keynotes Leonore Tiefer (NYU Medical School), a leading medicalization scholar, critic, and activist and Jennifer Terry (UC Santa Cruz), author of *An American Obsession: Science, Medicine, and Homosexuality in Modern Society*.

Events Open to the Public Include:

- *Orgasm Inc: The Strange Science of Female Sexual Pleasure*: screening of the critically acclaimed documentary with special introduction and Q and A by director Liz Canner and reception to follow.
  - Tickets: \$15 at: <http://bit.ly/eZ6mQm>
  - The Woodward Cinema 149 West Hastings, entrance at the West Cordova Street Courtyard
- The *Antidote* reception celebrating bodily diversity and resistance to the medicalization of sex. Features art work and the images from *I'll Show You Mine*, a photography book by Wrenna Robertson, exotic dancer, academic, and activist author, created in response to the rising trend of cosmetic vaginal surgery.
  - Admission: free, cash bar
  - The Gallery Gachet 88 East Cordova Street

For more information on the conference, please our website at: <http://www.sfu.ca/gsws/MedicalizationofSex.html> or Contact:

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