

SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED INFECTIONS (STIs)

HIV/AIDS

HIV in Kenya (2024)

- HIV prevalence rate: 3.7%
- Approximately 1.4 million people living with HIV (PLHIV)
- Females have higher prevalence (5.3%) compared to males (2.6%)

High Prevalence Counties:

- Homa Bay: 15.2%
- Kisumu: 14.5%
- Siaya: 13.2%
- Migori: 9.7%

Progress:

- 78% reduction in new HIV infections over the past decade
- Dropped from 101,448 (2013) to 22,154 (2022)
- Concern: 41% of new adult infections occur in 15-24 age group

How HIV is Transmitted

- 1. Sharing Needles and Syringes:** High risk for people who inject drugs
- 2. Mother-to-Child Transmission:** During pregnancy, childbirth, or breastfeeding (can be reduced with proper medical intervention)
- 3. Blood Transfusions and Organ Transplants:** Rare in countries with rigorous screening
- 4. Occupational Exposure:** Healthcare workers through needlestick injuries
- 5. Other Bodily Fluids:** Pre-seminal fluid, rectal fluids, breast milk

HIV is NOT Transmitted Through:

- Hugging
- Shaking hands
- Sharing food or drinks
- Insect bites

Chlamydia

What is Chlamydia?

A common sexually transmitted infection (STI) caused by the bacterium *Chlamydia trachomatis*.

Transmission

- Vaginal, anal, and oral sex
- From pregnant person to baby during childbirth

Symptoms

Often called a "silent" infection because many people don't exhibit symptoms.

For Women:

- Abnormal vaginal discharge
- Burning sensation during urination
- Pain during intercourse
- Bleeding between periods

For Men:

- Discharge from the penis
- Burning sensation during urination
- Pain or swelling in one or both testicles

Complications (if untreated)

- **Women:** Pelvic inflammatory disease (PID), infertility, ectopic pregnancy
- **Men:** Epididymitis, which can result in infertility

Diagnosis

- Urine tests
- Swabs of the affected area

Treatment

- Antibiotics such as azithromycin or doxycycline
- Partners should be treated simultaneously to prevent reinfection

Prevention

- Condom use
- Regular STI screenings
- Open communication with sexual partners

Syphilis

What is Syphilis?

A sexually transmitted infection caused by the bacterium *Treponema pallidum*.

Stages of Syphilis

1. Primary Stage

- **Symptoms:** Single sore (chancre) or multiple sores at infection site
- **Characteristics:** Firm, round, and painless; appears ~3 weeks after exposure; heals in 3-6 weeks

2. Secondary Stage

- **Symptoms:** Skin rashes (often on palms and soles), fever, swollen lymph nodes, sore throat, patchy hair loss, headaches, weight loss, fatigue
- **Characteristics:** Begins several weeks after chancre heals

3. Latent Stage

- **Symptoms:** None visible, but bacterium remains in body
- **Characteristics:** Can last for years

4. Tertiary Stage

- **Symptoms:** Severe problems affecting heart, brain, nerves, eyes, liver, bones, and joints
- **Characteristics:** Occurs 10-30 years after initial infection; can be life-threatening

Diagnosis

- Blood tests
- Direct detection of bacterium
- Examination of cerebrospinal fluid (for neurosyphilis)

Treatment

- Penicillin is most effective

- Early stages: single injection
- Later stages: additional doses required

Prevention

- Safe sex practices (condoms and dental dams)
- Regular testing
- Avoiding substance abuse

Complications

- Neurological and cardiovascular issues
- Increased risk of HIV infection
- Congenital syphilis in babies of infected mothers

Gonorrhea

What is Gonorrhea?

A sexually transmitted infection caused by the bacterium *Neisseria gonorrhoeae*.

Affected Areas

- Reproductive tract mucous membranes
- Mouth, throat, eyes, and rectum

Symptoms

In Men:

- Painful urination
- Pus-like discharge from the penis
- Swelling or pain in one testicle

In Women:

- Increased vaginal discharge
- Painful urination
- Vaginal bleeding between periods
- Pelvic pain

In Both:

- Rectal infections: discharge, anal itching, soreness, bleeding, painful bowel movements

- Throat infections: sore throat

Transmission

- Sexual contact with penis, vagina, mouth, or anus of infected partner
- Mother to baby during childbirth

Complications

- **Women:** Pelvic inflammatory disease (PID), infertility, ectopic pregnancy
- **Men:** Epididymitis, infertility
- Increased risk of HIV transmission
- Disseminated gonococcal infection (DGI): arthritis, tenosynovitis, dermatitis

Diagnosis

- Laboratory testing of samples from affected area

Treatment

- Antibiotics (dual therapy approach due to resistance)
- Ceftriaxone and azithromycin recommended
- Partners should be treated simultaneously
- Follow-up testing recommended

Prevention

- **Abstinence is the surest way of prevention**
- Condom use
- Regular STI screenings
- Open communication with partners

Peer Support in HIV Prevention and Treatment

1. Emotional Support

- **Reducing Stigma:** Fostering safe environments for sharing experiences
- **Mental Health:** Providing psychological support for coping with diagnosis

2. Education and Information

- **HIV Prevention:** Accurate information about transmission, prevention (condoms, PrEP, PEP), and testing
- **Treatment Adherence:** Educating about importance of antiretroviral therapy (ART)

3. Navigation and Access to Services

- **Healthcare System:** Helping navigate to find testing and treatment
- **Resources:** Connecting with housing, food, and financial assistance

4. Advocacy and Empowerment

- **Self-Advocacy:** Empowering individuals to advocate for their health
- **Community Advocacy:** Working to improve policies and services

5. Building Trust and Relatability

- **Shared Experiences:** Creating trust through shared experiences
- **Role Models:** Demonstrating successful HIV management

6. Peer-Led Programs

- **Support Groups:** Spaces for sharing experiences and strategies
- **Outreach Programs:** Educating and supporting marginalized communities

7. Research and Development

- **Community-Based Research:** Developing effective prevention and treatment strategies
- **Feedback:** Providing input to improve services

Peer support is a powerful tool in the fight against HIV, improving health outcomes and enhancing quality of life.