

STI Global Update

Newsletter of the International Union against Sexually Transmitted Infections

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archive, please contact Jackie on
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We will be having a face-to-face commemoration of the centenary at the Chicago Congress and I look forward to celebrating this great event with you all in Chicago.

Joint 25th ISSTD/24th IUSTI World Congress in Chicago on 24-27 July 2023



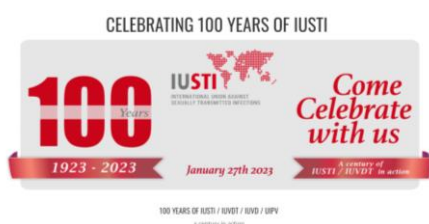
President's Letter



Dr Janet Wilson - President of IUSTI

IUSTI is 100 years old!

A new year and a centenary for IUSTI.



On 27th January 2023 IUSTI was 100 years old. What a great privilege it is to be part of an organisation with such an esteemed history. We are highlighting this on our website where you will find many documents and articles of interest which detail the origins and development of what is now known as the International Union against STIs. Jackie Sherrard, the Chair of the Centenary Committee, has identified an amazing amount of information about IUSTI which is now stored in one archive.

There are however some gaps in the information, so if any of you have other interesting or historical documents, or photos, that would add to the

Which brings me onto the Joint 25th ISSTD/24th IUSTI World Congress in Chicago on 24-27 July 2023. The plans are progressing well. The submitted abstracts have been scored and people have already been notified of the outcome. If you missed the deadline because your work was not quite ready at that stage, please submit an abstract as a Late Breaker. The deadline for these submissions is 3rd April 2023 but only work continuing beyond the original deadline will be considered as a late breaker.

The scientific programme is almost completed. All the plenary sessions have been confirmed and the Spotlights and Symposia sessions are almost finalised. Bobbie Van Der Poll, the Congress Chair and ISSTD President, and Patty Kissinger and Andy Winter, the Scientific Committee Co-Chairs, with the rest of the Scientific Committee have excelled themselves. If you are unsure about whether to come to the congress, please look at the amazing programme that they have created which really does have something of interest for everyone. I am sure that will persuade you to attend!

Early bird registration finishes on 31st March 2023 and there is a discount for full IUSTI members, so be sure to register as soon as possible. Discounted booking for the congress hotel is also available via the congress website, but if you plan to stay at the congress hotel please book quickly as the rooms are selling out. Also, remember that there are several symposia and courses on Monday 24th July

before the Opening Ceremony so make sure you plan your arrival in time to attend these.

Venue of joint ISSTD/IUSTI World Congress for 2027 to be decided soon



REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS FOR THE JOINT
27th INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY FOR SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED DISEASES RESEARCH &
28th WORLD IUSTI
CONGRESS

The venue for the joint ISSTD/IUSTI World Congress for 2027 will be chosen at the ISSTD Board meeting in Chicago. If you are interested in hosting this congress please go to <https://www.isstd.org/pdf/ISSTD%20IUSTI%20World%20Joint%20Meeting%202027%20Call%20for%20Bids.pdf> for the full details. The application deadline is 15th May 2023 and finalists should plan to attend the ISSTD Board meeting on 23 July 2023 to present their bid.

Change of venue for the IUSTI World Congress 2024

As you will be aware, IUSTI tries to rotate the venues of the World Congresses around the IUSTI regions. The 2024 IUSTI World Congress was planned to be held in the Latin-America and the Caribbean (LAC) Region but unfortunately due to the financial situation and political unrest in the countries that were hoping to host the congress this is not going to be possible. We hope these problems will be relatively short lived and that a World Congress will be held in the LAC region in the not too distant future.

Meanwhile, our Australian colleagues have kindly proposed that the 2024 IUSTI World Congress be held in Australia in conjunction with the Australian Sexual Health Conference. The World IUSTI Executive Committee has unanimously accepted this proposal and plans are on-going. It is appropriate that we are considering the Congress to be held in the Asia-Pacific Region as the A-P region missed out on its World Congress when the 2020 congress, meant to have been held in Thailand, had to be cancelled due to COVID-19.

I look forward to seeing you all in Chicago in July!

Janet Wilson, IUSTI-World President

News

STI Podcasts

Sexually Transmitted Infections is the world's longest running international journal on sexual

health. The journal releases regular podcasts which aims to keep practitioners, trainees and researchers up to date in the prevention, diagnosis and treatment of all STIs and HIV.



Latest episodes -

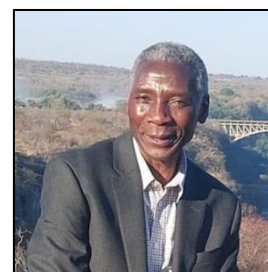
[HIV and STI prevention, plus HIV in Ukraine](#) - In this double-interview podcast, the Editor-in-Chief of the STI journal, Professor Anna Maria Geretti, brings you some of the highlights from the HIV Glasgow 2022 conference. Including interviews with Jean-Michel Molina, who discusses HIV and STI prevention and Professor Miłosz Parczewski, who discusses the effects of the war in Ukraine on the country's healthcare system, in particular on the prevalence of STIs.

[MPox 101, Community and Global response](#) - In this episode of the podcast we talk about transmission, diagnosis and management of MPox. We will also review the UK community and the World Health's Organization's perspective on this virus. Read STI's recently published articles on the topic [here](#) and [here](#).

STI podcasts are free to access and available on all major podcast platforms including [Soundcloud](#), [Apple Podcasts](#), [Google Podcasts](#), [Stitcher](#) and [Spotify](#).

Regional Reports

Africa MENA



Dr Francis Ndowa – Regional Director of IUSTI-Africa MENA

1. 23rd IUSTI World Congress 2022

It is 6 months since the IUSTI Africa-MENA Region hosted the 23rd IUSTI World Congress in Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe. Participants who registered for the Conference are reminded that Congress presentation slides & the Virtual platform are available for viewing until 31 March 2023.

2. Post Conference activities

2.1 Follow-up meeting in Zimbabwe

The Regional Director, Francis Ndowa, was invited to chair a meeting convened by the Zimbabwe Ministry of Health & Child Care (MoH&CC), Department of AIDS, TB. The meeting was following up on data presented at the IUSTI World Congress showing high rates of STIs among youth 16 to 24 years of age in Zimbabwe. The one-day meeting was entitled, “*Revisiting Approaches to STI Prevention and Control in Zimbabwe: A Brainstorming Session*”. The MoH&CC invited the National STI Advisory Committee, of which Francis Ndowa is a member, and its partners with an interest in STIs, including CDC-USA in Zimbabwe, USAID-Zimbabwe, Population Solutions for Health (PSH), Centre for Sexual Health and HIV AIDS Research Zimbabwe (CeSHHAR), The Biomedical Research and Training Institute (BRTI) and the National Microbiology Reference Laboratory (NMRL) Zimbabwe.

The group listened to updates on the STI Programme and Viral Hepatitis Control and the soon to be launched Enhanced Gonococcal Antimicrobial Surveillance Programme (EGASP) in Zimbabwe.

The meeting brainstormed on the paucity of information and promotion of STI prevention interventions, stockouts of medicines for the treatment of STIs in the primary health-care units, data collection, stigma related to STIs, especially among health-care providers, directed to key populations, such as sex workers and men who have sex with men. The meeting also looked into the need for aetiological studies of STIs among selected population groups and selected sites. The NMRL reported its readiness to support the STI Programme, especially when it embarks on EGASP and reported that *N. gonorrhoeae* was one of the target pathogens on its list.

3. Focus on data on HIV and herpes simplex virus in the MENA Region and other regions

3.1 Status of the HIV epidemic in key populations in the Middle East and north Africa region

Researchers at the Infectious Disease Epidemiology Group of Weill Cornell Medicine-Qatar documented a trend of increasing HIV prevalence among key populations including people who inject drugs, men who have sex with men, and female sex workers in the Middle East and North Africa countries. The study by *Mumtaz et al.*, ‘Status of the HIV epidemic in key populations in the Middle East and North Africa: knowns and unknowns’, was published in *Lancet HIV*. The study reported that although the epidemic continues at a low level in some

countries or localities within a country, there is evidence for concentrated epidemics, with sustained transmission at considerable HIV prevalence among people who inject drugs and men who have sex with men in over half of countries in the region with data, and among female sex workers in several countries. The article shed light on gaps in evidence for several countries; whereby the status of the epidemic among key populations remains unknown. Additionally, it highlighted that HIV response in the Middle East and North Africa remains far below global targets for prevention, testing, and treatment.

Citation: Mumtaz GR, Chemaitelly H, AlMukdad S, et al. Status of the HIV epidemic in key populations in the Middle East and north Africa: knowns and unknowns. *Lancet HIV* 2022; 9(7): e506-e16.

Weblink:

[https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanhiv/article/PIIS2352-3018\(22\)00093-5/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanhiv/article/PIIS2352-3018(22)00093-5/fulltext)

3.2 HIV incidence and impact of interventions among female sex workers and their clients in the MENA region

Researchers at the Infectious Disease Epidemiology Group of Weill Cornell Medicine-Qatar estimated a total of 14,604 new HIV infections among female sex workers, clients, and spouses in 12 Middle East and North Africa countries in 2020. This sum constituted 28.1% of 51,995 total new HIV infections estimated in all adults in these 12 countries combined. The study by *Chemaitelly et al.*, ‘HIV incidence and impact of interventions among female sex workers and their clients in the Middle East and north Africa: a modelling study’, was published in *Lancet HIV*. The study found that although the incidence of HIV is more likely to be detected among female sex workers, it constitutes only a third of HIV incidence in heterosexual sex work networks—the other two-thirds are split among clients and their spouses, who rarely access any HIV programs. The results suggest that clients and their spouses could benefit greatly from expanding coverage of interventions, even if these interventions are delivered only to female sex workers.

Citation: Chemaitelly H, Ayoub HH, Omori R, et al. HIV incidence and impact of interventions among female sex workers and their clients in the Middle East and north Africa: a modelling study. *Lancet HIV* 2022; 9(7): e496-e505.

Weblink:

[https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanhiv/article/PIIS2352-3018\(22\)00100-X/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanhiv/article/PIIS2352-3018(22)00100-X/fulltext)

3.3 Economic burden of genital herpes and HIV attributable to herpes simplex virus type 2 infections in 90 low- and middle-income countries

Researchers from Harvard University and the Infectious Disease Epidemiology Group of Weill Cornell Medicine-Qatar found that genital herpes contributed to US\$813.5 million in treatment and productivity losses in 2019 in low- and middle-

income countries (LMICs). The study by *Silva et al.*, 'Estimated economic burden of genital herpes and HIV attributable to herpes simplex virus type 2 infections in 90 low- and middle-income countries: a modeling study', was published in *PLOS Medicine*. The study found that economic losses due to genital herpes in LMICs can be large, especially when considering the lifelong nature of the disease. It also indicated that quality-of-life losses outweigh spending on treatment and reductions in productivity. Further, it explained that if HSV-2 has contributed to the spread of HIV in LMICs, then nearly one third of antiretroviral costs and HIV-related wage losses can be attributed to HSV-2.

Citation: Silva S, Ayoub HH, Johnston C, Atun R, Abu-Raddad LJ. Estimated economic burden of genital herpes and HIV attributable to herpes simplex virus type 2 infections in 90 low- and middle-income countries: a modeling study. *PLoS Med* 2022; 19(12): e1003938.

Weblink:

[https://journals.plos.org/plosmedicine/article?id=10.1371/journal.pmed.1003938#:~:text=In%20the%2090%20LMICs%2C%20genital.billion%20to%20US\\$2434.5%20billion.](https://journals.plos.org/plosmedicine/article?id=10.1371/journal.pmed.1003938#:~:text=In%20the%2090%20LMICs%2C%20genital.billion%20to%20US$2434.5%20billion.)

3.4 Status of herpes simplex virus type 2 in Europe

Researchers at the Infectious Disease Epidemiology Group of Weill Cornell Medicine-Qatar found that herpes simplex virus type 2 (HSV-2) seroprevalence in the adult general population of Europe averaged at about 12%. The study by *Alareeki et al.*, 'Epidemiology of herpes simplex virus type 2 in Europe: systematic review, meta-analyses, and meta-regressions', published in *Lancet Regional Health - Europe*, showed that HSV-2 seroprevalence is declining in Europe over the last three decades. Sexual risk behaviour, age, sex, and subregion within Europe explained a large proportion of the variation in seroprevalence in this continent. HSV-2 accounts for approximately two-thirds of genital herpes cases, yet contribution of HSV-2 infection to genital herpes cases was declining. These findings support the need to invest in HSV-2 vaccine development, and expanded sexual health services.

Citation: Alareeki A, Osman AMM, Khandakji MN, Looker KJ, Harfouche M, Abu-Raddad LJ. Epidemiology of herpes simplex virus type 2 in Europe: systematic review, meta-analyses, and meta-regressions. *The Lancet Regional Health – Europe* 2023; 25.

Weblink:

[https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanepi/article/PIIS2666-7762\(22\)00254-X/fulltext#%20](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanepi/article/PIIS2666-7762(22)00254-X/fulltext#%20)

3.5 Status of herpes simplex virus type 2 in Canada, Australia, and New Zealand

Researchers at the Infectious Disease Epidemiology Group of Weill Cornell Medicine-Qatar estimated that herpes simplex virus type 2 (HSV-2) seroprevalence among the general population was 10% in Canada and 15% in Australia and New Zealand, combined. The study by *AlMukdad et al.*, 'Epidemiology of herpes

simplex virus type 2 in Canada, Australia, and New Zealand: systematic review, meta-analyses, and meta-regressions', published in *Sexually Transmitted Diseases*, found no evidence for declines in HSV-2 seroprevalence over time. Sexual risk behaviour, age, and sex were strong predictors of HSV-2 seroprevalence. Two-thirds of genital herpes cases are caused by HSV-2 infection, but HSV-2's contribution appears to be declining yearly in these countries. These findings support the relevance of HSV-2 prophylactic and therapeutic vaccine development, as well as surveillance and further epidemiological research on HSV-2 infection.

Citation: AlMukdad S, Farooqui US, Harfouche M, Aldos L, Abu-Raddad LJ. Epidemiology of herpes simplex virus type 2 in Canada, Australia, and New Zealand: systematic review, meta-analyses, and meta-regressions. *Sex Transm Dis* 2022; 49(6): 403-13.

Weblink:

https://journals.lww.com/stdjournal/Fulltext/2022/06000/Epidemiology_of_Herpes_Simplex_Virus_Typ

3.6 Status of herpes simplex virus type 1 in Australia and New Zealand

Researchers at the Infectious Disease Epidemiology Group of Weill Cornell Medicine-Qatar estimated a herpes simplex virus type 1 (HSV-1) seroprevalence of 85% among healthy adults in Australia. The study by *AlMukdad et al.*, 'Epidemiology of herpes simplex virus type 1 and genital herpes in Australia and New Zealand: systematic review, meta-analyses, and meta-regressions', published in *Epidemiology & Infection*, found that HSV-1 seroprevalence appears to be increasing in Australia. The proportion of HSV-1 detection in genital herpes in Australia and New Zealand was relatively high at 31% and appears also to be increasing year by year. The study concluded that HSV-1 epidemiology in Australia and New Zealand appears to be transitioning toward less oral acquisition in childhood, but more genital acquisition among youth.

Citation: AlMukdad S, Harfouche M, Farooqui US, Aldos L, Abu-Raddad LJ. Epidemiology of herpes simplex virus type 1 and genital herpes in Australia and New Zealand: systematic review, meta-analyses, and meta-regressions. *Epidemiol Infect* 2023; 1-23.

Weblink:

<https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/epidemiology-and-infection/article/epidemiology-of-herpes-simplex-virus-type-1-and-genital-herpes-in-australia-and-new-zealand-systematic-review-metaanalyses-and-metaregressions/BD61C680ACCB4FBA808968879CC3999A>

Francis Ndowa

Europe



Dr. Claudia Heller-Vitouch – Regional Director of IUSTI-Europe

36th IUSTI Europe Congress 26 to the 28 October 2023, Valletta, Malta



REACHING OUT
TO THE HARD TO REACH

The Congress President, Dr Valeska Padovese, and the Chair of the Scientific Committee, Prof Henry De Vries, would like to invite and welcome you to the upcoming 36th IUSTI Europe Congress which will be held at the Grand Hotel Excelsior in Valletta, Malta, from the 26 to the 28 October 2023. We will be able to meet face-to-face after the Covid-19 lockdowns!

The Scientific Program will deal with all aspects of STIs and clinical issues. Furthermore this year it will also aim at discussing health policies to improve the sexual health outcomes of socially disadvantaged group, “reaching out to the hard to reach”: those who are disadvantaged and disenfranchised, the homeless and transient, chronically mentally ill, high school dropouts, criminal offenders, sex workers, gang members, and other street people.

We invite you to stay tuned and register your interest in the IUSTI Europe Congress website now live: iustimalta.eventsair.com/iusti-europe-congress-2023/

IUSTI-Europe STI Courses

It is with great pleasure that we can confirm that the 5th Edition of the Training Course on STI will take place in Bertinoro from 6-9 of June 2023.

A IUSTI Course, organized by IUSTI Europe, will take place at the ISSTD/IUSTI World conference in Chicago, on July 24, 2023.

A IUSTI-Europe advanced course will be held prior to the IUSTI-Europe Congress in Malta on Thursday, October 26, 2023. Reduced

combination tickets for the course together with the congress will be available.

The courses will be organized by Angelika Stary and Marco Cusini, IUSTI-Europe Chairs for Education.

Venereology... mon amour

Venereology, as part of Dermato-venereology or Genitourinary medicine, covers the diagnosis, treatment and prevention of sexually transmissible infections, dermatoses, and other medical conditions of the ano-genital tract, and pharynx. With ever changing challenges, new laboratory investigations and clinical guidelines require frequent updates and adaptations, making venereology a dynamic and exciting speciality.

The recent challenge of the Mpx outbreak, has kept us busy, active and hungry for objective medical information, as well additional resources, to face a Public Health challenge.

Medical education dedicated to STIs is scarce. The skin has become a field of interest for inflammatory chronic diseases and for dermato-cosmetic procedures. Fewer young colleagues are exposed to STI knowledge and research, and very few embrace the path of a career in STIs.

As a leading association in the field of STIs and HIV infection, IUSTI-Europe has started a mission to promote STI dedicated activities by strong collaborations with the main medical associations in the field – International League of Dermatological Societies (ILDS); European Academy of Dermatology and Venereology (EADV); European Dermatological Forum (EDF); and British Association for Sexual Health and HIV (BASHH).



Figure 1: Prof Michael Waugh, Dr Derek Freedman and Prof George-Sorin Tiplica discussing future IUSTI-Europe events (STIs Course EADV, Porto, 2022)

During the 2022 EADV Congress in Milan, a joint session of IUSTI-Europe and EADV STI Task Force took place which addressed cooperation between the two organisations, particularly in relation to the Scientific Programmes. The discussions were further advanced by Prof. Michael Waugh and Dr. Derek Freedman - both founding members of EADV, at the EADV Courses in Porto which included a specific STI Course (Figure 1). IUSTI-Europe's work to further this cooperation is ongoing.

Prof. George-Sorin Tiplica, Chair of IUSTI-Europe Council, Webinar Co-Editor and Coordinator

Dr Derek Freedman, Chair for Scientific policy and conference management, Webinar Co-Editor and Coordinator

IUSTI-Europe Webinars

In the meantime, the IUSTI-Europe webinars continued with the autumn-winter editions. Webinar 12 “MonkeyPox – where to now?” was held in October 2022 and included different aspects of the Mpox outbreak – from the ECDC figures presented by Dr Benjamin Bluemel to the clinical aspects presented by Dr Andrew Winter, and to the practical aspects observed in Amsterdam, presented by Prof Henry de Vries.

Webinars 13 and 14 were organised in November and December 2022, together with BASHH, and were dedicated to Sexual Violence (SV). Dr Deborah Wardle, Chair of the SV Special Interest Group (SIG), coordinated a dedicated group of lecturers; Dr. Rachel Caswell, Dr. Caroline Bruce, Dr. Andrea Holmes, Dr. Charlotte Cohen, Dr. Nikki Kelly, Dr. Gene Feder and Dr. Medina Johnson. Their exquisite presentations were perfectly matched by the real story of Zoe Dronfield, and by the direct experience of Dr. Valeska Padovese who works extensively with migrants.

In January 2023, Webinar 15, the theme was HIV in an STI Clinic. The presentations from Prof. Fiona Lyons, Dr Aisling Loy, Prof Daniel Richardson and A/Prof Valeriu Gheorghita drew a lot of attention from around the world – with a participation of more than 250 persons from 50 countries. The February 2023 Webinar 16 brought together urologists, dermato-venereologists and GUM specialists for the presentations of Dr Paddy Horner, Dr Megan Crofts, Prof Sohier Elneil and Prof Daniel Engeler, dedicated to idiopathic urethritis, pelvic pain and prostatitis. Their presentations shone a spotlight on these difficult clinical problems and explored the current thinking on the underlying pathophysiology.

All the IUSTI Europe Webinars are freely available to view on the IUSTI-E Website:

<https://www.iusti-europe.eu/web/>

The Webinar Co-Editors wish to thank our contributors, all of whom agreed to participate without charge and frequently at short notice. Our appreciation for their enthusiasm, their generosity and their expertise cannot be overstated.

The Webinars will continue on the last Wednesdays of March, April, and May, addressing topics relevant to the practice of our speciality, before taking a summer break.

IUSTI – Europe Statement on HIV Pre-exposure Prophylaxis Provision – Key Steps for Clinicians

We made the following statement available on our IUSTI-Europe webpage in different European languages (www.iusti-europe.eu).

Europe and near Asia are facing different problems

with controlling the HIV epidemic. In making this statement IUSTI- Europe wishes to identify the important steps governments, agencies, healthcare providers and individuals can take to promote the availability, accessibility and take up of Pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) against HIV . Although these have been clearly articulated in the WHO PrEP Guidance² and the review of PrEP provision that the ECDC¹ has recently issued we consider it important that clinicians recognise the urgency with which this needs to be undertaken.

HIV PrEP is a key component in the prevention of HIV acquisition. In combination with other strategies, it has become an important tool for combating new HIV infections. The evidence for its clear effectiveness across most at risk groups for HIV is incontrovertible and both Governments and clinicians need to take advantage of its availability. PrEP is now licensed across most of Europe and Near Asia but there are wide disparities between countries and regions in terms of its availability and uptake and there often remain structural barriers to its widescale usage.

1. We strongly recommend that governments in countries with no HIV PrEP availability and a rising epidemic to take immediate action to provide access to PrEP.
2. Health care providers and governments need to be cogniscent of the personal financial barriers that PrEP (or its associated monitoring) may pose to some individuals. Arrangements should be in place to ensure that affordable schemes are available, and consideration be given to free and easy access to PrEP for most at risk populations who are in greatest need.
3. Clinicians working in areas where they may come across most at risk populations for HIV acquisition should become familiar with the use of PrEP, and be comfortable in HIV testing and PrEP prescribing. This is particularly important for those working in STI management.
4. Clinicians should continue to provide care and monitoring to those individuals that choose to source PrEP through community organisations and alternative providers; this may be for reasons of cost and stigma. If PrEP availability through their own services is restricted, clinicians should signpost patients to alternative providers including third sector organisations.
5. Ideally, PrEP provision should be linked to a regular sexually transmitted infections (STI) screening program. If this is unavailable, then schemes to scale up STI screening should be undertaken. In their absence, clinicians should not delay the provision of PrEP.
6. In countries with an increasing demand for PrEP, clinicians need to consider showing flexibility around monitoring procedures without compromising the quality and minimal standards of care and monitoring. The prerequisite for PrEP monitoring is regular HIV

testing, which should be included in each visit. On the other hand, where STI monitoring is not available consideration should be given as to whether this in itself may pose a rate-limiting barrier for PREP roll out – STI monitoring should be recommended but not be insisted upon for the continuation of PREP.

IUSTI-Europe September 2022

References

- 1 Pre-exposure prophylaxis for HIV prevention in Europe and Central Asia Monitoring implementation of the Dublin Declaration on Partnership to fight HIV/AIDS in Europe and Central Asia – 2020/2021 progress report. https://www.ecdc.europa.eu/sites/default/files/documents/DD_P_rEP_brief_May%202022-revised-final.pdf
- 2 Differentiated and simplified pre-exposure prophylaxis for HIV prevention Update to WHO implementation guidance. Technical Brief. 2022. <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240053694>

Claudia Heller-Vitouch

Asia Pacific



Dr Pingyu Zhou – Regional Director of IUSTI-Asia-Pacific

Using A Standardized Patient Approach to Study Stigma Against LGBT Community in Healthcare Settings in Guangzhou, China

Healthcare stigma interferes with meaningful engagement of people at risk of or living with HIV. This is particularly true for gay, bisexual, and other men who have sex with men (MSM) who have low rates of engagement across the entire care continuum, despite having high HIV incidence. Though a public health priority, efforts to reduce healthcare stigma are hindered by measurement challenges. These include low provider willingness to self-report discriminatory behaviours or provider tendencies to alter behaviours under observation. Novel approaches are needed to address healthcare stigma among health professionals.

Dr. Kumi Smith (University of Minnesota), Dr. Sean Sylvia (University of North Carolina), and Dr. Ligang Yang (Dermatology Hospital of the Southern Medical University [SMU]) have led a multinational team to develop a standardized patient (SP) approach for measuring enacted healthcare. Working closely with local LGBT advocacy groups and regional health systems, the

team hired and trained actors from the local MSM community to present standardized cases to consenting providers. All SPs presented with classical complaints of primary syphilis, as its clinical presentation allowed for healthy actors to present a realistic case. Observations made by SPs were recorded following each visit using a detailed checklist informed by national STD clinical guidelines and expertise of SMU physicians. By randomly varying the HIV status and sexual orientation of the presented cases, the team was able to measure differences in care quality received across presented scenarios. Comparisons with the reference case (an HIV negative straight male), the team was able to objectively quantify stigma enacted against people reporting same sex behaviours, HIV infection, or both.



The team used findings from the SP approach to develop a training package for providers to improve their patient-centred care practices for patients with same sex behaviours or who are living with HIV. Design of the training was informed by feedback from separate advisory boards of providers and of MSM, allowing the team to harness insights of those closest to the problem. The intervention featured didactic sessions, simulation-and-feedback sessions with trained SPs, and group discussion. A second round of SP visits was then conducted to evaluate

Fifty-five providers from 17 clinics were recruited in this study, among whom a total of 123 unannounced SP visits were completed in the baseline round. No adverse events were reported, and baseline data indicated that overall, providers demonstrated strong diagnostic skills (>80% offered of syphilis testing). However, appropriate diagnostic testing was less likely when SPs presented as HIV positive irrespective of sexual orientation. In addition, adherence to other clinical guidelines (e.g. physical exams, sexual history taking) was lower in all scenarios relative to the referent case of a HIV negative straight cases.



A follow up round of unannounced clinic visits was completed in September of 2022 to assess the preliminary efficacy of the provider training on enacted stigma. Analysis of final results are currently underway. The team hopes lessons from this pilot study can inform a future fully powered trial which can inform future practice of providers in Guangzhou and beyond. As a result, they believe this will improve the healthcare quality for LGBT individual in those cities.

Kumi Smith and Danyang Luo

Pingyu Zhou

Latin America

The next IUSTI Brazilian Congress will take place in Florianópolis from October 4th to 7th, 2023. The scientific content is being prepared by the committees responsible for the thematic areas, bringing to the public updates in the areas of health care, prevention, diagnosis, research, policies and their interactions in health of the Brazilian and Latin America population. The conference will delivered in Portuguese but with one room offering English translation.



<https://www.dstuids2023.com.br/home.asp>

North America



Dr Brad Stoner – Regional Director of IUSTI-North America

From the American STD Association (ASTDA)



- ASTDA received a record number of applications for its Summer Fellowship Program. The program provides up to \$9000 to the applicants and their mentors to conduct STI-related research. The new class of fellows will be announced in April.
- ASTDA will fund three small project assistance grants submitted during the January cycle. As a reminder, there are two annual cycles: January and July.
- ASTDA has committed \$50,000 for scholarships to ISSTD Chicago. The ISSTD Scholarship Committee will be making decisions about funding in March/April.
- There is currently a call for nominations for the ASTDA Awards. This year, there may be three awards presented at the ISSTD conference in Chicago in July: i)The ASTDA Distinguished Career Award ii)The ASTDA Achievement Award iii)The ASTDA Young Investigator Award. Application deadline is March 10 and instructions may be found on the ASTDA website.

From the International Society for STD Research (ISSTD)



- Join us in July in Chicago for the 25th biennial ISSTD Meeting in conjunction with the IUSTI World Congress celebrating IUSTI's Centenary! www.stihiv2023.org
- Plan to stay through the closing session to see the results of the meeting-long design-a-thon which will attempt to identify novel actions that can be taken to reduce STI locally and globally
- Bids to host the 2027 ISSTD are now being accepted. Please work with an ISSTD Board member and submit a bid to host the meeting in your area. See www.isstdr.org for more details
- Nominations to be a member of the ISSTD Board are also open. Nominate yourself, or a colleague, via www.isstdr.org

From the CDC Division of STD Prevention (DSTDP)



- [STI Awareness Week](#) is April 9-15. This year, three communication themes are available – Prepare Before You're There, GYT: Get Yourself Tested, and Talk. Test. Treat. A variety of ready-made and customizable campaign materials and messages that make promoting STI Awareness Week easy, including an [interactive quiz](#) to help gauge STI risk, are now available. CDC also expects to release updated surveillance data during the observance, so please stay tuned to [the website](#) for updates.
- CDC released a new 5-year notice of funding opportunity, [PS-23-0007: Support Technical Assistance & Opportunities to Program, Policy, & Communications to Prevent STDs \(STOP STDs\)](#), for \$5.8 million to fund organizations with national reach and experience working with/or representing state, local, and/or territorial STD/HIV public health programs to support strategic opportunities to provide technical assistance to STD/HIV public health programs. Applications will be accepted until April 17, 2023.
- CDC has [awarded funding](#) to three organizations to form the STI Impact Research Consortium. The University of Alabama Birmingham, the University of Washington, and Vysnova Partners will comprise the consortium, which will

undertake clinical trials and implementation science research to reverse persistent, troubling trends in reported cases of sexually transmitted infections (STIs).

- CDC colleagues in the Division of STD Prevention continue to assist health departments in diagnosing and responding to multiple cases of mpox in the United States. Most notably, the Division is supporting the [Public Health Crisis Response Cooperative Agreement](#) to support state and local public health mpox response efforts. In January 2023, CDC awarded an additional \$41 million dollars to states and territories to strengthen capacity for jurisdictions to integrate mpox testing, education, prevention, and vaccination into existing sexually transmitted infection and HIV programs and work with communities most impacted by mpox. This expanded on a first round of awards made in late-2022.
- CDC revamped the CDC.gov [STD webpages](#) with portals for healthcare providers and public health professionals to direct them to priority content and resources.
- CDC continues to important STI prevention work at the state and local level via [success stories](#) and [brief bulletins](#). In recent months, CDC released a new [STI success story](#) on how resources available through the CDC and Food and Drug Administration (FDA) Antimicrobial Resistance Isolate Bank help drive innovative research to halt gonorrhea's growing resistance to drug treatment, in addition to brief bulletins about successful initiatives by [the Atlanta Harm Reduction Coalition](#) and [North Dakota Health and Human Services](#).
- With the release of data on doxycycline post-exposure prophylaxis (doxy-PEP) to prevent STIs, CDC [continues to explore and better understand](#) the role doxy as STI PEP may play in reducing infections.

Stay up-to-date on the latest news from DSTDP by visiting the Division's [What's New page](#).

From IUSTI-Canada



- IUSTI-Canada held its Annual General Meeting (AGM) on January 4, 2023. Members of the IUSTI-Canada Executive are:

President: Marc Steben

Immediate Past President: Jo-Anne Dillon

Vice-President: Caroline Cameron

Treasurer: Nitika Pant Pai

Secretary: Bradley Stoner

Member-at-large: Irene Martin

- IUSTI-Canada is planning to provide partial support to two Canadian early-career investigators for attendance at the 2023 STI & HIV World Congress.

- The IUSTI Canada Webinar Series continues to offer high-quality presentations by experts in the field.

- On November 16, 2022, IUSTI-Canada hosted a webinar entitled "Syphilis Vaccine Development." Speakers included Dr. Caroline Cameron and Dr. Lorenzo Giacani. The webinar was hosted by IUSTI-Canada President Dr. Marc Steben.

- On December 1, 2022 (World AIDS Day), IUSTI-Canada hosted a webinar entitled "AIDS 2022: Pearls to Optimize our Canadian AIDS Strategies!" with Dr. Jean-Pierre Routy. The webinar was hosted by Dr. Bradley Stoner (IUSTI-Canada Secretary and IUSTI-North America Regional Director). A recording of the webinar is available on the [IUSTI-Canada website](https://www.iusti.org).

- On February 1, 2023, IUSTI-Canada hosted a webinar entitled "What if the Next Pandemic Was a New STBBI! Would We Be Ready?" with Dre. Céclie Tremblay. The webinar was hosted by IUSTI-Canada President Dr. Marc Steben. A recording of the webinar is available on the [IUSTI-Canada website](https://www.iusti.org).

- Upcoming webinars will include
 - March 15, 2023: "Advancing HIV and STI Prevention: Are Strengths-Based and Sexual Pleasure Focused Approaches to Sexual Health Missing Pieces?" with Dr. Carmen Logie.
 - April 5, 2023: "HIV Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP) is Effective but Underused: A

Call to Action" with Dr. Darrell Tan.

- TBD: "Microbiome and Protection against STIs"
- TBD: "Genital Herpes: How Best to Prevent Transmission?"

Additional information will be forthcoming on the IUSTI-Canada website.



- Organization planning is well underway for the 2025 ISSTD IUSTI Congress, to be held in Montreal, Quebec on July 24-27, 2025. Please mark your calendars for this exciting conference in a world-class city.

From the American Sexual Health Association (ASHA)



- ASHA is an organizing partner with the STI & HIV 2023 World Congress being held July 24-27 in Chicago, IL.
- ASHA took part in public health observations including World AIDS Day (December), Cervical Health Awareness Month (January), and National Condom Month (February).
- ASHA released additional episodes of our Sex+Health podcast including the two episodes in women's health series on trichomoniasis that focused on current diagnostic options and trich as a health equity issue. We also released an episode on HPV-associated head and neck cancers.
- ASHA continued exploring new avenues for our Yes Means Test campaign, aimed at promoting recommended STI screening to young women, including a possible future partnership with the HBO series The Sex Life of College Girls and collaboration with content creators on TikTok.
- ASHA released a video Cervical Cancer Screening - An Interactive Journey that

allows users to choose different screening options and go through each, step by step.

- ASHA published an online quiz What do you know about HPV and men?

From the National Coalition of STD Directors (NCSD)



**National Coalition
of STD Directors**

- Registration is open for [STD Engage 2023: Coming Back Stronger](#) in New Orleans, Louisiana, on May 15-19. Attendees will hear from national public health leaders, researchers, clinicians, and their own peers working all across the country during the return of this in-person event. Sponsorship and tabling opportunities are also available.

In January, NCSD welcomed three new members to the Board of Directors: Leslie Fowler, Communicable Disease Unit Prevention Program Manager, Wyoming Department of Health; Bernard Gilliard, Program Manager, (State) Partner Service & Disease Intervention Activities, South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control; and Karen "Ren" Nicosia, STI and Viral Hepatitis Prevention Program Manager, Ohio Department of

Health. Audrie MacDuff King, Director of Policy, STI Programs, Bureau of Hepatitis, HIV, and STI, New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, started her tenure as Board Chair.

Brad Stoner

Conference Update

IUSTI Events:

STI & HIV World Congress

Dates: July 24-27, 2023

Chicago, USA

Website: <https://stihiv2023.org/>

IUSTI Brazilian Congress

Dates: October 4-7, 2023

Florianópolis, Brazil

Website:

<https://www.dstajds2023.com.br/home.asp>

STI Global Update is published by the International Union against Sexually Transmitted Infections. Its aims are to provide an international perspective on the management and control of sexually acquired infections.

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Further information on the activities of IUSTI available at www.iusti.org



36th IUSTI EUROPE CONGRESS

Grand Hotel Excelsior, Valletta - Malta
26-28 October 2023

Registrations Now Open

Sign up for updates