

SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED INFECTIONS

Sexually transmitted infections (STIs) are considered a hidden epidemic because symptoms are often absent and the causes are not openly discussed. Yet there are approximately 19 million new STI cases in the United States each year at an annual health care cost of nearly 17 billion dollars.⁴¹ Active infections can increase the likelihood of contracting another STI, such as HIV, and untreated STIs can lead to pelvic inflammatory disease, infertility, and adverse pregnancy outcomes. Safer sex practices, screening, and treatment can help reduce the burden of STIs.

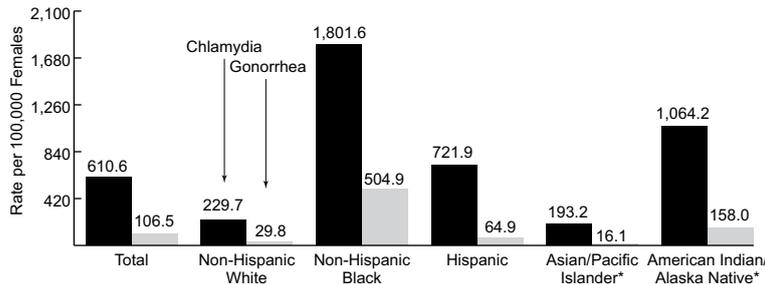
The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention requires State and local reporting of new chlamydia, gonorrhea, syphilis, and

HIV cases (see page on HIV/AIDS). Reported STI rates among females vary by age and race and ethnicity. Rates are highest among adolescents and young adults; over 70 percent of all chlamydia and gonorrhea cases in females occurred among those under 25 years of age in 2010 (data not shown). With the exception of Asian/Pacific Islanders, minority females had higher STI rates than non-Hispanic White females. For example, compared with non-Hispanic White females, the chlamydia rate was 7.8 times higher for non-Hispanic Black females, 4.6 times higher for American Indian/Alaska Native females, and 3.1 times higher for Hispanic females. The syphilis rate was also highest among non-Hispanic Black females (7.5 versus 0.3 per 100,000 non-Hispanic White females; data not shown).

Although chlamydia, gonorrhea, and syphilis can be cured with appropriate antibiotics, viral STIs, such as HIV, human papillomavirus (HPV), and herpes cannot be cured but can be monitored and managed to prevent symptoms and disease progression.¹² Herpes Simplex Virus Type 2 (HSV-2) is an infection that causes genital herpes and can lead to blindness, neonatal infections, and increased risk for HIV. Herpes Simplex Virus Type 1 (HSV-1) can also cause genital herpes, but it is more commonly associated with sores around the mouth, and recurring symptoms are less common than with HSV-2.⁴² Overall, 59.2 percent of women aged 18–49 years tested positive for HSV-1 and 22.0 percent tested positive for HSV-2 in 2009–2010. The prevalence of both HSV-1 and HSV-2 increased with age.

Rates of Chlamydia and Gonorrhea Among Females (All Ages), by Race/Ethnicity, 2010

Source II.16: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Sexually Transmitted Disease Surveillance



*May include Hispanics.

HSV-1 and HSV-2 Infection Among Women, by Age, 2009–2010

Source II.9: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics, National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey

