

# Sexually Transmitted Diseases/Infections: Overview and Fact Sheets

## OVERVIEW

Information about the sexually transmitted diseases/infections (STDs/STIs) described in this document was obtained from the following sources: American Social Health Association, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Henry J. Kaiser Foundation, Planned Parenthood Federation of America, Sexuality Information and Education Council of the United States, and Virginia Department of Health. The mission of each organization or agency is aimed at improving the health of individuals, families, and communities, and each has a focus on educating about the harmful consequences of STDs/STIs and promoting strategies for preventing the infections.

Although STD/STI is a critical health issue, estimating how many STD/STI cases occur is not a simple or clear task. Because most STDs can be "silent" with no noticeable symptoms, the asymptomatic infections can be diagnosed only through testing. Unfortunately, routine screening programs are not widespread. The social stigma around testing and the lack of public awareness concerning STDs/STIs inhibits frank discussion between health care providers and patients about sexual risks and the need for testing. Therefore, it is likely that the number of STD/STI cases in most statistics is less than the actual number of cases that occurred within any given time frame.

STDs/STIs affect people of all ages, backgrounds, and various walks of life. In the U.S. alone there are approximately 15 million new cases each year with more than 65 million currently living with an incurable STD/STI by age 24, it is estimated that one in three sexually active people will contract an STD. Getting the facts about STDs/STIs and sexual health is increasingly important. Educators, health care workers, parents, and other individuals are invited to learn more about specific STDs/STIs, tips for reducing risk, and ways to talk with partners clients, and youth.

On the following pages, you can find information about the incidence and prevalence of the most tested STDs. You can read other general statistics and facts about STD/STI infections. Following that section are fact sheets about specific STDs. This section will offer information on each infection related to transmission, signs and symptoms, associated complications, the effect on pregnancy, diagnosis, treatment, and prevention strategies. The last section will provide information on governmental and non-governmental sources to search for additional information.

## INCIDENCE AND PREVALENCE

Data on the most reported STD/STIs below were compiled by the Sexuality Education and Information Council of the United States from the American Social Health Association, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (National Center for HIV/AIDS, Viral Hepatitis, STD, and TB Prevention), and the National Institutes of Health (National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases).

### Chlamydia

- Over 783,000 Chlamydia infections were reported to the CDC in 2001.
- The reported rate of Chlamydia among women (435.2 cases per 100,000 females) was approximately four times higher than the reported rate among men (113.9 per 100,000 males) in 2001.
- Female adolescents 15 to 19 years of age had the highest reported rates of Chlamydia (2,536.1 per 100,000) in 2001.
- Chlamydia infections increased from 50.8 to 278.3 per 100,000 between 1987 and 2001.

### Gonorrhea

- Over 361,000 cases of Gonorrhea were reported to the CDC in 2001.
- The reported rate of Gonorrhea among women in 2001 (128.2 cases per 100,000 females) was similar to the rate in 2000 (126.7 per 100,000) and in 1999 (128.6 per 100,000).
- The rate of Gonorrhea among men declined from 135.5 cases per 100,000 males in 1999 to 130.9 in 2000 and 128.2 in 2001.
- Among women, those 15 to 19 years of age had the highest reported rate of Gonorrhea (703.2 per 100,000) in 2001.
- Among men, those 20 to 24 years of age had the highest reported rate of Gonorrhea (563.6 per 100,000) in 2001.

### Syphilis

- Over 6,100 cases of primary and secondary Syphilis cases were reported to the CDC in 2001.
- The reported rate of primary and secondary Syphilis increased 15.4 percent among men (from 2.6 cases to 3.0 cases per 100,000) between 2000 and 2001. During this time, the rate declined 17.7 percent among women (from 1.7 to 1.4 cases per 100,000).

### Herpes

- Approximately 25 percent of adults have Genital Herpes.
- Over 45 million people 12 years of age and older (or one out of five) are infected with HSV-2, a Herpes virus.
- Infection with HSV-2, a Herpes virus, is more common in women (approximately one out of four) than in men (almost one out of five). This may be due to the fact that male-to-female transmission is more efficient than female-to-male transmission.

### Hepatitis B

- The number of new Hepatitis B infections per year has declined from an average of 260,000 in the 1980s to approximately 78,000 in 2001.
- Of an estimated 1.25 million Americans chronically infected with Hepatitis B, 20 to 30 percent were infected during childhood.

## **Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV)**

- Nearly 24,000 adult and adolescent males from the 39 areas of the country with confidential HIV-infection reporting were diagnosed as HIV positive in 2001.
- Over 11,000 adult and adolescent females from the 39 areas of the country with confidential HIV-infection reporting were diagnosed as HIV positive in 2001.
- Nearly 32,000 adult and adolescent males were diagnosed with AIDS in 2001. In total, over 666,000 cases among adult and adolescent males were reported through December 2001.
- Over 11,000 adult and adolescent females were diagnosed with AIDS in 2001. In total, over 141,000 cases among adult and adolescent females were reported through December 2001.

## **Human Papillomavirus (HPV)**

- Approximately 5.5 million new cases of HPV infection are reported every year. At least 20 million Americans are already infected.
- Fifty to 75 percent of sexually active men and women will become infected with genital HPV at some point in their lives.
- Approximately 14,000 women are diagnosed with cervical cancer each year; over 5,000 die from this disease each year.

## ***References***

1. Sexually Transmitted Disease Surveillance 2001 (Atlanta, GA: Division of STD Prevention, CDC, September 2002), p. 7.
2. <http://www.cdc.gov/std/Herpes/STDFact-Herpes.htm>
3. <http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/diseases/hepatitis/b/fact.htm>
4. HIV Surveillance Report, vol. 13, no. 2 (Atlanta, GA: CDC, December 2001), p. 19, Table 10.
5. <http://www.niaid.nih.gov/factsheets/stdhvp.htm>
6. <http://www.ashastd.org/sitemap.cfm>

## STD/STI STATISTICS: GENERAL FACTS

- More than half of all people will have an STD at some point in their lifetime. [1]
- The estimated total number of people living in the US with a viral STD is over 65 million. [2] Every year, there are at least 15 million new cases of STDs, some of which are curable. [2, 3]
- More than \$8 billion is spent each year to diagnose and treat STDs and their complications. This figure does not include HIV. [4]
- In a national survey of US physicians, fewer than one-third routinely screened patients for STDs. [5]
- Less than half of adults ages 18 to 44 have ever been tested for an STD other than HIV/AIDS.
- Each year, one in four teens contracts an STD. [6]
- One in two sexually active persons will contract an STD by age 25. [7]
- About half of all new STDs in 2000 occurred among youth ages 15 to 24. [8] The total estimated costs of these nine million new cases of these STDs was \$6.5 billion, with HIV and human papillomavirus (HPV) accounting for 90% of the total burden. [9]
- Of the STDs that are diagnosed, only some (gonorrhea, syphilis, Chlamydia, hepatitis A and B) are required to be reported to state health departments and the CDC.
- One out of 20 people in the United States will get infected with hepatitis B (HBV) some time during their lives. [10] Hepatitis B is 100 times more infectious than HIV. [11]
- Approximately half of HBV infections are transmitted sexually. [12] HBV is linked to chronic liver disease, including cirrhosis and liver cancer.
- Hepatitis A, hepatitis B, [and HPV] are the only [three] vaccine-preventable STDs.
- It is estimated that as many as one in four Americans have genital herpes, a lifelong (but manageable) infection, yet up to 90 percent of those with herpes are unaware they have it. [13] With more than 50 million adults in the US with genital herpes and up to 1.6 million new infections each year, some estimates suggest that by 2025 up to 40% of all men and half of all women could be infected. [14, 15, 16]
- Over 6 million people acquire HPV each year, and by age 50, at least 80 percent of women will have acquired genital HPV infection. [17] Most people with HPV do not develop symptoms. Some researchers believe that HPV infections may self-resolve and may not be life-long like herpes. [2]
- Cervical cancer in women, while preventable through regular Paps, is linked to high-risk types of HPV.
- Each year, there are almost 3 million new cases of Chlamydia, many of which are in adolescents and young adults. [8] The CDC recommends that sexually active females 25 and under should be screened at least once a year for Chlamydia, even if no symptoms are present.
- About two-thirds of young females believe doctors routinely screen teens for Chlamydia. [18] However, in 2003 only 30% of women 25 and under with commercial health care plans and 45% in Medicaid plans were screened for Chlamydia. [19]
- At least 15 percent of all American women who are infertile can attribute it to tubal damage caused by pelvic inflammatory disease (PID) the result of an untreated STD. Consistent condom use reduces the risk of recurrent PID and related complications: significantly, women who reported regular use of condoms

in one study were 60 percent less likely to become infertile. [20]

- Consistent condom use provides substantial protection against the acquisition of many STDs, including statistically significant reduction of risk against HIV, Chlamydia, gonorrhea, herpes, and syphilis. [21, 22, 23]
- Some studies show that, for those who already have a clinically apparent genital HPV infection, using condoms promotes the regression of HPV lesions in both women and men. [24, 25]

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