

Tracking the Progress 2019:
**National Sexually
Transmissible Infections
Strategy**



UNSW
SYDNEY



UNSW
Kirby Institute

The years for comparison are 2014 to 2018 unless otherwise specified.

Sources of data are provided in the appendix and in the data dashboard on the Kirby data site.

Acknowledgement would like to be given to the many contributors helping report progress against the National Sexually Transmissible Infections Strategy. The full list of contributors can be found on the Acknowledgement page of the Kirby data site.

© The Kirby Institute for infection and immunity in society 2021

ISSN 2653-2158 (Online)

The Kirby Institute for infection and immunity in society.
UNSW Sydney, Sydney NSW 2052

Suggested citation:

The Kirby Institute. Tracking the Progress 2019: National Sexually Transmissible Infections Strategy.

Telephone: 02 9385 0900 Facsimile: 02 6100 2860 International prefix: 61 2
Email: info@kirby.unsw.edu.au

Tracking the Progress: National Sexually Transmissible Infections Strategy

The goals of the Fourth National Sexually Transmissible Infections Strategy are to:

1. Reduce transmission of, and morbidity and mortality associated with STI in Australia
2. Eliminate the negative impact of stigma, discrimination and legal and human rights issues on people's health
3. Minimise the personal and social impact of STI.

The National Sexually Transmissible Infections Strategy has five targets that provide specific focus for the efforts made towards achieving the goals of this Strategy. Each target has corresponding indicators that measure progress towards attaining the target. The full list of the targets and their indicators are listed in Appendix i.

Target 1

access full
data here



Achieve and maintain HPV adolescent vaccination coverage of 80%

- The proportion of females registered in the Australian Immunisation Registry receiving two HPV vaccine doses increased from 80.0% in 2016 to 81.9% in 2019. In the same period, the proportion of males registered in the Australian Immunisation Registry receiving two HPV vaccine doses increased from 75.7% in 2016 to 79.2% in 2019.

Target 2

access full
data here



Reduce the prevalence of gonorrhoea, chlamydia and infectious syphilis, Part A - Notifications and testing

Gonorrhoea

- Between 2014 and 2018 the gonorrhoea notification rate increased by 86% from 68.2 to 127.0 notifications per 100 000 population. In the same period and by sex, the notification rate increased by 89% among males from 98.6 to 186.0 and by 81% among females from 37.4 to 67.6.
- Among people aged 15 to 29 years, the proportion of gonorrhoea tests yielding a positive test result increased from 1.7% in 2014 to 2.7% in 2018. Among males the proportion increased from 4.5% to 6.1% and among females the proportion increased from 0.8% to 1.2%.
- Among female sex workers attending clinics participating in the ACCESS project, the incidence of gonorrhoea increased by 199% from 3.7 to 11.0 new infections per 100 person-years.
- Among gay and bisexual men attending clinics participating in the ACCESS project, the incidence of gonorrhoea increased by 44% from 19.8 to 28.4 new infections per 100 person-years.

Target 2

access full
data here



Reduce the prevalence of gonorrhoea, chlamydia and infectious syphilis, Part A - Notifications and testing

Chlamydia

- Between 2014 and 2018 the chlamydia notification rate increased by 15% from 374.6 to 429.5 notifications per 100 000 population. In the same period and by sex, the notification rate increased by 30% among males from 314.3 to 410.0 and by 3% among females from 438.6 to 451.7.
- Among people aged 15 to 29 years, the proportion of chlamydia tests yielding a positive test result remained stable between 2014 and 2018 and was 13.1% in 2018. The proportion yielding a positive test was stable among both males and females and in 2018, was 18.9% and 10.6%, respectively.
- Among female sex workers attending clinics participating in the ACCESS project, the incidence of chlamydia increased by 27% between 2014 and 2018 from 10.0 to 12.7 new infections per 100 person-years.
- Among gay and bisexual men attending clinics participating in the ACCESS project, the incidence of chlamydia increased by 37% between 2014 and 2018 from 21.0 to 28.9 new infections per 100 person-years.

Infectious syphilis

Current trends in infectious syphilis are strongly influenced by the ongoing outbreak of infectious syphilis across northern and central Australia. The number of diagnosed cases of infectious syphilis are also sharply increasing in urban areas across Australia.

- Between 2014 and 2018 the infectious syphilis notification rate increased by 132% from 9.0 to 20.9 notifications per 100 000 population. In the same period and by sex, the notification rate per 100 000 population increased by 115% among males from 16.6 to 35.7 and by 307% among females from 1.5 to 6.1.
- Among female sex workers attending clinics participating in the ACCESS project, the incidence of infectious syphilis remained steady and was 0.2 new infections per 100 person-years in both 2014 and 2018.
- Among gay and bisexual men attending clinics participating in the ACCESS project, the incidence of infectious syphilis remained steady between 2014 and 2018 and was 4.4 new infections per 100 person-years in 2018.

Target 2

access full
data here



Reduce the prevalence of gonorrhoea, chlamydia and infectious syphilis, Part B - Knowledge and risk behaviours

- Among participants of the National Survey of Australian Secondary Students and Sexual Health (SASSH), the highest levels of knowledge regarding STIs were demonstrated about the potentially asymptomatic nature of many infections, and lower levels of knowledge were seen in relation to chlamydia and herpes. In 2018, 94.5% of students knew that someone could still pass on a sexually transmissible infection without having any obvious symptoms, up from 89.4% of participants in 2013. By comparison, 72.8% of participants were aware that chlamydia affects both men and women, up from 60.7% of students in 2013 and 53.6% of participants were aware that can lead to sterility amongst women, down from 57.4% in 2013. With relation to knowledge around genital herpes, only 40.9% of participants knew that once a person caught genital herpes, they will always have the virus, down from 46.7% in 2013. Overall, a higher proportion of female students answered STI knowledge questions correctly than their male peers. Further detail on responses by gender is available on the [Kirby data site](#).
- The proportion of all sexually active respondents to the SASSH survey reporting always using a condom when they had sex in the last 12 months was 38.5%, a decrease from 46.3% in 2013. The proportion reporting condom use at last sex was 57.4% in 2018, a decline from 58.8% in 2013. Condom use was higher among males than females in all years. In 2018, almost a fifth (19.1%) of participants reported three or more sexual partners in the past year, a decrease from 26.4% in 2013. Full breakdowns of reported risky behaviours by sex are available on the [Kirby data site](#).
- Among participants of the Gay Community Periodic Survey, the proportion who reported consistent condom use with casual sexual partners in the previous 12 months declined from 44.6% in 2014 to 26.3% in 2018.

Target 3

access full
data here



Increase STI testing coverage in priority populations

- Chlamydia and gonorrhoea testing in Australia are tested for concurrently using duplex testing. Between 2014 and 2018, the proportion of 15- to 29-year-olds receiving at least one chlamydia/gonorrhoea test in the previous 12 months remained steady and was 14.2% in 2018. By sex, the proportion of 15- to 29-year-olds receiving at least one chlamydia/gonorrhoea test remained steady for both males and females and in 2018 was 9.2% and 18.2%, respectively.
- Between 2014 and 2018, among gay and bisexual men attending clinics participating in the ACCESS project, the proportion receiving a chlamydia, gonorrhoea and syphilis test in the previous 12 months remained stable and was 85% in 2018.
- In the same period, among sex workers attending participating clinics in the ACCESS project, the proportion receiving a chlamydia, gonorrhoea and syphilis test in the previous 12 months remained stable and was 90.8% in 2018.
- Among participants of the GCPS, the proportion who reported having had comprehensive STI testing in the previous 12 months increased from 38.1% in 2014 to 53.1% in 2018.

Target 4

access full
data here



Eliminate congenital syphilis

Current trends in congenital syphilis are strongly influenced by the ongoing outbreak of infectious syphilis across Australia.

- Between 2014 and 2018 the number of congenital syphilis notifications increased by 167% from three notifications in 2014 to eight notifications in 2018. Translated to notification rate (the number of congenital syphilis notifications per number of live births), the congenital syphilis notification rate increased from 1.0 to 2.5 notifications per 100 000 live births between 2014 and 2018, an increase of 154%. More work is required to eliminate congenital syphilis in Australia.
- Among women of reproductive age (15 to 44 years), the infectious syphilis notification rate increased by 310% from 3.0 notifications per 100 000 women in 2014 to 12.3 notifications per 100 000 women in 2018.

Target 5

access full
data here



Minimise the reported experience and expression of stigma in relation to STI

- Among to participants of The National Debrief Survey aged between 15 to 29 years:
 - 63% reported that they had never behaved negatively towards people with an STI while 8% reported that they had sometimes or often behaved negatively towards someone with an STI. 28% reported they had done so rarely.
 - 12% reported that they would expect to never experience stigma if they had an STI while 62% reported that they would sometimes, often or always expect to experience stigma. 26% reported they would expect to rarely experience stigma if they had an STI.
 - 50% reported that they had never experienced stigma or discrimination due to their STI while 27% reported that had sometimes, often or always experience stigma or discrimination. 23% reported that they have rarely experienced stigma or discrimination due to their STI.
- As reported in the **Annual Report of Trends in Behaviour 2019 HIV and STIs in Australia**:
 - Among surveyed health care workers, 75% reported never expressing negative behaviour towards people because of a STI. Conversely, 7% of health care workers reported they had sometimes, often, or always expressed negative behaviour towards people because of an STI, while 18% reported that they had done so rarely.
 - Also, among surveyed health care workers, 57% reported never witnessing negative behaviour towards people because of an STI. Conversely, 24% of health care workers reported they had sometimes, often, or always witnessed negative behaviour towards people because of an STI while 19% reported that they had witnessed such behaviour rarely.

Appendix i

National Sexually Transmissible Infections Strategy

Indicator	Data source
Target 1 Achieve and maintain human papillomavirus adolescent vaccination coverage of 80%.	
1a HPV two dose vaccination coverage for males and females aged 15 years of age.	Australian Immunisation Register (AIR)
Target 2 Reduce the prevalence of gonorrhoea, chlamydia and infectious syphilis.	
2a Annual rate of gonorrhoea notifications.	National Notifiable Diseases Surveillance System (NNDSS)
2b Annual rate of chlamydia notifications.	National Notifiable Diseases Surveillance System (NNDSS)
2c Annual rate of infectious syphilis notifications.	National Notifiable Diseases Surveillance System (NNDSS)
2d Incidence of STIs in sex workers attending a sexual health clinic.	ACCESS (Australian Collaboration for Coordinated Enhanced Sentinel Surveillance)
2e Incidence of STIs in gay and bisexual men attending a health service.	ACCESS (Australian Collaboration for Coordinated Enhanced Sentinel Surveillance)
2f Proportion of chlamydia tests that yield a positive result in the 15-29 year age group.	Medicare, National Notifiable Diseases Surveillance System (NNDSS)
2g Proportion of gonorrhoea tests that yield a positive result in the 15-29 year age group.	Medicare, National Notifiable Diseases Surveillance System (NNDSS)
2h Proportion of secondary school students giving the correct answer to STI knowledge and behaviour questions.	National Survey of Australian Secondary Students and Sexual Health
2i Proportion of secondary school students reporting certain risky sexual behaviours.	National Survey of Australian Secondary Students and Sexual Health
2j Proportion of young people (15-29 year olds) giving the correct answer to STI knowledge questions.	The Debrief Survey
2k Proportion of young people (15-29 year olds) reporting consistent condom use with sexual partners in the previous 12 months.	The Debrief Survey
2l Proportion of gay and bisexual men who reported consistent condom use with casual sexual partners in the previous 12 months.	Gay Community Periodic Surveys

Appendix i

National Sexually Transmissible Infections Strategy		
Indicator		Data source
Target 3 Increase STI testing coverage in priority populations.		
3a	Proportion of 15-29 year olds receiving at least one chlamydia test in the previous 12 months.	Medicare
3b	Proportion of 15-29 year olds receiving at least one gonorrhoea test in the previous 12 months.	Medicare
3c	Proportion of gay and bisexual men who report having had an STI test in the previous 12 months.	ACCESS (Australian Collaboration for Coordinated Enhanced Sentinel Surveillance)
3d	Proportion of gay and bisexual men attending a health clinic receiving a chlamydia, gonorrhoea and infectious syphilis test at least once in the previous 12 months.	ACCESS (Australian Collaboration for Coordinated Enhanced Sentinel Surveillance)
3e	Proportion of gay men who report having had comprehensive STI testing in the previous 12 months.	Gay Community Periodic Surveys
3f	Proportion of sex workers attending a health clinic receiving a chlamydia, gonorrhoea or infectious syphilis test in the previous 12 months	ACCESS (Australian Collaboration for Coordinated Enhanced Sentinel Surveillance)
3g	Proportion of young people (15-29 years) who reported having sex and have had an STI and/or HIV test in the previous 12 months.	The Debrief Survey
Target 4 Eliminate congenital syphilis.		
4a	Number of congenital syphilis notifications.	National Notifiable Diseases Surveillance System (NNDSS)
4b	Notification rate of congenital syphilis per 100,000 live births.	National Notifiable Diseases Surveillance System (NNDSS)
4c	Annual notification rate of infectious syphilis in women of reproductive age (15-44 years of age).	National Notifiable Diseases Surveillance System (NNDSS)
Target 5 Minimise the reported experience and expression of stigma in relation to STI.		
5a	Proportion of young people reporting negative behaviour towards people with an STI.	The Debrief Survey
5b	Proportion of people who report that they would expect to experience stigma if they had an STI.	The Debrief Survey
5c	Proportion of young people who report that they experienced stigma or discrimination due to their STI.	Annual Report of Trends in Behaviour
5d	Proportion of health care workers reporting or witnessing negative behaviour towards people with an STI.	Annual Report of Trends in Behaviour