Declarations

• Founder of Decolonising Contraception a community interest group created by people of colour working in Sexual & Reproductive Health
• Contributor gal-dem.com, Black Ballad
• Freelance journalist – Dazed & Confused, The Independent, Metro
• Trustee Medact
• Sit on the International Affairs Committee for the Faculty of Sexual & Reproductive Health
Objectives

• Outline how advocacy can start
• Understand the impacts of colonialism on our profession & our patients
• What it means to decolonise sexual & reproductive health (SRH)
• Why it is important medical professionals are advocates
At the start...

“Doctors put drugs of which they know little into bodies of which they know less for diseases of which they know nothing at all.”

Voltaire – French Philosopher
Colonisation

• The action or process of settling among and establishing control over the indigenous people of an area.

• The action of appropriating a place or domain for one's own use.
‘Before you can decolonise you must first recognise how society has been colonised’
‘As Black women, our experiences as patients are not only determined by our economic status. As women, we have inherited a long medical tradition of male neglect. Historically, the control & manipulation of women’s bodies by an all-male medical profession has meant that we have been consistently denied access to essential knowledge about ourselves’

– Heart of the Race: Black Women’s Lives in Britain
J. Marion Sims
Must Fall Too....

• Nicknamed Father of Gynaecology
  Experimented on Thousands of Enslaved
  African American Women
• Has multiple statues named after him
• Also the Sims Speculum that many
  Gynaecologists use everyday!
Tuskagee Syphilis Experiments

• 600 poor, black African Americans recruited to study the progression of syphilis
• Many did not know they had syphilis
• Known penicillin treatment not given
• Many died of related complications
• They generated the biggest body of information in relation to syphilis
• Their families would not find out until years later
Fanni Lou Harmer

• African American Civil Rights Leader
• Underwent forced sterilisation at 14 years old after being admitted to hospital
• Referred to it as her Mississippi Appendectomy
• Southern Poverty Law between 100,000 to 150,000 poor people were being sterilised every year using federal funding.
'Many paternal and apparently sympathetic doctors have persuaded Black women to accept an abortion or contraceptive she did not really want, out of a concern to control our fertility. And such attitudes are reflected not only through our experiences here in Britain, but in our countries of origin, where myths about the need for population control are used as an excuse for unleashing of mass sterilisation and birth control programmes on Black & Third World women, often as part of the West’s ‘aid’ package.'

- Heart of the Race: Black Women’s Lives in Britain
Medical Electives/ Training Abroad
**GLOBAL GAG RULE**

**TRUMP'S GLOBAL GAG RULE IS KILLING WOMEN**

It has cut $100s of millions from international health organizations and banned U.S. funded clinics from performing or even discussing abortions.

Because of this rule, experts estimate:

- **16M** additional people will contract HIV.
- **4.8M** more women will face unintended pregnancies.
- **20K+** women will die of pregnancy complications.

Trump also ended all U.S. funding for the United Nations Population Fund — the world's largest provider of contraceptives.

Share to spread the word about Trump's attack on women around the world.

#InternationalWomensDay

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Effects on those in the Global South

• USAID cut off shipments of contraceptives to 16 countries in Sub-Saharan Africa, Asia and the Middle East e.g The Lesotho Planned Parenthood Association had received 426,000 condoms from USAID over a two year period.

• About 40% of all women using a modern family planning method in Madagascar have received their method from the U.S supported MSI-Madagascar program.
Forced Sterilisation of those living with HIV

• Forced and coerced sterilization is a widespread problem in Namibia.
• One investigation found that 40 out of 230 women living with HIV had been victims of this abuse.
• 2012 - the High Court of Namibia ruled that all 3 women were sterilized without their informed consent (yet not discrimination based on their status)
• Reports of continued sterilisation
So how do move on?
‘There is no such thing as a single issue struggle as we do not live single issue lives’ – Audre Lorde
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How do these disparities manifest?
'To gain trust, we must first acknowledge the flagrant abuses of the past and the subtler ones of the present…'

-Harriet Washington, Author Medical Apartheid
So what do we do?
We build a trusted community
Decolonising Contraception
We engage our communities
We challenge academia & push policy-makers
‘If you are **neutral** in situations of injustice, you have chosen the **side of the oppressor**. If an elephant has its foot on the tail of a mouse and you say that you are **neutral**, the mouse will not appreciate your **neutrality**.’

- Archbishop Desmond Tutu
Follow us...

- Twitter DecoloniseContr

- Instagram Decoloncontra

- Website: https://decolonisingcontraception.com
Suggested Homework

• Medial Apartheid – Harriet Washington
• Superior – Angela Saini
• The Return of Scientific Racism – Dr Adam Rutherford
  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cYf-xNsIb2I
• Heart of the Race: Black Women’s Lives in Britain
References


References

• MBRACE REPORT 2018 https://www.npeu.ox.ac.uk/mbrrace-uk/reports