North America
Featured in this report include: The BASHH/ASTDA meeting held in Brooklyn New York May 7-10, 2008 (“Converging Approaches in STI control and Reproductive Health”); updates from the American Social Health Association (ASHA); the American Sexually Transmitted Diseases Association (ASTDA); adolescents’ sexual activity and STDs in the US, and some exciting new websites. There is a new online organization from the Internet and STD Center of Excellence, Denver Colorado, STD Prevention Online, STDPREVENTIONONLINE.ORG, where members can discuss STD-related issues, read about new STI information and exchange views, as well as contact collaborators in the field of STDs. It is a web-based workspace, which provides a communication interface for STI/HIV prevention program, policy, and research. All are welcome to join.

BASHH
From May 7-10, 2008 the ASTDA hosted the 3rd Bi-lateral ASTDA/BASHH meeting in New York City. This meeting was co-sponsored by IUSTI. Over 450 delegates attended an extensive program which included 8 plenary sessions, 28 oral abstracts and over 150 posters. In particular, there was substantial attention paid to the interactions between STIs and HIV. Highlights of the meeting included a large session on bacterial STDs within the context of HIV infection, and focusing on outreach approaches to gay men. We were honored by the presence of Baroness Joyce Gould, who is a member of the House of Lords, and who has been largely responsible for implementation of the UK Chlamydia control program as well as its funding. The meeting concluded with the traditional BASHH gala, which occurred in a stunning venue overlooking the sun setting behind the New York City skyline. Unique to this conference was the involvement and attention of local public health officials and front-line public health workers. Through grants from the ASTDA, over 50 employees from the New York City Health Department and affiliated agencies were able to attend, enabling exposure to top-level translational science in a unique venue. The conference abstracts are available as an electronic supplement to Sexually Transmitted Infections (volume 84).

Board Meeting
IUSTI-North America held a board meeting while in New York at the BASHH meeting and plans were made for a new program for workshop training sessions to be held immediately before future International meetings. The intent will be to help develop young researchers, as well as investigators from less developed countries, by offering skills-building, networking and collaborative opportunities. The program is in development and we will keep everyone apprised of our progress.

STIs in Teens
A presentation from the 2008 National STD Prevention Conference, Chicago IL, which was sponsored by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) last March, received wide news coverage in the United States, and demonstrated that about one-in-four adolescent girls have an STI. It was presented by Sara Forhan et al. and was entitled “Prevalence of STIs and Bacterial Vaginosis among Female Adolescents in the United Stated: Data from the National Health and Nutrition Survey (NHANES) 2003-2004”.

From 838 female participants, 14-19 years of age, who were part of the representative National Survey, 404 reported ever having sex. The weighted prevalence of ‘any STI’ for all females was 25.7% (95% CI 20.1-32.9). Among those reporting sex, the prevalence was
39.5% (95% CI 31.1-50.3). Among all adolescents, specific prevalences were HPV-High Risk/6/11 18.3%, chlamydia 3.9%, trichomonas 2.5% and HSV-2 1.9%. Specific prevalences for those reporting having had sex included: HPV-High Risk/6/11 29.5%, chlamydia 7.1%, trichomonas 3.6%, and HSV-2 3.4%. Almost 25% of all females had BV. For those with any STI, 15% had more than one STI. The authors concluded that public health efforts should be increased to prevent STIs among adolescents.

**Sexual Activity in Teens**
The new data from the Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS, 2007, MMWR 57: 2008) published by the CDC indicates many high school adolescents are sexually active in the U.S. and many practice high-risk sexual behavior. A three-stage cluster sample design was used to produce a nationally representative sample of students in grades 9-12.

**YRBS data from 14,041 students from 157 schools with a student response rate of 84%**
- 47.8% of students have had sexual intercourse
  - 9th grade: 32.8%; 10th grade: 43.8%; 11th grade: 55.5%; 12th grade: 64.6%
  - Males: 49.8%; females 45.9%
  - 7.1% students initiated sex before age 13 years (10.1% males vs. 4.0% females)
  - 14.9% students had ≥ 4 lifetime partners
- Of 35.0% currently sexually active (3 mo), 61.5% reported condom use at last sex
- Of 35.0% currently sexually active, 22.5% had drunk alcohol or used drugs before last sex

**New STI Book**
The new edition of the widely used reference book for STIs was published in the spring of this past year: *Sexually Transmitted Diseases, 4th Edition*, eds. KK Holmes, PF Sparling, WE Stamm, P Piot, JW Wasserheit, L Corey, MS Cohen and HD Watts, (McGraw-Hill, New York, 2008). This book has been heralded as bringing STDs and associated social and population-level issues up-to-date and has created an excellent resource for clinicians world-wide. Earlier this year, the textbook received a 5 star rating from Doody’s Journal, a resource journal for librarians. The Lancet is publishing a review of the book shortly that was done by Dr. Christopher Hudson. This 2,166 page edition is highly recommended for all STI researchers, public health officials, and clinicians.

In partnership with the American Sexually Transmitted Diseases Association (ASTDA), the North American Branch of IUSTI is focusing on stressing importance of the relationship between STDs and HIV. We are worried about antibiotic resistance in gonorrhea. We are watching the uptake of the HPV vaccine and following the use of expedited partner therapy. We are increasing our knowledge about other STDs which are being found to play key role in disease, such as Trichomonas vaginalis and Mycoplasma genitalium, and focusing on new technologies that make STIs easier to diagnose.

News from the CDC.
The CDC STD annual prevention activities can be found in the DSTDP Year End annual summary and Dear Colleague Letter, available at http://www.cdc.gov/std/general/ DearColleagueYearEnd2007.pdf. There are expanded efforts to explore the delivery of partner services through the Internet, such as email notification of anonymous partners and notification through chatrooms. These approaches have been clarified in guidance developed by the National Coalition of STD Directors in the U.S. in collaboration with the CDC (http://www.ncsddc.org/upload/wysiwyg/documents/InternetGuidelinesFOC9_27_07.pdf). CDC is encouraging use of expedited partner therapy (EPT) where legal issues permit. EPT promotes partner treatment for chlamydia and gonorrhea delivered by the patient or through a pharmacy without a clinical examination. (See http://www.cdc.gov/std/treatment/2006/clinical.htm#clinical3 and http://www.cdc.gov/std/ept/legal/introduction.htm). CDC is also supporting increasing efforts to screen more males for chlamydia. The report is available at: http://www.cdc.gov/std/chlamydia/ChlamydiaScreening-males.pdf.
Gonorrhea Resistance is still a problem for North America as it is for the rest of the world. In 2007, the CDC made major recommendations for gonorrhea treatment which removed quinolones as first-line therapy. Ceftriaxone and other third-generation cephalosporins are now the primary therapy. See report at: http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm5614a3.htm?s_cid=mm5614a3e

News from the American Social Health Association

ASHA was founded in 1914, and is a leading national provider in the area of health communications and sexually transmitted infection prevention, with an advocacy role in Washington and numerous research and educational programs. ASHA’s health policy office in Washington, DC responds to requests for information as well as advocating for decisions that are science-based and in support of sound public health. Additionally, ASHA continues to serve as a resource to public health clinics and others around the country, who are seeking materials on all subjects related to sexually transmitted infections. Their public outreach efforts have focused on their websites, which are dedicated to different audiences (general public, teens, Hispanics): http://www.ashastd.org/. ASHA also maintains a popular online message board. Over the course of this past year, the message board — with forums focused on herpes, HPV, general STI concerns, and an over-55 audience — has become a popular destination for individuals looking not just for accurate information but emotional support as well. While ASHA continues to operate a national STI hotline as it has for more than two decades, this innovative online program has allowed ASHA’s small staff to reach many more individuals with personalized messages.

ASTDA (from Jeanne Marrazzo, MD, MPH, ASTDA President)

In April, the ASTDA announced its first round of ASTDA Developmental Award recipients. Congratulations to Alia Al-Tayyib, PhD, of Denver Public Health, Denver, Colorado, and Loida Bonney, MD, of Emory University School of Medicine, Atlanta, Georgia! Dr. Al-Tayyib’s proposal is entitled ‘Detecting chlamydial and gonococcal infections using respondent-driven sampling,’ and she will be mentored by Kees Rietmeijer, MD, PhD. Dr. Bonney’s proposal is entitled ‘Identifying barriers and facilitators to HPV vaccination among minority women,’ and she will be mentored by Carlos del Rio, MD, PhD. The ASTDA Developmental Awards are intended to encourage new investigators to pursue careers in research related to STI, and will fund up to two years of activities at the post-doctoral level. The intent is that they will be used to generate data that young investigators can use as the basis for seeking future independent funding from the NIH or other sources. We anticipate offering these awards on an annual basis. For details, see www.astda.org.

ASTDA will also sponsor an interactive session entitled ‘HIV, STDs and the Global AIDS Pandemic: Lethal Synergy 2008’ at the 48th Annual Interscience Conference on Antimicrobial Agents and Chemotherapy and the Infectious Diseases Society of America (ICAAC/IDSA) to be held in Washington, DC, from October 25-28, 2008. This session will be moderated by Jeanne Marrazzo, MD, MPH, and Myron Cohen, MD, and will feature an international group of panelists discussing challenging scenarios that illustrate the perilous intersection of HIV and STI care and policy. We hope to see you there!

STI articles of interest recently published in North America

- Al-Tayyib AA, et al. Health Care Access and Follow-Up of Chlamydial and Gonococcal Infections Identified in an Emergency Department. STD:2008;35(6),583-587. This article highlights the difficulty of follow-up for ED patients found to have an STI when test results are delayed. Twenty percent of patients who had an STI were not able to be located or otherwise lost to follow-up, and were not treated.
- Gottlieb S, et al. Prevalence of Syphilis Seroreactivity in the United States: Data from the National Health and Nutrition Examination Surveys (NHANES) 2001-2004. STD:2008;35(5);507-511. This article used data from a nationally representative survey to show that there is very low (0.71%) positive syphilis serology in the US. However, disparities were significant when evaluated by ethnicity/race, income and education.
- Chen M, et al. Mind the Gap: The Role of Time Between Sex with Two Consecutive Partners on the Transmission Dynamics of Gonorrhea. STD:2008;35(5);435-444. This article uses a mathematical model to evaluate length of time of partnerships,
Aral S. Just One More Day: The GAP as Population Level Determinant and Risk Factor for STI Spread. *STD*: 2008;35(5);445-446. This editorial takes some points from the Chen article (above) and proposes that the same risk factors are true of all STIs and that individual gaps between partners as well as partner gaps and partner relationship duration may all be new targets for behavior change.

**Upcoming meeting of interest**
48th ICAAC—46th IDSA Annual Meeting; October 25-28, 2008 Washington, DC.

Check out: www.STDwizzard.org; www.iwantthekit.org