

Chinese hospital seeks virgins' blood

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A Chinese hospital's request for blood from healthy female virgins for use in medical research has been condemned as insulting to women, state-run media reported Monday.

The Peking University Cancer Hospital said it needed the blood of 100 female virgins aged from 18 to 24 years old for studies on the [human papilloma virus](#) (HPV), which is usually transmitted through [sexual contact](#), the China Daily reported.

Some internet users condemned the request as promoting virginity worship and demeaning to women.

"Male virgins are not needed, just females, how is this science?" wrote one user of Sina Weibo, a social media service similar to Twitter and a lively forum for popular opinion.

The hospital defended the call for donors, saying that virgins' blood was less likely to be infected with HPV.

"It's in line with international practice to collect female virgins' [blood samples](#), which serve as negative control substances in HPV research, given that the risk of contracting HPV is low among women who have never had sex," the China Daily quoted spokeswoman Guan Jiuping as saying.

Hospital officials would take the donors' word for their sexual status, she added.

Some internet users defended the hospital, with one saying on Sina Weibo: "People who curse are basically those who haven't understood the whole story. Learn some science and [rationality](#), rather than criticising others."

Female virginity was traditionally seen as a prerequisite for marriage in China, and today many Chinese men still prefer their wives to be virgins.

The continued importance attributed to virginity, combined with relaxed sexual mores in recent decades, has led to growth in the market for artificial hymens and restorative surgery which allows women to appear to be virgins.

But some commentators in China have said the pressure placed on women to remain virgins is demeaning and evidence of a double standard.

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