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Washington, Aug 29 : It has been revealed that Miss Universe hopefuls had teamed up with AIDS prevention group Population Services International (PSI) to stage a "Condom Olympics" at the recent pageant in the Bahamas to bring about AIDS awareness.

But questions have risen as to whether the demonstration was more about product placement and promoting promiscuity than AIDS prevention.

Contestants such as Miss Australia Rachael Finch and Miss USA Kristen Dalton took part in testing the condom's limits by blowing them up until they burst.

They even filled them with water and learned how to conduct condom demonstration correctly, with just one "game" mentioning abstinence as a means to avoid AIDS.

"In preparation for the new Miss Universe to become an Ambassador for Youth AIDS and in the hopes that the contestants would return to their countries inspired to support HIV/AIDS initiatives, the contestants participated in an hour long peer education session," Fox News quoted a rep from PSI as saying in a statement.

"The session consisted of a discussion on HIV/AIDS and several peer education activities that are actually employed by our programs in the field. Often times, target populations are illiterate or of low literacy and we need to find ways to reach them through engaging activities that don't rely on written materials.

"What we have learned is that youth more actively listen to their peers and role models, so we centre our activities through peer education and deliver messages of prevention through role models like the Miss Universe contestants.

"The winner and the remaining contestants have a unique opportunity to help reduce stigma, educate at-risk populations and empower youth and women to practice abstinence, to delay the first sexual debut, and if sexually active, remain faithful," the rep stated.

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The role of Miss Universe is to champion AIDS/HIV awareness and in March the Miss Universe Organization officially partnered with PSI, which promotes itself as a world leader in HIV prevention and education.

PSI was actually founded by Phil Harvey, who is also President of Adam and Eve, the largest mail-order sex toy/pornography business in the country.

"The idea that playing games in order to spread HIV awareness is absurd. Millions all over the world are dying from this pandemic and the 'Condom Olympics' in no way emphasizes the severity of this issue which, by the way, is completely preventable," Alyssa Cordova of the Clare Booth Luce Policy Institute, which prepares and promotes conservative women, said.

"HIV doesn't just happen; it's caused by irresponsible behaviour like sharing needles and engaging in sexually promiscuous behaviour.

"Playing right into our culture's obsession with political correctness, the Miss Universe organization downplays the only thing that prevents the spread and contraction of HIV that is 100 percent effective-abstinence-and perpetuates the lie that if you use a condom everything will be ok," she stated.

Cordova was also disturbed by the fact that PSI felt that "abstinence is not the right message" for some people.

"Apparently Miss Universe and PSI believe that some of us are so barbaric that it's not even worth sharing the message. Not only is that insulting, it's dangerous and irresponsible," she added.

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