



## Sexually Transmitted Infections – 2009 Fact Sheet

- More than half of all infectious disease cases reported in Canada are sexually transmitted infections (STIs).<sup>1</sup>
- Reported STI infections account for only an estimated **10%** of all cases.<sup>2</sup>
- Health effects include pelvic inflammatory disease, chronic pelvic pain, ectopic pregnancy, infertility, organ damage, death.<sup>3</sup>
- Many cases of infection have no symptoms and go undetected until serious physical damage has already occurred.<sup>4</sup>
- *Chlamydia* infection rates have more than doubled in the past decade.<sup>5</sup>
  - 48% of infectious disease reports are *Chlamydia* infections
  - *Chlamydia* is the leading preventable cause of infertility
  - 2/3 of the victims are young women ages 15-24
- Gonorrhea rates have risen by more than 132% in the past decade and the disease is rapidly becoming immune to antibiotics.<sup>6</sup>
- Syphilis infections have risen by 900% in the past five years.<sup>7</sup>
- HPV and *herpes simplex virus* infections are considered “highly prevalent” infections in Canada. It is estimated that as many as 75% of sexually active men and women will have at least one HPV infection in their lifetime. HPV causes almost all cases of cervical cancer.<sup>8</sup>
- HIV infection rates are estimated at between 2,300 – 4,500 cases per year with an estimated 58,000 cases in Canada (2005 figures), of which 27% are undiagnosed. Individuals already infected with an STI are significantly more susceptible to HIV infection.<sup>9</sup>
- Condoms do not protect against oral or external-genital transmission of infection, and condom effectiveness depends on careful and consistent use. Studies have repeatedly shown that most people, particularly youth, do not use condoms consistently, or at all, despite education.<sup>10,11</sup>



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### References

<sup>1</sup> Public Health Agency of Canada. 2004 Canadian Sexually Transmitted Infections Surveillance Report. *CCDR* 2007;33SI: 1-69.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> Public Health Agency of Canada, Infectious Diseases, Sexual Health and Sexually Transmitted Infections:

<http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/id-mi/az-index-eng.php#st>

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> Data Tables: Surveillance and Epidemiology Section, Community Acquired Infections Division, Centre for Communicable Diseases and Infection Control, Public Health Agency of Canada, 2008.

<sup>6</sup> Public Health Agency of Canada. Brief Report on Sexually Transmitted Infections in Canada: 2006. STI and HCV Surveillance and Epidemiology Section, Community Acquired Infections Division, Centre for Communicable Diseases and Infection Control, Public Health Agency of Canada, 2008.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hl-vs/iyh-vsv/diseases-maladies/hpv-vph-eng.php>

<sup>9</sup> Public Health Agency of Canada. HIV and AIDS in Canada. *Surveillance Report to December 31, 2007*. Surveillance and Risk Assessment Division, Centre for Communicable Diseases and Infection Control, Public Health Agency of Canada, 2008.

<sup>10</sup> S.J. Genius, S.K. Genius, "Managing the sexually transmitted disease pandemic: A time for reevaluation," in *American Journal of Obstetrics and Gynecology* 191 (2004), 1103-12.

<sup>11</sup> Markus J. Steiner, Willard Cates, S.J. Genius, "Are condoms the answer to rising rates of non-HIV sexually transmitted infection?" in *BMJ* 336 (January 2008), 184-185.