Message from the Regional Director

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We hope everyone is enjoying the STI & AIDS World Congress this week in Vienna, Austria. It is the joint meeting of the 20th ISSDTR and the 14th IUSTI meetings. It promises to be a dynamic and fulfilling Congress. We owe a big thanks to the organizers of the meeting. Our Congress Chair is Dr. Angelika Story and the Co-Chair is Dr. Raj Patel. The Chair of the International Scientific Committee is Dr. Thomas C. Quinn, and Claudia Heller-Vitouch is the Chair of the Local Organizing Committee.

In the United States, new surveillance data from the CDC makes us especially more aware of our challenges. As we move towards the implementation of the new Affordable Care Act, only teamwork between private and public organizations, and communities and individuals can strengthen our abilities to prevent STIs and their health burden.

All STIs in North America have significant health inequity issues with rates often 10-20 times higher in African Americans.

As an example, last year 1.3 million chlamydia cases were reported to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC); however, the CDC estimates that 2-3 million new cases occur per year, with substantial underreporting due to lack of screening in some populations. Rates of infection have increased every year; higher rates among women than among men reflect the focus on expansion of screening programs in women during the past 20 years, the use of increasingly more sensitive diagnostic tests, an increased emphasis on case reporting, and improvements in the information systems used for reporting.

Young women have the highest infection rates for chlamydia, the most common infection reported to the CDC; the figures were 3416.5 and 3722.5 cases per 100,000 population for women 15-19 and 20-24 years of age, respectively. Age-specific rates among men were highest in the 20-24 year-old age group, at 1343.3 cases per 100,000. Significant health disparities exist and are a reflection of the health inequities in the U.S. The rate among black females aged 15-19 years was almost six times the rate among white females in the same age group. Among males aged 15-19 years, the rate among blacks was 11.1 times the rate among whites. The rates among American Indian/Alaska Natives and Latinos were more that four times and two times higher, respectively, than those among whites.

New estimates for prevalent and incident infections were recently published by Satterwhite et al. [STD. 2013; 40:187-193] suggesting that there are more that 110 million total prevalent STIs among men and women across the nation. Prevalence estimates were 20 million new infections in the United States each year. Eight common STIs were included: chlamydia, gonorrhea, hepatitis B virus (HBV), herpes simplex virus type 2 (HSV-2), human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), human papillomavirus (HPC), syphilis, and trichomoniasis.

The economic burden of STIs in the United States has been estimated to cost the American healthcare system nearly $16 billion in direct medical costs alone. [Owusu-Edusei K, et al. STD. 2013; 40:197-201.]
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We welcome new members from North America. Please log onto www.IUSTI.org and join our unique international colleagues who work in the STI field. Other Regions which play an integral part of Worldwide-IUSTI include: IUSTI-Europe, IUSTI-Latin America, IUSTI-Africa, and IUSTI-Asia Pacific. Associate membership is free and full membership is inexpensive. Membership is open to individuals with a professional interest in STIs. You can see that we have a lot of work to do in diagnosing, treating, and preventing STIs in North America.

Much is happening at the American Sexual Health Association!

Earlier they changed their name, then came a new logo. Now ASHA is working to prepare for their Centennial anniversary. Not too many nonprofits make it to 100 years, so ASHA has a lot to celebrate.

In 2014 ASHA will produce a documentary and other materials for the purpose of expanding the sexual health message that the organization feels strongly is necessary to the long-term health of individuals, families, and communities.

Join the American Sexual Health Association at the 2014 STD Prevention Conference where the opening reception will be a birthday party for ASHA!

AIDSVu’s Interactive Maps Illustrate the Impact of HIV in U.S. Communities

Understanding HIV at the community level is critical to helping focus prevention and care resources where they are most needed. In June, the 2012 update of AIDSVu was unveiled. AIDSVu is an interactive online mapping project depicting the HIV epidemic in the US, with new local maps and data that can help provide a better understanding of HIV in the communities most impacted. The data on AIDSVu maps have been updated with the most recent nationally comparable HIV prevalence data available from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Led by Emory University and developed with the support and advice of partners from the corporate sector, government, and the HIV community, AIDSVu is an example of how diverse stakeholders can work together to actively address the HIV/AIDS epidemic in the United States.

http://aidsvu.org/
Save the Date: NCC Webinar on Adolescents and STDs

The National Chlamydia Coalition (NCC), in collaboration with the National Institute for Health Care Management Foundation, will host a webinar on STD prevention for adolescents on July 24, 2013 from 1-2:30 PM ET. **Adolescents and STDs: A Call to Action for Providers and Health Plans**, will discuss the potential impact of the Affordable Care Act on STD services for adolescents, successful approaches for providers to reach adolescents with STD prevention messages, the importance of confidentiality, and health plan successes in increasing chlamydia screening rates. Register for the webinar at [http://nihcm.org/index.php](http://nihcm.org/index.php)

So They Can Know

So They Can Know is a free resource to help notify sexual partners that they may have been exposed to a sexually transmitted infection.

So They Can Know is a project of Sexual Health Innovations, a non-profit organization dedicated to improving the sexual health of Americans by promoting more effective use of technology.


Since **So You Can Know** was launched in September 2012, over 10,000 unique users have visited the website.

76% of these users were from the United States.

156 users have sent 286 email notifications.

[https://www.sotheycanknow.org/](https://www.sotheycanknow.org/)
Upcoming Events

STI World Congress 2013
Joint Meeting of the 20th ISSTDR & 14th IUSTI
July 14-17, 2013  Vienna, Austria

17th United States Conference on AIDS (USCA)
September 8-11, 2013  New Orleans, LA

53rd ICAAC Conference
September 10-13, 2013  Denver, CO

IDWeek 2013
October 2-6, 2013  San Francisco, CA

American Society for Microbiology
114th General Meeting
May 17-20, 2014  Boston, MA

We're on the web!!
www.iusti.org

http://www.astda.org/

ASTDA is the American Sexually Transmitted Diseases Association, a membership organization dedicated to the control and study of sexually transmitted diseases. ASTDA membership is open to any individual with interest in the control and prevention of sexually transmitted diseases.

ASTDA Announces 2013 Award Winners

The Distinguished Career Award is presented to Dr. Jonathan Zenilman, professor of medicine at Johns Hopkins University and chief of infectious diseases at Johns Hopkins Bayview Medical Center, who has made major research contributions in areas including STD epidemiology, antimicrobial resistance, and behavioral research. A former president of ASTDA, Dr. Zenilman has served on the seminal Institute of Medicine (IOM) committee which published the groundbreaking report on STDs as a “hidden epidemic.” He served as a consultant to the US Presidential Commission for the Study of Bioethical Issues which focused on unethical STD research studies carried out by US investigators in Guatemala from 1946-1948.

The Achievement Award is presented to Dr. Jane Schwebke, professor of medicine and epidemiology at the University of Alabama at Birmingham, who focuses primarily on bacterial vaginosis and trichomoniasis. Dr. Schwebke’s work includes several high-impact randomized controlled trials for STD diagnosis and treatment.

The Young Investigator Award is presented to Dr. Jesse Clark, assistant professor of medicine at the David Geffen School of Medicine, University of California-Los Angeles, who has established an important record of investigation in STD/HIV prevention and treatment among men who have sex with men in Lima, Peru. Dr. Clark’s work also addresses issues of partner notification and treatment, and the use of partner management strategies to limit the spread of infection through high-risk sexual networks.

Each year, ASTDA offers Developmental Award funding to encourage new investigators to pursue careers in STD research. This year’s Developmental Award winner is Jennifer Balkus, PhD, MPH, an epidemiologist and staff scientist in the Vaccine and Infectious Diseases Division at the Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center and an affiliate instructor in global health at the University of Washington in Seattle. Dr. Balkus’ research project will focus upon the incidence and natural history of Mycoplasma genitalium among Kenyan and US women. She is currently a co-investigator for the Preventing Vaginal Infections (PVI) trial and is study lead/co-investigator for the ancillary PVI microbiome study. Congratulations, Dr. Balkus!