More than one million sexually transmitted infections of 10 African-American females and three times higher than whites were reported to be nine times more likely to be infected than whites. Dr. Shilpa Regan explains statistics about HIV/AIDS during an OMMA presentation on sexually transmitted infections.

However, the largest ethnic group affected by disease is the African-American male. Dr. Regan’s presentation noted that 61 percent of men are thought to have contracted the disease. Dr. Regan’s presentation noted that 61 percent of men are affected with HIV/AIDS and is particularly high among MSM—men who sleep with men—and transsexuals and women with gay careers. 

According to Dr. Regan, the last STI Dr. Regan discussed was HIV/AIDS. According to Dr. Regan, HIV was not discovered in 1981 and five years later, it was acknowledged that this disease leads to AIDS. "If you have another STI, you’re five times more likely to get HIV," Dr. Regan said.

At that time AIDS was referred to as the "gay plague" because people thought that only gay men contracted the disease. Dr. Regan’s presentation noted that 61 percent of men are affected with HIV/AIDS and is particularly high among MSM—men who sleep with men—and transsexuals and ethnicities. Because HIV/AIDS is not just a minority disease as 40 percent of white males and 19 percent of white women are also infected. Despite the infection rate among whites, HIV/AIDS is still seen as a disease that affects minorities. African-American figures like Magic Johnson and the death of Arthur Ashe have helped bring awareness to the black community about HIV/AIDS. But Dr. Regan stressed that awareness will only help if members of the community are receptive. “The ramifications for not getting help are profound,” Dr. Regan said. “Death, health problems, sterility and pelvic inflammatory disease arise when one has an STI and doesn’t know it.”

Because HIV/AIDS is still a taboo topic in all communities, some people are less likely to be tested for STIs. However, Dr. Regan believes that it is necessary to address the issue, no matter what.

“If you can conquer the fear, then the conversation about sex is more open,” Dr. Regan said. “It’s scary to get tested for some people and nerve-wracking to wait for results.”

But Dr. Regan said talking about STIs is the only way to combat STIs and devise solutions. One of the ways to help assist in the fight against STIs is by informing people through the use of social media. Other tactics include diagnosis and treating the STIs, along with awareness and treatment. "Education is the key," Dr. Regan said. "And if it is not just an ethnic problem, it is a social problem that ought to be addressed."