



Dr Jules Black F.R.C.O.G., F.R.A.N.Z.C.O.G.

Dr Jules Black was born in Sydney on March 7, 1940. He started medical training at the Medical Faculty at Sydney University aged 16 and graduated in 1964. He then commenced specialist training as an obstetrician & gynaecologist at the Women's Hospital, Crown Street in Sydney. Around 1967 this hospital opened up Australia's first sexual dysfunction clinic, known by the euphemistic title of 'The Department of Gynaecological Psychiatry'. Gaining his MRCOG in 1970, Dr Black went to England for postgraduate training.

Returning to Australia in 1972 Dr Black started to raise the consciousness of specialist colleagues regarding patients' sexual difficulties. Sadly the subspecialty was often treated as 'something of a joke'. In 1973 a meeting was convened in the Barossa Valley, South Australia by Adelaide obstetrician and gynaecologist, the late Dr. Roger Wurm. This inaugural scientific meeting became the Australian Society of Psychosomatic Obstetrics & Gynaecology.

Later in 1973 Dr Black presented a paper called "Sex in the Suburbs" at St Vincents Hospital, Sydney. Many of the like-minded doctors who came together at this meeting became the stalwarts of ASSERT when it was founded. In 1974 Dr Black persuaded the Editor of the Australian & New Zealand Journal of Obstetrics & Gynaecology, to accept its first article ever on sexuality "Sex and the Gynaecologist".¹ In 1975 Dr Black pressed Sydney University to include questions on sexuality in its final medical examinations and also for the MRACOG specialist exams. Then in 1976 Dr Black & Prof. Derek Llewellyn Jones structured and participated in the first course on Human Sexuality at Sydney University. The University of NSW followed suit that same year and Dr Black lectured at both universities.

In 1975, psychologist Greta Goldberg approached colleagues to form AASECT (eventually ASSERT). Dr Black was one of the founding directors and President of the association.

As a medical doctor, Dr Black appeared on national TV and was able to spread good, safe information about sexuality in the community. In 1976, he was a keynote speaker, with Bettina Arndt, at a major conference in Rockhampton. His private practice was prominent for the treatment of apareunia due to vaginismus and

unconsummated marriages, and female pelvic pain. He was Australia's foremost gynæcological sexologist.

In 1982, Dr Black & Prof. Joe LoPiccolo from Stony Brook University, USA, made a videotape of Dr Black's techniques in treating vaginismus. This video is now used as reference evidence with the NSW Health Department and with medical defence unions to demonstrate ethical sexological examinations. In 1983, Dr Black was appointed to the Board of SSSS (The Society for the Scientific Study of Sexuality) where he served on various committees but principally as the International Board Representative between 1983-1991 and on the Ethics Committee. From 1985 to 2001 he was on the advisory committee of WAS (The World Association for Sexual Health). He held various executive positions: Co-Secretary 1985-1989 and Secretary-General/Treasurer 1989-1993.

Dr Black was awarded Life Membership of ASSERT NSW in recognition for the working he has done in raising the awareness of the relevance of normal sexuality for health and for the treatment of sexual difficulties in Australia, and for his commitment and work on behalf of ASSERT.

He has now semi-retired to the Gold Coast but continues his interest and work in sexuality.

ⁱ Black, J.S. Sex and the Gynaecologist. Australian & New Zealand Journal of Obstetrics & Gynaecology 1974; 14, 238-240.