Self-reported Sexually Transmitted Infections: Nationally representative 2014/15 NZ Health Survey

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Introduction and Methods

• NZ Health Survey (NZHS) continuously in field since 2011 (>80% response rate)

• Adult and Child Questionnaires include:
  • Core questions: health-related behaviors, health status (eg mental health), use of health care services, patient experience, and socio-demographics
  • Rotating modules that change annually

• 2014/15 NZHS included Sexual and Reproductive Health module:
  • Purpose - developing and monitoring health policy and services
  • First comprehensive national representative survey of sexual behaviour and reproductive health in New Zealand
Introduction and Methods - continued

• 10,198 adults aged 16-74 years completed the S&RH module
  • 87% of 16-74 year olds who completed the core NZHS
  • Results are weighted. Weights take into account likelihood of selection into sample and non-response rates to make results representative of total population aged 16-74 years

• Method
  • Computer-assisted self-interview mode
  • Audio & touchscreen to assist those with poor literacy skills
  • Can answer ‘Don’t know’/ ‘Refuse’ to any question
  • Questions from National Survey of Sexual Attitudes and Lifestyles
Research Questions addressed today

- What is the (a) lifetime prevalence and (b) past-five-year prevalence of diagnosed STIs among New Zealanders aged 16-74 years who have had sex?

- Which STIs have been diagnosed?

- Where were people treated for their last STI?

How do the results differ by sex and age?

Further results will be available through the Data Brief and E-tables:
- comparisons by ethnicity, level of neighbourhood deprivation and same-sex behaviour
## Topics in S&RH module

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learning about sex</th>
<th>Women’s reproductive health</th>
<th>First sex with opposite sex</th>
<th>Sex with opposite sex</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Contraception</strong></td>
<td>First sex with same sex</td>
<td>Sex with same sex</td>
<td>Most recent partners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paying for sex</td>
<td>Pregnancy history</td>
<td>Family formation, fertility, infertility</td>
<td>Sexually transmitted infections</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health screening &amp; drug use</td>
<td>Sexual functioning</td>
<td>Sexual orientation</td>
<td>Non-volitional sex</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Have you ever been told by a doctor or other healthcare professional that you had any of the following?

You may choose more than one answer.
1. Chlamydia
2. Gonorrhoea
3. Genital or anal warts
4. Genital or anal herpes
5. Trichomonas vaginalis (Trich, TV)
6. Syphilis
7. NSU (Non Specific Urethritis)
8. I was told I had one of the above sexually transmitted infections but can’t remember which one
9. None of the above
K. Don’t know
R. Choose not to answer
Questions used to define sexually active

Opposite sex partner

Have you ever had sex with a female \textit{for men}/ male \textit{for women}?

That is vaginal sex, oral sex or anal sex.

Same sex partner

Have you ever had sex with a male \textit{for men}/ female \textit{for women}?  

That is oral \textit{or anal for men} sex or any other genital contact intended to achieve orgasm

If response was “Yes”, a follow up question asked “Altogether, in the last five years, how many [males/females] have you had sex with?”
Self-reported doctor diagnosed STIs will underestimate true STI period prevalence

- No clinical STI tests in NZHS
- Many STIs asymptomatic or unrecognised so number diagnosed related to access to risk assessment and testing
- Testing and diagnosis vary by sex and age
  - Women more likely to seek/access healthcare in situation where STI testing likely
  - Under-25-year-olds targeted for testing
  - Older people may not recall named STI diagnosed a long time ago and/or may be more reluctant to report
  - In recent decades more sensitive tests particularly for chlamydia
**Lifetime prevalence**: any diagnosed STI among those who have ever had sex

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Age group at time of survey</th>
<th>Men</th>
<th>Women</th>
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<td>12.0%</td>
<td>17.4%</td>
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Overall
- Men 12.0% 174,000
- Women 19.7% 298,000
Lifetime prevalence: chlamydia, warts, gonorrhoea and herpes among those who have ever had sex

**Chlamydia**
- Men: 4.7%
- Women: 10%

**Warts**
- Men: 2.9%
- Women: 4.8%

**Gonorrhoea**
- Men: 1.5%
- Women: 1.3%

**Herpes**
- Men: 1.2%
- Women: 3.4%
Five-year prevalence: any diagnosed STI among those having sexual partner(s) in this period

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Overall 5-year prevalence
Men 2.9% 39,000
Women 5.6% 78,000
Location of treatment for most recent STI in past-5-years

- Other *
- Family Planning clinic
- Sexual health clinic
- Medical centre or GP

Other*:
Student health clinic, ante-natal clinic, ED, abortion clinic, somewhere else

Numbers too small to do meaningful analysis by age
Summary - Key findings

• Approximately one in five sexually experienced women (20%) and one in nine sexually experienced men (12%) reported a life-time history of an STI.

• Women’s life-time STI rate peaks at 20-24 years, dropping steeply after 45-54 years. No age pattern for men.

• Chlamydia was most common STI diagnosed in life-time: 10% women, 4.7% men.

• Most common place for seeking treatment for STI in past-5-years was GP for women; GP/ sexual health clinic for men.
Future research

• Publishing online tables and short reports on Ministry website later this year

• Confidentialised Unit Record File (CURF)
  • Available via Statistics New Zealand from 2018
  • Access to CURF is free and the licence generally issued for 12 months
  • Criteria for accessing data:

• Questionnaires:
Any questions?