

INTRODUCTION

Sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) are prevalent in communities of gay men and other men who have sex with men (MSM), particularly among those with HIV infection. In 2005, nearly 70% of all reported early Syphilis cases in California were MSM; and over 59% of those cases were HIV-positive MSM. Infection with STDs such as Syphilis, Gonorrhea, and Chlamydia increase by a factor of 2 to 5 the risk of sexual HIV acquisition and transmission. In this population, effective communication around STDs can be a challenge for busy medical care providers already charged with providing comprehensive health care and social support services for their patients.

Screen, Test, Diagnose & Prevent (STD-Prevent) is a resource designed to improve clinicians' knowledge, skills, and comfort in effectively diagnosing and managing STDs in gay men and other MSM. Tools to support routine and periodic sexual history taking, and laboratory screening for STDs, including the use of highly sensitive and specific nucleic-acid based screening, as well as risk-reduction counseling for those at highest risk, are included. Also offered is guidance for creating a safe clinical environment for gay, bisexual, and other MSM patients, as well as information about STD and HIV partner management, useful in preventing post-treatment STD re-infection and transmission of HIV. All of the included tools — along with additional resources and referrals for both clinicians and patients — may be found at www.stdcheckup.org.

In coordination with the distribution of these materials, an educational campaign has been launched to increase gay and other MSM patients' awareness of the need for periodic, comprehensive STD screening. This toolkit, educational campaign, and the stdcheckup.org website are designed to work in conjunction to improve access to and provision of STD screening among MSM in California.

To learn more about this initiative, ask questions or share comments, please visit www.stdcheckup.org.

