

SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED INFECTIONS AND HIV/AIDS

Sexually transmitted infections (STIs) are considered a hidden epidemic because symptoms are often absent and the causes are not openly discussed. Yet there are nearly 20 million new STIs in the United States each year at an annual health care cost of nearly 16 billion dollars.⁴³ Untreated STIs can increase the likelihood of contracting another STI, such as HIV, and can lead to various reproductive problems and certain types of cancers, such as those caused by human papillomavirus (HPV) and hepatitis.⁴⁴ Safer sex practices, HPV and hepatitis vaccination, and screening and treatment can help reduce the burden of STIs.

States require reporting of new chlamydia,

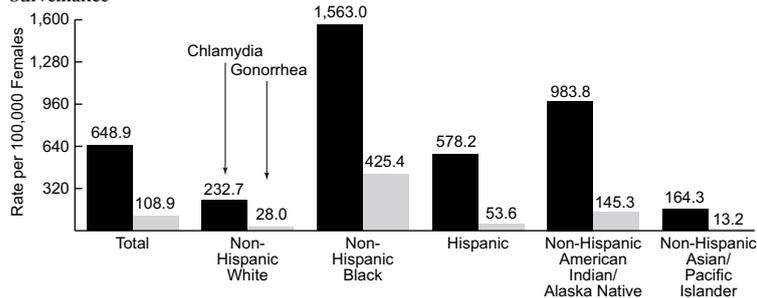
gonorrhea, syphilis, and HIV cases and data are shared with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Reported STI rates among females vary by age, as well as race and ethnicity. Rates are highest among adolescents and young adults: in 2011, over 70 percent of all chlamydia and gonorrhea cases in females occurred among those under 25 years of age (data not shown). With the exception of non-Hispanic 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 6.7 times as high for non-Hispanic Black females, 4.2 times as high for non-Hispanic American Indian/Alaska Native females, and 2.5 times as high for Hispanic females.

HIV and AIDS disproportionately affect men

who have sex with men; however, a substantial proportion of HIV/AIDS diagnoses occur among women, and particularly Black women. In 2011, females accounted for 20.8 percent of estimated new HIV cases, of which nearly two-thirds were non-Hispanic Black females (data not shown). New HIV diagnosis rates for non-Hispanic Black females were 20 times the rate for non-Hispanic White females (40.0 versus 2.0 cases per 100,000 females), and were also higher for Hispanic, non-Hispanic American Indian/Alaska Native, and non-Hispanic females of multiple races (7.9, 5.5, and 7.5 cases per 100,000 females, respectively). Early detection of HIV infection is critical in preventing transmission of the virus to others and receiving treatment that can prevent progression to AIDS.

Rates of Chlamydia and Gonorrhea Among Females (All Ages), by Race/Ethnicity,* 2011

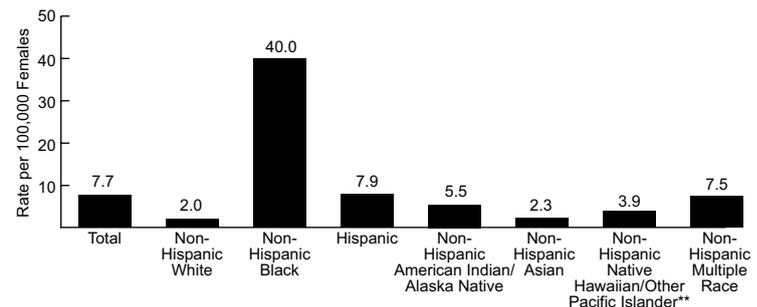
Source II.11: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Sexually Transmitted Disease Surveillance



*Separate data for Asians, Native Hawaiians, and Other Pacific Islanders were not available.

Estimated Rates of New HIV Cases* Among Females Aged 13 and Older, by Race/Ethnicity, 2011

Source II.12: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, HIV Surveillance Report



*Estimated rates are adjusted for reporting delays but not incomplete reporting.

**Interpret with caution; estimated rate is based on fewer than 10 cases.