

STIs AND HIV/AIDS

Sexually transmitted infections (STIs), such as chlamydia and gonorrhea, can pose serious, long-term health complications for adolescents and young adults.¹ Although young people aged 15–24 years represent only one-quarter of the sexually experienced population, they acquire nearly half of all new STIs.² Among adolescents and young adults, chlamydia continues to be the most common of all the STIs reported to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Overall, there were 2,001.7 reported cases of chlamydia per 100,000 adolescents aged 15–19 years in 2012 (figure 1). Rates of chlamydia vary by sex, with 3,291.5 cases of chlamydia per 100,000 female adolescents and 774.8 cases per 100,000 male adolescents. Gonorrhea was less common, with rates of 376.8 per 100,000 among all adolescents, 521.2 per 100,000 female adolescents, and 239.0 per 100,000 male adolescents (figure 2).

Human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) is a disease that destroys cells that are critical to a healthy immune system. Acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS) is diagnosed when HIV has weakened the

immune system enough that the body has difficulty fighting disease and infections. Early age at sexual initiation, unprotected sex, drug use, older sex partners, and lack of awareness place adolescents at an increased risk of contracting HIV.³ By the end of 2010, an estimated 7,272 adolescents between 15 and 19 years of age were living with a diagnosed HIV infection. With regard to race and ethnicity, 148.2 per 100,000 non-Hispanic Black adolescents and 7.1 per 100,000 non-Hispanic White adolescents were living with HIV.

Abstaining from sex and drug use is the most effective way to avoid HIV. Adolescents and young adults can also reduce their risk by knowing where to get tested for HIV, how to negotiate safer sex, and how to use a condom correctly. CDC has developed interventions that can be carried out locally to help reduce the risk to adolescents. One such program, *Choosing Life: Empowerment! Action! Results!*, is targeted to adolescents older than 16 and living with HIV/AIDS or at high risk for HIV.⁴

Figure 1. Reported Chlamydia Infection Rates per 100,000 Adolescents Aged 15–19 Years, by Race/Ethnicity* and Sex, 2012

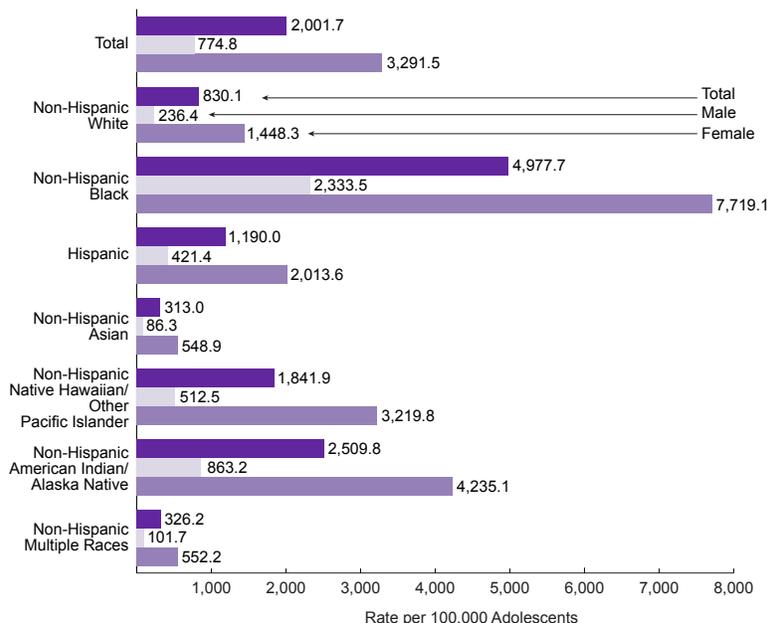
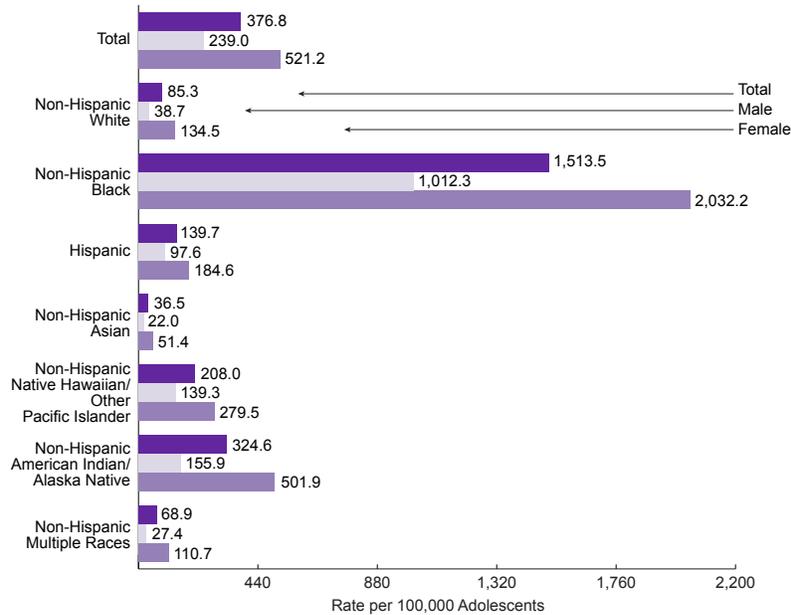


Figure 2. Reported Gonorrhea Infection Rates per 100,000 Adolescents Aged 15–19 Years, by Race/Ethnicity* and Sex, 2012



*Rates by race/ethnicity should be interpreted with caution: 25.8% of case reports were missing race/ethnicity.

Data Sources

Figure 1 and 2. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. *Sexually Transmitted Disease Surveillance, 2012*. Atlanta, GA: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services; 2014.

Endnotes

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STD). CDC Fact Sheets. Available at: http://www.cdc.gov/std/healthcomm/fact_sheets.htm. Accessed September 20, 2014.
- Weinstock H, Berman S, Cates W Jr. Sexually transmitted diseases among American youth: incidence and prevalence estimates, 2000. *Perspectives on Sexual and Reproductive Health*. 2004;36(1):6–10.
- U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Who’s at Risk for HIV?. Available at: <http://www.cdc.gov/hiv/risk/>. Accessed September 21, 2014.
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Suggested Citation

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Health Resources and Services Administration, Maternal and Child Health Bureau. *Child Health USA 2014*. Rockville, Maryland: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2015. Online at <http://mchb.hrsa.gov/chusa14/>