

# More than 1 million new curable STIs every day

## STAR HEALTH REPORT

Every day, there are more than 1 million new cases of curable sexually transmitted infections (STIs) among people aged 15-49 years, according to data released by the World Health Organisation (WHO). This amounts to more than 376 million new cases annually of four infections - chlamydia, gonorrhoea, trichomoniasis, and syphilis.

The research shows that among men and women aged 15-49 years, there were 127 million new cases of chlamydia in 2016, 87 million of gonorrhoea, 6.3 million of syphilis and 156 million of trichomoniasis.

These STIs have a profound impact on the health of adults and children worldwide. If untreated, they can lead to serious and chronic health effects that include neurological and cardiovascular disease, infertility, ectopic pregnancy, stillbirths, and increased risk of HIV. They are also associated with significant levels of stigma and domestic violence.

Syphilis alone caused an estimated 200,000 stillbirths and newborn deaths in 2016, making it one of the leading causes of baby loss globally.



### STIs remain a persistent and endemic health threat worldwide

Since the last published data for 2012, there has been no substantive decline in either the rates of new or existing infections. On average, approximately 1 in 25 people globally have at least one of these STIs, according to the latest figures, with some experiencing multiple infections at the same time.

STIs spread predominantly through unprotected sexual contact, including vaginal, anal

and oral sex. Some — including chlamydia, gonorrhoea, and syphilis — can also be transmitted during pregnancy and childbirth, or, in the case of syphilis, through contact with infected blood or blood products, and injecting drug use.

STIs are preventable through safe sexual practices, including correct and consistent condom use and sexual health education.

Timely and affordable testing and treatment are crucial for reducing the burden of STIs globally, alongside efforts to

encourage people who are sexually active to get screened for STIs. WHO further recommends that pregnant women should be systematically screened for syphilis as well as HIV.

All bacterial STIs can be treated and cured with widely available medications. However, recent shortages in the global supply of benzathine penicillin has made it more difficult to treat syphilis. Rapidly increasing antimicrobial resistance to gonorrhoea treatments is also a growing health threat, and may

lead eventually to the disease being impossible to treat. **Expanding access to prevention, testing and treatment**

WHO generates estimates to assess the global burden of STIs, and to help countries and health partners respond. This includes research to strengthen prevention, improve quality of care, develop point-of-care diagnostics and new treatments, and generate investment in vaccine development.

More data was available from women than men to generate these global estimates, and STI prevalence data remains sparse for men globally. WHO is seeking to improve national and global surveillance to ensure availability of reliable information on the extent of the STI burden worldwide.

Published in the WHO Bulletin as an 'online first', the data provides the baseline for monitoring progress against the Global Health Sector Strategy on STIs, 2016-2021. The strategy, adopted by the World Health Assembly in May 2016, proposed rapid scale-up of evidence-based interventions and services to end STIs as a public health concern by 2030.

Source: World Health Organisation

## GUIDELINE



## ADA updates recommendations on diabetes & CKD

The American Diabetes Association (ADA) has updated its diabetes standards of care to incorporate results from the CREDENCE trial, published in the New England Journal of Medicine.

In the placebo-controlled trial, the sodium-glucose cotransporter-2 (SGLT2) inhibitor canagliflozin was associated with reduced risk for cardiovascular events and renal failure in patients with type 2 diabetes and chronic kidney disease (CKD).

Among the updates:

- Urinary albumin (e.g., spot urinary albumin-to-creatinine ratio) and estimated glomerular filtration rate (eGFR) should be assessed at least annually in all patients with type 2 diabetes.
- For patients with type 2 diabetes and diabetic kidney disease, clinicians should consider using an SGLT2 inhibitor when the eGFR is at or above 30, especially with albuminuria above 300 mg/g, to lower renal and CV risk.
- For patients with CKD at elevated risk for CV events, a glucagon-like peptide 1 receptor agonist may lower risk for albuminuria progression and/or CV events.

The update reads: "Although the adverse event profiles of these agents must be considered, the risk-benefit balance of SGLT-2 inhibitor treatment appears to be favourable for most patients with type 2 diabetes and CKD."

## AHA offers CVD guidance for patients with HIV

The American Heart Association (AHA) offers new guidance in preventing and managing cardiovascular disease in patients with HIV. Here are some of the group's recommendations, published in Circulation:

- Patients with HIV should have their risk for atherosclerotic cardiovascular disease (ASCVD) assessed with the ACC/AHA ASCVD Risk Estimator or an alternative calculator.
- If any of the following risk factors are present, a person's CVD risk may be higher than the calculated ASCVD risk: hepatitis C coinfection; metabolic syndrome, lipodystrophy/lipoatrophy, or fatty liver disease; HIV treatment failure/non-adherence; low CD4 count (less than 350 cells/mm3); or a history of prolonged HIV viraemia or delayed initiation of antiretroviral therapy (ART).
- Simvastatin and lovastatin should be avoided. Pravastatin and pitavastatin are the least likely statins to interfere with antiretroviral therapy. Atorvastatin and rosuvastatin may also be considered.

Dr. Carlos del Rio, an editor with NEJM Journal Watch Infectious Diseases, comments: "With effective antiretroviral therapy, people living with HIV (PLWH) can live near normal lives but they are at increased risk of comorbid conditions including cardiovascular diseases."

## HEALTH bulletin



## How many footsteps should you take a day?

Walking at least 4400 steps daily might help improve survival in older women, a JAMA Internal Medicine study suggests — welcome news for people who do not hit the much-promoted goal of 10000 steps daily.

Nearly 17000 older women wore a hip accelerometer for 7 days to collect step counts. Participants were then divided into quartiles based on the median number of daily steps: 2700, 4400, 5900, and 8400.

During roughly 4 years' follow-up, 3% of the women died. After adjustment for confounders like age, smoking, and comorbid conditions, women in the three higher quartiles of daily steps had significantly lower mortality risks — reductions of 46%, 53%, and 66%, respectively — than those in the lowest quartile. Mortality declined with increasing steps until roughly 7500 steps per day, at which point the benefit levelled off.

The researchers conclude, "These findings may serve as encouragement to the many sedentary individuals for whom 10000 steps/day pose an unattainable goal."

## Donate blood and give a gift of life

DR PRONAB CHOUDHURY

World blood donor day (June 14) is an annual event, usually on the same date each year, to thank voluntary blood donors, acknowledge them and encourage blood donation, especially by representing how blood donations have saved and changed lives. The Day has the slogan 'Safe blood for all' to raise awareness of the universal need for safe blood in the delivery of health care and the crucial roles that voluntary donations play in achieving the goal of universal health coverage.

In Bangladesh, blood transfusion service became available at the Dhaka Medical College Hospital in 1950. Blood donation in Bangladesh is an activity conducted by several different organisations. The first volunteer blood donation programme in Bangladesh begun in 1977 at Dhaka Medical College.

Transfusion of blood and blood products save millions of lives every year. It can help patients suffering from life threatening conditions live longer and with a higher quality of life, and supports complex medical and surgical procedures. It also has an essential, lifesaving role in maternal and child care and during the emergency response to manmade and natural disasters.

There is myth that blood donation leads to weakness but fact is that blood donation never leads to weakness, rather brings in new energy.



A blood service that gives patients access to safe blood and blood products in sufficient quantity is a key component of an effective health system. An adequate supply can only be ensured through regular donations by voluntary, unpaid blood donors. However, in many countries, blood services face the challenge of making sufficient blood available, while also ensuring its quality and safety.

One of the aims of the day is to encourage younger people, who might be a bit nervous or unsure about giving blood, feel encouraged to sign up and start donating so that the donor population stays strong. It is also to highlight the need for donations to be regular in order to keep stocks and quality of blood

donations high. Some blood types are rare, so promoting the need for rare donor types is also part of this event.

Many countries still have a shortage of donors, and thus World Blood Donor Day is vital to these countries to raise awareness of blood donation and thus increase supply in order to save as many lives as possible.

Almost in all health issues blood is donated by people like you and me to save lives. So not everyone can save a life but you have an opportunity, do not waste it. Donate blood and give somebody a gift of life.

The writer is a Consultant, Diabetes, Rheumatology and Family Medicine at Praava Health.  
E-mail: dr.pronab@yahoo.com



World Elder Abuse Awareness Day (WEAAD) is commemorated each year on 15 June to highlight one of the worst manifestations of ageism and inequality in our society, elder abuse.

Elder abuse is any act which causes harm to an older person and is carried out by someone they know and trust such as a family member or friend. The abuse may be physical, social, financial, psychological or sexual and can include mistreatment and neglect.

WEAAD was officially recognized by the United Nations General Assembly in December 2011, following a request by the International Network for the Prevention of Elder Abuse (INPEA), who first established the commemoration in June 2006.

## 10 tips to promote respect and prevent elder abuse

- Love and cherish your older relatives
- Speak carefully to older people
- Include older people in your social activities
- Phone or visit them regularly
- Support and encourage them to spend their money however they wish
- Encourage them to make their own decisions
- Honour older people's wisdom
- Enable them to set their own pace
- Respect their stories, they often have important lessons for us to learn
- You can seek advice from 'Elder Abuse and Neglect Prevention Service' when you think an older person is being neglected or abused.

Help is in spreading awareness about this issue.



In Search of Excellence