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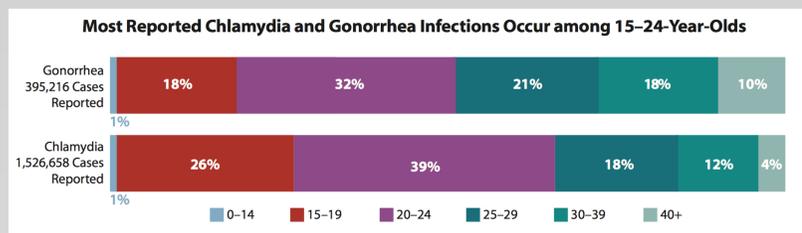
# The Continuous Increased Occurrence of Sexually Transmitted Infective Diseases

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## Background

- The CDC states that there are 20 million new sexually transmitted infections each year; close to half are in young people aged 15 to 24 years of age.
- The sexually transmitted diseases that are on the rise are syphilis, gonorrhea, and chlamydia.
- All these infections are treatable and curable but if left untreated can lead to infertility, pelvic inflammatory disease, and organ damage.
- The lack of structured health education, stigma towards discussing sexual health, and access to health care are some of the attributing factors to the increased rate of sexually transmitted diseases



(CDC, 2015)

## Purpose

The purpose of this review is to:

- explore and evaluate the risk factors for contracting a sexually transmitted disease
- exploring the stigma associated with sexually transmitted diseases in regards to prevention, testing, and education
- potentially provide framework on discussing sexual health openly.

## Methodology

For the literature review DePaul University and Rosalind Franklin University were used in order to gain access to medical journal databases. The following databases were used: PubMed, CINAHL, Science Direct, and the CDC. The keywords used to search this topic were: sexually transmitted diseases, sexually transmitted infections, rising, gonorrhea, syphilis, and chlamydia.

## Research Questions

- How much of a role do the risk factors actually play into seeking testing and treatment?
- What is the difference in STD rates in the states that require public schools to teach sex education versus the states where that education is not required?
- How can clinics and communities address the barriers for people who do not seek testing or treatment?

## Discussion

### Risk Factors

- Racial and ethnic disparities, poverty and marginalization, access to health care, substance abuse, sexuality and secrecy, and sexual networks all play a role in seeking testing.
- Interventions and testing recommendations should be modified depending on the level of risk.
- Perceived association with meeting sex partners online and risky sexual behavior was confirmed but was not associated with having previous STD history.
- The need for funding of STD is substantiated with relation to a steady trend versus a decline with insurance expansion.

### Sexual Health Education

- Sex education is not a mandatory curriculum requirement by the federal government.
- Comprehensive sex education resulted in 60% of reducing unprotected sex.
- Abstinence-only programs resulted in no change in unprotected sex.
- Nurse curriculum facilitators for sex education have a positive impact on information retention when teaching students about disease prevention.

### Barriers to Testing and Treatment

- The greatest impact on this decision were the notion of negative consequences, negative personal emotions, and the public knowledge and opinion .
- Women are more likely to get tested than men due to sexual health maintenance being viewed as a feminine behavior.
- Majority of sexually experienced participants did not seek treatment because they felt they were not at risk.
- Campaigns should shift their emphasis on creating unisex, informational material that is geared for the appropriate population.

## Nursing Implications

- Current literature addressing STIs on a national level is limited. Various studies have been conducted but not on the general population. This suggests that a need for research conducted on a larger scale is required.
- A primary strategy in STI prevention is patient education which is a large component of the nursing process.
- Nurses can use time during patient care, when appropriate, to educate about STIs, prevention, testing, and treatment. This discussion may help the patient feel less stigma for getting tested.
- It is crucial for nurses working with high risk populations to prepare themselves for these small windows of opportunity to be a change agent and potentially impact the rate of sexually transmitted infections.



(CDC, 2015)

## Conclusion

This review identified a number of risk factors including ethnic and racial disparities, poverty and marginalization, access to healthcare, substance abuse, age, number of sex partners, and privacy as the top contributors to sexually transmitted infections rising. However, while persons were participating in more unprotected sex when meeting partners online, it must be assumed that they are more likely to be infected than people who do not meet partners online and engage in unprotected sex. However, research must be conducted in order to determine the most effective ways to halt the rise of infections and possibly reverse the trend.