



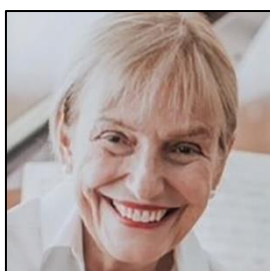
STI Global Update

Newsletter of the International Union against Sexually Transmitted Infections

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President's Letter



Dr Jo-Anne Dillon - President of IUSTI

Dear IUSTI Community,

Sincere greetings to each of you.

In our previous Newsletter, I touched on the essential role that volunteers play in making IUSTI the vibrant organization that it is today. I am so pleased to share a shining example of the volunteer spirit in action at our recent IUSTI2024 (<https://www.iusti2024sydney.org/>) meeting which was held under early springtime warmth in beautiful Sydney, Australia, from September 17-20, 2024. What a great experience it was!

I had the privilege of working alongside the incredible Prof. Eric Chow who served as President of the meeting (I delighted to serve as was co-President!). Eric's steady leadership and remarkable collaboration with the Australasian Society for HIV, Viral Hepatitis and Sexual Health Medicine (ASHM) were instrumental in ensuring the smooth and well executed meeting that we all enjoyed. His steady and collected approach in the monthly meetings with the various committee Chairs helped set the agenda, coordinate various stakeholders, and tackle any glitches along the

way. It is no exaggeration to say that Eric reminded a steady rock throughout our journey!



IUSTI Executive Committee

I would also like to thank other members of the Organizing Committee that each had their own responsibilities as Committee Chairs: Catriona Bradshaw and Jonathan Ross, representing IUSTI were Co-Chairs of the Scientific Committee. The IUSTI2024 meeting also incorporated the Australasian Sexual and Reproductive Health Alliance (ASRHA) Conference and Jennifer Power and Kate Seib were Scientific Co-Chairs representing ASRHA. The tracks of the Scientific Committee were chaired by Matt Golden (Clinical Management), Rebecca Guy (Behavioural and Prevention Sciences), Jane Hocking (Epidemiology and Surveillance), Gerald Murphy and Magnus Unemo (Basic and Laboratory Science) and Kath Albury (Social Research and Community Policy). Thanks also to the following Chairs - Tanya Applegate -Fundraising; Remco Peters – Media; Raynor Kay Jin Tan and Teralynn Ludwick -Early Career Researcher Committee; Lenka Vodstrcil and Edmond Choi -Scholarship Committee. I would like to thank all the volunteer members of the various committee that contributed to the meeting. These various committee had 63 members in total from 18 countries – an amazing international contribution.



Members of the IUSTI 2024 Organizing Committee (left to right). R Tan, T Applegate, K Seib, J Power, R Peters, M Mason (ASHM), J Dillon, S Williamson (ASHM), E Chow, K Bradshaw, J Ross, L Vodstrcil, E Choi, T Ludwick



IUSTI President Jo-Anne Dillon presenting Silver Medals to Eric Chow and Pingyu Zhou

Here are some interesting statistics about the IUSTI2024 meeting. We had a total of 825 delegates including 194 (24%) early career researchers. The Scientific Program included 3 plenaries, 16 invited speaker sessions, 15 sponsored sessions, 11 oral abstract session, 252 posters and 5 poster tours. Speakers for the various poster tours were selected. Thirty-eight scholarships were awarded including 9 awarded to persons from low- and middle-income countries and 8 awarded to Torres Strait Islanders. The Early Career Researchers self-identified and carried a cute symbol indicating their status. The ECR Committee prepared preconference webinars on preparing a conference presentation, a detective board, a session on how to successfully publish manuscripts and had an ECR networking corner. IUSTI members spoke in a The World Health Organization (WHO) preconference symposium on *Mobilizing Action to Address Sexually Transmitted Infections*, the third time that IUSTI has participated in these symposia. The WHO also presented additional sessions on topics such as antimicrobial resistance in gonorrhoea. IUSTI maintains official relations with WHO and deeply values our continued collaborations.

A IUSTI prestigious lecture is presented as a plenary lecture at IUSTI conferences. The IUSTI Prestigious Lecture at IUSTI 2024 was delivered by Prof Michael Marks who opened the conference with a talk on aspects of the Global syphilis epidemic. He is the 8th recipient of this award which was inaugurated in 2016.

Two IUSTI silver medals were awarded. Silver medals are awarded to local hosts of IUSTI Meetings. Dr Pingyu Zhou received a silver medal for her excellent work in organizing the 2019 IUSTI- Asia Pacific Congress in Shanghai, China. Prof Eric Chow received a silver medal for organizing the IUSTI2024 World Congress in Sydney, Australia.

To recognize the best presentations at the IUSTI2024, eight IUSTI awards were given for the best oral and poster presentations, including three awards (one winner and two highly commended) for the IUSTI Best Oral Presentation. The winner was Caroline Thing (Gold Coast Sexual Health Service, Australia) who spoke on “*An open-label randomised controlled trial evaluating the efficacy of a meningococcal serogroup B (4CMenB) vaccine on Neisseria gonorrhoeae infection in gay and bisexual men: the MenGO study*”. Lotte Werner (Public Health Service of Amsterdam, NL) and Denton Callander (Kirby Institute, UNSW, Australia) were highly commended for their oral presentations. The IUSTI Best Poster Presentation Awards were awarded in the following categories: Basic and Laboratory Science (Buhari Teker, Public Service of Amsterdam, NL); Clinical Management (Stephanie Mclaughlin, University of Washington, USA); Prevention (Edmond Choi, University of Hong Kong); Epidemiology and Surveillance (Zoie Alexiou, National Institute for Public Health and the Environment, NL); and Community Engagement and Policy (Sharyn Burns, Curtin University, Australia). A huge congratulations to these awardees as well as a big thank you to the selected volunteers who judged the oral sessions and posters.

All accepted abstracts for oral or poster presentation at the IUSTI Congress are eligible for an award. No additional application is required. Don't forget to submit your abstracts for the upcoming STI and HIV 2025 World Congress in Montreal (July 26-30, 2025). Registration for this Congress is now open as is abstract submissions (<https://stihiv2025.org/stihiv2025.org>).

In conclusion, thank you to all who volunteered to make the IUSTI2024 meeting in Sydney a great success. See you in Montreal!

Jo-Anne Dillon, IUSTI-World President

News

Call for Applications for World Health Organisation Sexually Transmitted Infections Lead (ref P5 – 2407691)

Full details of the job opportunity are available on the WHO/PAHO Career Section.

[Career Section.](#)

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.



Missed opportunities for integrating STI services into HIV PrEP guidance. A global review from the WHO analysed 113 national PrEP guidance documents and found that only 77% included STI-related recommendations. High-income countries usually, although not universally, recommended hepatitis B, syphilis, and gonorrhoea/chlamydia testing, while low- and middle-income countries had substantially lower rates. Quarterly STI testing was commonly recommended. Few documents specified testing types or addressed partner services. The study highlights opportunities to promote a more effective response to HIV and STIs. <https://sti.bmj.com/content/100/6/343>

Primum non-nocere – First, do not harm. This editorial offers a perspective on screening for *Neisseria gonorrhoeae* and *Chlamydia trachomatis* in asymptomatic MSM taking HIV PrEP. Thibaut Vanbaelen and Chris Kenyon propose that it is now time to stop. They argue that we have evidence from RCTs and other types of studies that screening has little or no benefit and rather results in harm. Do you agree? <https://sti.bmj.com/content/100/6/337>

Doxycycline postexposure prophylaxis may delay seroconversion in incident syphilis. In this correspondence article, researchers in Milan report a case series of MSM using DoxyPEP who were diagnosed with syphilis while taking prophylaxis. In three cases of primary syphilis, seroconversion using treponemal antibody testing, RPR and TPHA was delayed by ≥ 2 weeks after ulcer onset. Larger studies are needed to define the potential impact of DoxyPEP on syphilis diagnostic algorithms.

<https://sti.bmj.com/content/100/6/397>

Do not miss our recent **topical issue on viral hepatitis**, addressing emerging aspects of prevention and care.

<https://sti.bmj.com/content/100/5>

STI Podcast: Novel antimicrobial approaches to Trichomoniasis. Tune in to our latest podcast, to hear Dr Christina Muzny, Professor in Infectious Diseases at University of Alabama, Birmingham, USA, discuss published clinical trial data on novel treatment against trichomoniasis. Find it here: <https://stibmj.podbean.com/>

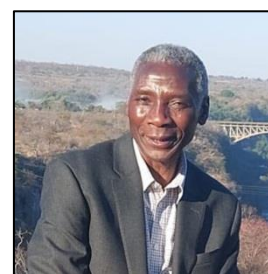
Find more at <https://sti.bmj.com/>

Enjoy!

Anna Maria Geretti, Editor in Chief

Regional Reports

Africa MENA



Dr Francis Ndowa – Regional Director of IUSTI-Africa MENA

1. **The IUSTI Africa-MENA Region membership-update and challenge**

It has been difficult to obtain an accurate registry of fully paid-up IUSTI members of the IUSTI Africa-MENA Region. The Memberships Secretariat's software seems to allocate regional designations based on the country in which the respective credit cards are issued. Thus, there are members who reside in the Africa-MENA Region and who selected Africa-MENA as their region of membership, but

appear as members in other regions, such as Europe or Asia-Pacific.

The IUSTI Africa-MENA Region has had 2 members vacate the Regional Committee because of relocation to other regions and, at the same time, this has created a vacancy on representation on the IUSTI Executive Committee.

Efforts are under way to fill the positions on the Regional Committee as well as to identify and submit names for consideration for the vacant position on the EXCO.

2. Publication of a Chapter on STIs & HIV from members of the IUSTI Africa-MENA Region

A chapter on, "Sexually Transmitted Infections: Old foe, New Opportunities for Control" has been approved for publication in the Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Global Public Health.

- This was led by Francis Ndowa with regional colleagues, Laith Abu-Raddad and Remco Peters, in partnership with Suzanne Garland (Australia) who worked on the section of HPV.
- The publication gives an up-to-date, comprehensive summary of: Epidemiology, Pathogenesis, Prevention, Clinical features, Diagnosis & Treatment of *C. trachomatis*, *N. gonorrhoeae*, Syphilis, *T. vaginalis*, HIV, HSV, HPV and *M. genitalium*

As soon as it is published, the team will advise accordingly for people to access it. The standard format for citing the article will be as follows.

Ndowa, Francis; Garland, Suzanne; Peters, Remco P.H.; Abu-Raddad, Laith J. "Sexually Transmitted Infections: Old foe, New Opportunities for Control." In *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Global Public Health*. Ed. New York: Oxford University Press.

3. Highlights of activities and research from the Region

i. Assessment of *Chlamydia trachomatis*, *Neisseria gonorrhoeae* and *Trichomonas vaginalis* prevalence using a molecular Point of Care: Findings from a respondent driven sampling study among MSM in Morocco

Between 2020 and 2024, the National Aids Program of Morocco, in the Ministry of Health, and the National Institute of Hygiene (hosting the reference laboratories for HIV and STIs) conducted a number of studies, including a study to assess the prevalence of HIV, Syphilis, *Neisseria gonorrhoeae*, *Trichomonas vaginalis*, *Chlamydia trachomatis* and the human papillomavirus (HPV) among different population groups:

- Women with vaginal discharge and lower abdominal pain,
- Female sex workers, with vaginal discharge and lower abdominal pain,
- Males with urethral discharge, and

- Men who have sex with men (MSM) with urethral discharge.

The study also aimed to update the status of antimicrobial resistance in *N. gonorrhoeae* and assess the relevance of the syndromic approach for managing STIs in Morocco. Preliminary results confirm a stable prevalence of the studied pathogens among the key population groups.

Among MSM, the study observed that the subjects were young and homosexual. The prevalence of *C. trachomatis* was 11.3% in Agadir and 12.5% in Fes. The prevalence of *N. gonorrhoeae* was 13.3% in Agadir and 5.5% in Fes. The prevalence of *T. vaginalis* was 0.4% in Agadir and 0.2% in Fes. Co-infection with *C. trachomatis* and *N. gonorrhoeae* was found in 4.5% of cases in Agadir and in 2.7% in Fes.

Citation: Aithaj-Mhand R, Bellaji B, Jennane S, Remz C, Charof R, Khoudri I, Kettani A, El Rhilani H, Alami K, Ghargui L, Youbi M, Abdelmoumen H, Hançali A, Oumzil H. Assessment of *Chlamydia trachomatis*, *Neisseria gonorrhoeae* and *Trichomonas vaginalis* prevalence using a molecular Point of Care: Findings from a respondent driven sampling study among MSM. *Infez Med*. 2023 Jun 1;31(2):234-242. doi: 10.53854/liim-3102-12. PMID: 37283639; PMCID: PMC10241399.

ii. Proposal of pharmacophore model for HIV reverse transcriptase inhibitors: Combined mutational effect analysis, molecular dynamics, molecular docking and pharmacophore modeling study.

A study was conducted, employing computer-aided drug design methodologies, aiming to propose novel analogs of Efavirenz (EFV) as potential direct inhibitors of HIV reverse transcriptase. Three key approaches were applied: a mutational profile study, molecular dynamics simulations, and pharmacophore development. The impact of mutations on the stability, flexibility, function, and affinity of target proteins, especially those associated with Nucleotide Reverse Transcriptase Inhibitors (NRTI), was assessed. The study underscored the significance of EFV analogs as potential inhibitors of HIV reverse transcriptase, highlighting the impact of mutations on drug efficacy.

Citation: Annan A, Raiss N, Lemrabet S, Elomari N, Elmir EH, Filali-Maltouf A, Medraoui L, Oumzil H. Proposal of pharmacophore model for HIV reverse transcriptase inhibitors: Combined mutational effect analysis, molecular dynamics, molecular docking and pharmacophore modeling study. *Int J Immunopathol Pharmacol*. 2024 Jan-Dec; 38:3946320241231465. doi: 10.1177/03946320241231465. PMID: 38296818; PMCID: PMC10832406.

iii. The APOBEC3G gene rs2294367(C>G) variant is associated with HIV-1 infection in Moroccan subjects

The APOBEC3G gene is one of the most important host factors that has been found previously

associated with HIV infection and AIDS progression. A study was conducted to investigate the association of three single nucleotide polymorphisms (SNPs) in the APOBEC3G gene (rs8177832, rs35228531 and rs2294367) with disease outcomes in Moroccans living with HIV-1 infection. The study demonstrated significant associations between the studied polymorphisms in APOBEC3G with plasma viral load variations during treatment, thus, confirming that genetic variations in the APOBEC3G gene might modulate the susceptibility to HIV-1 infection and the response to antiviral drugs in Moroccan individuals.

Citation: Belbacha, Imane & Azzouzi, Meryem & Bensghir, Rajae & Marhoum, Kamal & Hajjout, Khadija & Elharti, El & Sadki, Khalid & Oumzil, Hicham. (2024). The APOBEC3G gene rs2294367(C>G) variant is associated with HIV-1 infection in Moroccan subjects. *Acta Tropica*. 249. 107045. 10.1016/j.actatropica.2023.107045.

iv. **Revolutionizing antiretroviral therapy for human immunodeficiency virus/AIDS: A computational approach using molecular docking, virtual screening, and 3D pharmacophore building to address therapeutic failure and propose highly effective candidates**

A study was carried out aiming to employ advanced molecular modelling techniques to identify potential alternatives to current antiretroviral agents. The study focused on three essential classes of antiretroviral drugs: nucleoside reverse transcriptase inhibitors (NRTIs), non-nucleoside reverse transcriptase inhibitors (NNRTIs), and protease inhibitors (PIs). Computational analyses were performed on a database of 3,343,652 chemical molecules to evaluate their binding affinities, pharmacokinetic properties, and interactions with viral reverse transcriptase and protease enzymes. Molecular docking, virtual screening, and 3D pharmacophore modelling were utilized to identify promising candidates. The combination of molecular docking, virtual screening, and 3D pharmacophore modelling yielded lead compounds that hold potential for addressing HIV therapeutic failures.

Citation: Annan A, Raiss N, Elmir EH, Filali-Maltouf A, Medraoui L, Oumzil H. Revolutionizing antiretroviral therapy for human immunodeficiency virus/AIDS: A computational approach using molecular docking, virtual screening, and 3D pharmacophore building to address therapeutic failure and propose highly effective candidates. *Int J Immunopathol Pharmacol*. 2023 Jan-Dec;37:3946320231207514. doi: 10.1177/03946320231207514. PMID: 37850462; PMCID: PMC10585989.

v. **Status of syphilis infection in the Middle East and North Africa**

A collaborative study by the American University of Beirut and the Infectious Disease Epidemiology Group at Weill Cornell Medicine-Qatar found that the prevalence of current syphilis infection in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) is

approximately 0.5% among the general population, a level similar to global figures. However, the study identified a decreasing trend over the past few decades, with a 3% relative annual decline among general populations and a more pronounced 8% decline among key populations, including men who have sex with men, transgender people, and female sex workers. Conducted by *El-Jamal et al.* and titled "*Syphilis Infection Prevalence in the Middle East and North Africa: A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis*," the study was published in *The Lancet's eClinicalMedicine* and represents the first comprehensive examination of syphilis infection epidemiology in the MENA region. The findings underscore a significant, yet under-recognized, disease burden with important implications for reproductive health and social well-being. Despite the observed decline in syphilis prevalence, current efforts remain insufficient to meet global targets.

Citation: El-Jamal M, Annan B, Al Tawil A, et al. Syphilis infection prevalence in the Middle East and North Africa: a systematic review and meta-analysis. *eClinicalMedicine* 2024; 102746.

Weblink:

[https://www.thelancet.com/journals/eclinm/article/PIIS2589-5370\(24\)00325-0/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/eclinm/article/PIIS2589-5370(24)00325-0/fulltext)

vi. **Status of *Trichomonas vaginalis* infection in the Middle East and North Africa**

Researchers at the Infectious Disease Epidemiology Group at Weill Cornell Medicine-Qatar identified a considerable prevalence of *Trichomonas vaginalis* (TV) infection in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region, estimated at around 5% among the general population of women. This prevalence is comparable to the global estimate for women, which is also approximately 5%. The study also found a 1% relative annual decline in TV prevalence, a rate significantly below the level required to meet the World Health Organization's target for this infection. Conducted by *Harfouche et al.* and titled "*Epidemiology of Trichomonas Vaginalis Infection in the Middle East and North Africa: Systematic Review, Meta-Analyses, and Meta-Regression*," the study was published in *The Lancet's eBioMedicine*. The findings highlight that the unexpectedly high prevalence of this curable infection may be partly due to limited access to and underutilization of sexually transmitted infection screening and treatment services.

Citation: Harfouche M, Gherbi WS, Alareeki A, et al. Epidemiology of *Trichomonas vaginalis* infection in the Middle East and North Africa: systematic review, meta-analyses, and meta-regressions. *EBioMedicine*. 2024 Aug;106:105250. doi: 10.1016/j.ebiom.2024.105250.

Weblink:

[https://www.thelancet.com/journals/ebiom/article/PIIS2352-3964\(24\)00286-X/fulltext#:~:text=The%20pooled%20mean%20TV%20prevalence,Ci%3A%201.9%E2%80%9315.5%25\)%20among](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/ebiom/article/PIIS2352-3964(24)00286-X/fulltext#:~:text=The%20pooled%20mean%20TV%20prevalence,Ci%3A%201.9%E2%80%9315.5%25)%20among)

vii. **Status of *Neisseria gonorrhoeae* infection in Europe**

Researchers at the Infectious Disease Epidemiology Group at Weill Cornell Medicine-Qatar found that the epidemiology of *Neisseria gonorrhoeae* (NG) in Europe over the last few decades presents two distinct and contrasting patterns.

The first involves NG transmission in heterosexual sexual networks, where the prevalence of current urogenital infection is 1% among the general population, comparable to global levels, and follows a strong hierarchy, with higher rates observed in populations at greater risk, such as female sex workers. Additionally, the prevalence of urogenital infection is declining at a relative rate of 3% per year.

The second pattern pertains to NG transmission within sexual networks of men who have sex with men (MSM), male sex workers (MSWs), and transgender people. In these populations, NG prevalence is estimated at 6% for current anorectal infection and 4% for current oropharyngeal infection, substantially higher than the 1% prevalence of current urogenital infection. Moreover, the prevalence of anorectal and oropharyngeal infections is increasing at a rate of 2% per year. The study by Chidiac *et al.*, titled "*Epidemiology of Gonorrhea: Systematic Review, Meta-Analyses, and Meta-Regressions, World Health Organization European Region, 1949 to 2021*," was published in *Eurosurveillance* and provides a comprehensive analysis of NG epidemiology in this region. The findings suggest that the increased transmission may facilitate the emergence of drug-resistant strains.

Citation: Chidiac O, AlMukdad S, Harfouche M, Harding-Esch E, Abu-Raddad LJ. Epidemiology of gonorrhoea: systematic review, meta-analyses, and meta-regressions, World Health Organization European Region, 1949 to 2021. *Euro Surveill.* 2024 Feb;29(9):2300226. doi: 10.2807/15607917.ES.2024.29.9.2300226. Weblink: <https://www.eurosurveillance.org/content/10.2807/1560-7917.ES.2024.29.9.2300226>

viii. **Status of herpes simplex virus type 1 infection in the United States**

Researchers at the Infectious Disease Epidemiology Group at Weill Cornell Medicine-Qatar conducted a meta-analysis estimating the seroprevalence of herpes simplex virus type 1 (HSV-1) in the United States at 64% among general-population adults, a level comparable to other Western countries, with an annual relative decrease of 1%. The study also estimated that the proportion of HSV-1 detection in genital herpes cases is 15%, but this proportion is increasing by 2% annually. The study by Ageeb *et al.*, titled "*Epidemiology of Herpes Simplex Virus Type 1 in the United States: Systematic Review, Meta-*

Analyses, and Meta-Regressions," published in *iScience*, provides a comprehensive analysis of HSV-1 epidemiology in the United States. The findings suggest that the epidemiology of HSV-1 is shifting, characterized by a decline in oral acquisition during childhood and an increase in genital acquisition during adulthood.

Citation: Ageeb RA, Harfouche M, Chemaitelly H, Abu-Raddad LJ. Epidemiology of herpes simplex virus type 1 in the United States: Systematic review, meta-analyses, and meta-regressions. *iScience.* 2024 Aug 5;27(9):110652. doi: 10.1016/j.isci.2024.110652. Weblink: [https://www.cell.com/iscience/fulltext/S2589-0042\(24\)01877-7#%20](https://www.cell.com/iscience/fulltext/S2589-0042(24)01877-7#%20)

Francis Ndowa

Latin America



Dr Angelica Espinosa Miranda– Regional Director of IUSTI-Latin America

XV SBDST Congress, XI Brazilian AIDS Congress, and VI Latin American Congress on STIs/HIV/AIDS

The Congress of the Brazilian Society of Sexually Transmitted Diseases (SBDST) is organized by the Brazilian Society of Sexually Transmitted Diseases (SBDST), with support from the Brazilian Ministry of Health and IUSTI LAC. The congress brings together doctors, researchers, epidemiologists, microbiologists, nurses, and other health professionals from Brazil and Latin America to discuss scientific advances, challenges, and strategies for the prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of sexually transmitted infections. The next congress will be held in Rio de Janeiro from June 3 to 6, 2025. Save the date!



Source: SBDST

Exhibition: History, Science, and Art of Syphilis

In a cooperative effort between scientific societies, the exhibition Syphilis: History, Science, and Art was showcased at the Congress of the Brazilian Society of Infectious Diseases. The initiative aims to raise awareness about the disease, presenting information on its clinical manifestations, key signs and symptoms, and treatment options. The goal is to increase syphilis visibility in other medical specialties by offering a comprehensive overview through various perspectives, including historical documents, scientific records, epidemiological milestones, reproductions of artworks, and historical artifacts. The hybrid exhibition, organized in 2021, is also available as traveling exhibition and in the online viewing through the website: <http://exposifilis.aids.gov.br/tour/>



Source: Mauro Romero Leal de Passos

Enhanced Gonococcal Antimicrobial Surveillance Program (Egasp) in Brazil

From August 5 to 8, Brazil hosted professionals from the World Health Organization (WHO), the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the WHO Collaborating Center for Gonorrhea and other STIs at the University of Örebro, Sweden, and the Carlos Malbrán Institute of Microbiology in Buenos Aires, Argentina, for a joint mission to implement the Enhanced Gonococcal Antimicrobial Surveillance Program (Egasp) in Brazil and discuss tools for responding to syphilis and congenital syphilis. The national reference laboratory in Brazil is Laboratório de Biologia Molecular e Micobactérias (LBMM). The goal of Egasp is to strengthen gonorrhea control by monitoring antimicrobial resistance in drugs used to treat its agent, *Neisseria gonorrhoeae*. Participants in the visit included Dr. Magnus Unemo, Dr. Maria Luiza Bazzo, Dr. Patricia Galarza, Dr. Angelica Miranda, and Dr. Pamela Gaspar, who are part of IUSTI, involved in STI policies in Latin America and the Caribbean. The

meetings were held in two Brazilian cities, Florianópolis and Brasília.



Source: Maria Luiza Bazzo (LBMM)

National Day to Combat Syphilis and Congenital Syphilis in Brazil

Since 2017, the third Saturday of October has marked the National Day to Combat Syphilis and Congenital Syphilis, as established by Law No. 13.430/2017. The project was born from a petition signed during an event on syphilis at the Fluminense Medical Association in 2004. The date was made official in Brazil to raise awareness and strengthen actions for the prevention, early diagnosis, and treatment of syphilis, especially congenital syphilis. October, also known as "Green October," provides an opportunity to reinforce efforts against syphilis and its complications, working towards a healthier and more informed society. In addition to the Ministry of Health, several institutions across the country participate in the activities, including SBDST and IUSTI LAC. In 2024, it will be celebrated on October 19.

Lei cria o Dia Nacional de Combate à Sífilis e à Sífilis Congênita

De Redação | 03/04/2017 | 19:03



Senado aprova o Dia Nacional de Combate à Sífilis e à Sífilis Congênita

A data passa a ser lembrada todo terceiro domingo do mês de outubro.

Publicado: 09.03.2017 - 14:48 última modificação: 04.11.2022 - 10:38



O Plenário do Senado Federal aprovou, na manhã desta quinta-feira (9), a criação do Dia Nacional de Combate à Sífilis e à Sífilis Congênita (PLC nº 149/2015 ^(P)), instituído no terceiro sábado do mês de outubro em todo o Brasil. O projeto agora segue para sanção presidencial.

A diretora do Departamento das IST, do HIV/AIDS e das Hepatites Virais (DCCV), Adrie Benzakim, comemora a decisão.

Source: <https://antigo.aids.gov.br/pt-br/noticias/senado-aprova-o-dia-nacional-de-combate-sifilis-e-sifilis-congenita>



Source: Brazilian Ministry of Health



Source: MALBRAN/Patricia Galarza

Annual Laboratory Diagnosis Course on Genital Infections in Argentina

The Annual Laboratory Diagnosis Course on Genital Infections is an event aimed at healthcare professionals, particularly those working in microbiology and infectious disease laboratories. Its goal is to provide specialized training on diagnostic techniques for genital infections, which are a crucial part of managing sexually transmitted infections (STIs). The course was offered by the Carlos Malbrán Institute of Microbiology in Buenos Aires from September 16 to 20, with participation from professionals from Argentina and other Latin American countries.

Elimination of Communicable Diseases in Argentina

The Pan American Health Organization/World Health Organization (PAHO/WHO) in Argentina held a high-level dialogue on the PAHO Initiative for the Elimination of Communicable Diseases, as part of the process for developing the 2024-2028 Country Cooperation Strategy (CCS). The dialogue addressed sexually transmitted infections (STIs), with a particular focus on syphilis, within the MTCT+ (HIV, Syphilis, HBV and Chagas Disease) framework. Patricia Galarza, member of IUSTI LAC, participated in the organization.

Europe



Source: Patricia Galarza



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

PAHO visit to monitor the implementation of the initiative for the elimination of mother-to-child transmission of HIV, Syphilis, Hepatitis B, and Chagas Disease in Ecuador

The visit aimed to assess and discuss the progress of Ecuador's subnational validation initiative for the elimination of HIV and syphilis. A work plan was also developed to meet the elimination goals. Additionally, Ecuador is organizing its first HIV/AIDS Congress, where new strategies for the prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of HIV, hepatitis, and sexually transmitted infections (STI) will be explored. Congenital syphilis is a challenge in Latin America and IUSTI LAC can enhance its support to countries in their efforts to control syphilis and other STI in the region.



Source: Rodrigo Tovar



Angelica Espinosa Miranda

37th IUSTI Europe Congress: Zagreb, Croatia 11-14 September 2024



The 37th IUSTI (International Union against Sexually Transmitted Infections) Europe Congress has been recently held in Zagreb, Croatia, September 11-14, 2024. Nearly 400 participants have attended the Congress, from 47 countries World-wide, Australia included.

This was the greatest event of that kind in Europe this year and that the diagnostics, treatment and management of the STIs have been comprehensively addressed, as well as many entities (especially involving also the genital region) such as lichen sclerosus, psoriasis, atopic dermatitis, hidradenitis suppurativa etc., The scientific programme was focused on viral STIs. The eminent and most interactive speakers delivered talks on HPV and the current challenges in the vaccination programme and the cancer prevention; HSV- Unmet Needs and New Therapeutics; HIV and BBV; Mpox and, of course, no Congress could have taken place today without discussing PrEP and DoxyPEP. Bacterial STIs have not be neglected either, with a session addressing Syphilis, GC, CT and *M. genitalium*. Practical aspects of patient care have been also be discussed with an emphasis on Genital Dermatology.

The Advanced Course on STIs has become a tradition for IUSTI-Europe Congresses and has taken place on 12th September, at the beginning of the Congress. This year's theme of the very successful and interactive Course was 'From Yeasts to HPV' and was particularly aimed at those in training.

On behalf of the Organizing and Scientific Committee we strongly believe that this year's Congress motto "Being in love with science of love" really reflected our attitude. We have done our utmost to provide the traditional Croatian hospitality joined with the beauty and elegance to all Congress participants in our capital city Zagreb, the Middle-European "boutique" city with the unique "Southern breeze" at the same time. We strongly believe that a part of the professional aspect, the message of love and friendship has been "taken home" in the heart of every Congress participant.



Fig.1: IUSTI-Europe Council meeting, Zagreb 2024



Fig.2: Debate, Zagreb 2024:

<https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=GDJcpep4AK8>

Impressions from the IUSTI-Europe meeting, Zagreb 2024

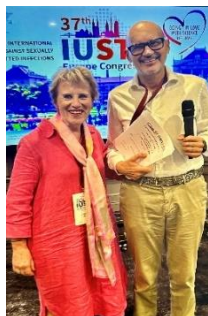
*Congress Presidents - Mihael Skerlev, Suzana Ljubojević Hadžavdić
Chair of the International Scientific Committee - Marco Cusini*

Scholarships



Scholarship recipients

It is our great pleasure to announce that, with the support of the national STI societies of many European countries, 55 scholarships have been awarded to young congress participants. These scholarships aim to encourage the next generation of professionals in the field. We believe this initiative will foster learning and collaboration. We sincerely thank our national representatives who have initiated the support through their national societies for their invaluable contribution.

IUSTI-Europe STI-courses:

The IUSTI Advanced Course, focusing on *Candida* Infections and HPV took place on Thursday, September 12th, organized by Angelika Stary and Marco Cusini. We had 75 participants who showed high interest in both topics of the IUSTI Europe advanced course in Zagreb, genital Candidiasis and HPV. We had vivid discussions after the presentations and during the breaks. We will send out an evaluation formular to all participants to get a Feedback and some suggestions for the next course in Athens. It was remarkable that we could support many participants with scholarships We want to thank all speakers and participants but most of all the local organisers, Jelena and her Team, and the President Mihael Skerlev an Suzana. Ljubojević Hadžavdić. for the enormous help and support.



IUSTI-Europe STI-course in Zagreb 2024

Angelika Stary and Marco Cusini

38th IUSTI-Europe congress 9 -11 October 2025, in Athens, Greece

After the conference is before the conference!

Congress President Prof. Electra Nicolaidou and Scientific Chair Prof. George Sorin Tiplica are delighted to invite you to the 38th IUSTI Europe Congress, to be held in Athens, Greece, between October 9-11, 2025.

Athens is a vibrant city with thousands of years of history, an abundance of archaeological, cultural and architectural treasures, and an excellent Mediterranean climate. This setting, along with a superb infrastructure in terms of accommodation, local transportation and recreation, make Athens an ideal venue for this important event. The Organizing and Scientific Committees are committed to ensuring an unforgettable experience for every participant. The Congress theme invites

us all to be part of the journey from Hippocrates to AI!



IUSTI-Europe Athens 2025

EADV Congress in Amsterdam, September 25-28, 2024

For the first time in history IUSTI-Europe had a booth at the biggest European Dermatovenereological conference (free of charge). More than 17.000 delegates from Europe and the world attended the meeting and had the chance to learn more about IUSTI-Europe and the benefits for IUSTI-members. IUSTI-Europe council members were present at any time at the booth to present the upcoming conferences in Athens and Prague as well as the IUSTI-guidelines and the IUSTI-Europe webinars. The information was very well accepted, and we hope to have interested some colleagues to become new IUSTI-members.

Moreover, several lectures during the conference have been dedicated to STIs, most of them delivered by IUSTI-Europe members. STI-workshops and courses have been held.



Plenary EADV: STDs in 2024, Henry de Vries



Valeska Padovese at EADV

The EADV-STI-taskforce, led by George Sorin Tiplica and the EADV-HPV-taskforce led by Mihael Skerlev and Arne Wikström came together for their annual meetings.



EADV-STI-Taskforce Meeting



EADV-HPV-Taskforce Meeting

IUSTI Europe Webinars 2024-2025

We are delighted to announce that the forthcoming season of IUSTI-Eu Webinars have been awarded CPD recognition by the Royal Collage of Physicians Ireland. We are very grateful to the RCPI in efficiently facilitating us, at no cost, and having CPD that will be widely recognised.

Our provisional plans for the forthcoming 24-25 Academic Season are as follows:

Wednesday 30 October 2024	Zagreb Highlights Correlated and Presented by Marco Cusini
Wednesday 27 November 2024	<i>Strange Bedfellows</i> Humour and STI's Ina Parke Intractable Scabies George Sorin Tiplica
Wednesday 29 January 2025	2024: An year in review 'Best from Sydney' Correlated and Presented by Kit Fairley
Wednesday 26 February 2025	Making the most of your presentations Peter Greenhouse + Colm O'Mahony

Wednesday 26 March 2025	Herpes 2024 -Guidelines and Advances Raj Patel
Wednesday 30 April 2025	La vie en rose! STI's In France Sebastian Fourere
Wednesday 28 May 2025	Guidelines 2025 Jackie Sherrard and George Sorin Tiplica

These plans will be subject to change and addition as new information and threats emerge to our speciality.

The IUSTI Eu Webinars were conceived as a means for IUSTI Eu to continue to provide information and resources to our members and the wider STI community during the Covid 19 Epidemic. We have been very heartened by the wide response and enthusiasm for the webinars and look forward continuing this initiative on behalf of IUSTI Europe. We welcome suggestions for topics and speakers for these Webinars.

The IUSTI Eu Webinars are all recorded and available at the IUSTI Eu Website.

<https://www.iusti-europe.eu/web/index.php/webinar-recordings>

Derek Freedman and George Sorin Tiplica
IUSTI Eu Webinar Editors
df@freedman.ie romsocderm@yahoo.com

Country roundup

In [France](#) from 1 September testing for STIs is now available without a doctor's order (« mon test IST ») and is free for those aged 25 or under.

[England](#) reported a concerning 50% rise in people found to have HIV in 2023 compared to 2022, both those previously diagnosed abroad and those newly identified in the UK. This included a 7% rise in men exposed through sex between men in spite of free availability of PrEP.

[Croatia](#) reports considerable efforts trying to lift HPV vaccine uptake in adolescents above 40%, which is available for free on walk-in basis, and along with many countries is fighting vaccine hesitancy.

Many IUSTI Europe country representatives report concerns with HIV PrEP implementation with either capped numbers (e.g the [Netherlands](#)), poor geographic availability (e.g Poland, Romania) or simply not being available (e.g. Lithuania) [source: IUSTI Europe Council Members' country reports]. European Centres for Disease Control [summarised the ongoing challenges](#) implementing the '[Dublin Declaration](#)', signed over 20 years ago.

Estimates of STI prevalence in Europe

Released for World Sexual Health Day on 04 Sep 2024, ECDC published a [comprehensive systematic review](#) reporting prevalence estimates for chlamydia, gonorrhoea, trichomoniasis and syphilis in Europe (including EU, EFTA, EU candidate and UK), both in the general population and populations of special interest. This highlighted data gaps and the need for many countries to strengthen surveillance and prevention. There is a wonderful set of country-specific [tables](#).

Alarming fall in condom use in adolescents

A [survey](#) of over 242,000 15-year-olds reported by the WHO Regional Office for Europe revealed a significant drop in condom use among sexually active adolescents between 2014 and 2022, with a third reporting using neither a condom nor hormonal contraception at last intercourse. Dr Hans Henri P. Kluge, WHO Regional Director for Europe, noted that “Age-appropriate comprehensive sexuality education remains neglected in many countries” and has been under attack due to reactionary efforts.

IUSTI Europe group on Linked In and Instagram

With the increasing challenges of #medtwitter you may want a safer space to meet professionally. Anyone with a professional interest in STIs in Europe is welcome to join our [Linked In](#) group. You can also follow us on Instagram at [@iusti.europe](#).

Claudia Heller-Vitouch

Asia Pacific



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

48th National Conference of IASSTD and AIDS Successfully Held in New Delhi, India

We are delighted to announce the successful completion of the 48th National Conference of the Indian Association for the Study of Sexually Transmitted Diseases (IASSTD) and AIDS, which took place from August 29th to September 1st, 2024, in New Delhi, India. The conference brought together leading professionals in the fields of sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and HIV/AIDS, fostering productive discussions on the latest research, treatments, and preventive strategies. Attendees from around the globe

shared their expertise, building valuable connections and strengthening collaborative efforts to combat STIs and HIV.

One of the most significant outcomes of the conference was the decision regarding the 2027 National Conference of IASSTD and AIDS. It was announced that this future event will be held in conjunction with the Joint 27th International Society for Sexually Transmitted Diseases Research (ISSTD) Conference and the 28th World Congress of the International Union against Sexually Transmitted Infections (IUSTI). This global collaboration marks an exciting opportunity for the international STI and HIV community to come together in a truly unique and impactful event.



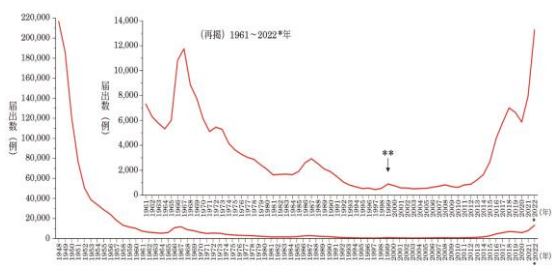
Rising Syphilis Cases and New Testing for *M. genitalium* and Sharp Increase in Syphilis Cases in Japan

Japan has seen a significant rise in syphilis cases over recent years, marking a growing public health concern. According to recent reports, syphilis infections have steadily increased, with witnessing a substantial surge. Health authorities are urging for greater awareness and vigilance in both diagnosis and treatment of this sexually transmitted infection (STI).

The rise in cases underscores the need for enhanced prevention strategies, early detection, and more effective public health campaigns aimed at curbing the spread of syphilis.

In addition to the increase in syphilis cases, Japan has also introduced testing for *Mycoplasma genitalium* (*M. genitalium*), a relatively newly recognized sexually transmitted infection. *M. genitalium* is a small bacterium that can cause urethritis, cervicitis, and other genital tract infections, and has become increasingly concerning due to its resistance to antibiotics.

The introduction of testing for *M. genitalium* in Japan marks a major step forward in STI management and control. Early detection is crucial to preventing the spread of this infection and managing its complications. Healthcare providers are urged to consider testing for *M. genitalium* in cases of persistent urethritis, cervicitis, and pelvic inflammatory disease, especially when traditional treatments fail.



Annual change of reported cases of syphilis in Japan

Pingyu Zhou

North America



Dr Brad Stoner – Regional Director of IUSTI-North America

From the American STD Association (ASTDA)



We've just wrapped the [2024 STI Prevention Conference](#) in Atlanta! The meeting was a wonderful success – nearly 1300 attendees, 50 symposia presentations, 108 oral presentations, and 250 poster presentations. A few highlights:

- Katelyn Jetelina, a 2024 TIME100 Most Influential Person in Health, delivered the opening plenary, focused on the importance of scientific communication to combat misinformation and disinformation.
- Nearly half of the oral presentations were delivered by early-career professionals. We awarded oral presentation prizes to Gregory Zane (“High Incidence of Antibiotic Use Among a Cohort Of Men Who Have Sex With Men (MSM) In Seattle, WA”) and Wyatt Hanft (“Clinical and Sociodemographic Factors Associated With Ocular Mpox In California, May 2022 - September 2023”), who tied for second place, and Justin Holderman (“Public Health and Laboratory Activities For Strengthening The U.S. Response To Resistant Gonorrhea (SURRG), 2021-

2022”) and Jill Diesel (“Rapid Ethnographic Assessment of General And Sexual Health-Seeking Behaviors Among Young Black Women In Detroit”), who tied for first place.

- We held our annual luncheon to celebrate ASTDA’s 2024 award winners: Lao-Tzu Allan-Blitz (Young Investigator Award), Lorenzo Giacani (Achievement Award), Roxanne Kerani (Jack N. Spencer Award) and Connie Celum (Distinguished Career Award). Diana Tordoff won the prize for best paper in the journal STD authored by an early-career scholar.
- We hosted five events for early-career professionals, including a networking reception, Ask-the-Expert roundtables, coaching on scientific writing, tips for developing research questions, and a dedicated oral presentation session where all the speakers were early-career scholars.
- In July, we funded four projects through our Small Projects Assistance program: congratulations to Pooja Chitneni, Alex de Voux, John Flores and Kendall Lawley. The next application deadline for this program is January 1, 2025.
- We welcomed Dr. Brad Stoner, former ASTDA President and former IUSTI North America Regional Director, as CDC’s new Director of the Division of STD Prevention. ASTDA is delighted to continue our longstanding partnership with CDC under Brad’s leadership.
- We produced a special issue of STD to celebrate the journal’s 50th anniversary. “STD at 50” is a lovely set of essays about science, but also mentorship, growth, failure, and friendship.

From the CDC Division of STD Prevention (DSTDP)



- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the American Sexual Health Association (ASHA), the American Sexually Transmitted Diseases Association (ASTDA), and the National

Coalition of STD Directors (NCSO) hosted the [2024 STI Prevention Conference](#) September 16-19, 2024 in Atlanta, Georgia. This year's conference theme was "Strengthening Sexual Health through STI Prevention." Continuing education [is available](#) for conference attendees until October 21st.



- CDC is continuing to promote the guidelines on doxycycline as STI prevention. [Consumer-facing web content](#) is now live. This complements [content for HCPs](#).
- Adult presentations (1.2mU and 2.4mU) of Bicillin L-A are available again in the U.S. and have been removed from the FDA drug shortages website. The pediatric 600,000U presentation will not be available until early 2025.
 - The Availability of STI Testing & Treatment Products page ([Availability of STI Testing & Treatment Products | STI | CDC](#)) has also been updated to reflect "Available" supply of 2.4 million Units/4 milliliter Bicillin L-A® and 1.2 million Units/2 milliliter Bicillin L-A®. Available supply means that Bicillin L-A® should be used for all appropriate patients [per CDC's standard guidance](#).
- Stay up-to-date on the latest news from DSTDP by visiting the Division's [From the Director page](#) or [DSTDP's landing page](#).

- IUSTI-Canada is looking forward to working with ASTDA to plan an Early Career Investigator session on Sunday July 26, 2025 prior to the opening of the 2025 STI & HIV World Congress in Montreal.

From the American Sexual Health Association (ASHA)



- ASHA was a co-sponsor and managing partner of the 2024 STI Prevention Conference, held September 16-19 in Atlanta, GA. Approximately 1,300 attendees gathered for an array of sessions on science, program, and policy. We're now editing conference recordings which we'll post and make available to attendees. [#STIConf24](#)
- ASHA continues our work as funded by CDC through the grant Support Technical Assistance and Opportunities for Program, Policy, and Communications to Prevent STDs (STOP STDs). We are working in three priority areas: congenital syphilis, bacterial STI prevention, and Doxy-PEP.
- Our activities include supporting publication of CDC's guidelines on use of doxy PEP for bacterial STI prevention with a [series of ten social media videos](#) we developed to focus on key messages around doxy PEP's use in men-who-have-sex-with-men and transgender women.
- We also created a [sharable version](#) of our digital infographic [Congenital Syphilis: A Preventable Problem](#). This version is in video form that can be shared directly on social channels or, using the embed code we created, added to a website's architecture.

From IUSTI-Canada



- Mark your calendars for the 2025 STI & HIV World Congress to be held July 26-30, 2025 in Montreal, Quebec! Registration and accommodation booking is now open, see <https://stihiv2025.org/>. We look forward to welcoming you to the Congress!

- ASHA staff were interviewed by several media outlets including *USA Today* (rising rates of STIs among those ages 55 and older), the Associated Press (declining condom use among teens), and health.com (FDA approval of a new syphilis at-home test).
- ASHA took part in public health observations including National HIV Testing Day (June), National Immunization Month (August), Gynecologic Cancer Awareness Month (September), and World Sexual Health Day (September). ASHA/NCCC are active on social media with each observation and offer relevant resources on our websites.

Brad Stoner

Conference Update

IUSTI Events:

2025 ISSTDR IUSTI Congress
24-27 July 2025
Montreal, Canada
<https://stihiv2025.org>

38th IUSTI Europe Congress
9-11 October 2025
Athens, Greece

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.

Prof. Jonathan Ross, Editor
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Further information on the activities of IUSTI available at
www.iusti.org