

# Current issues in Sexual Health

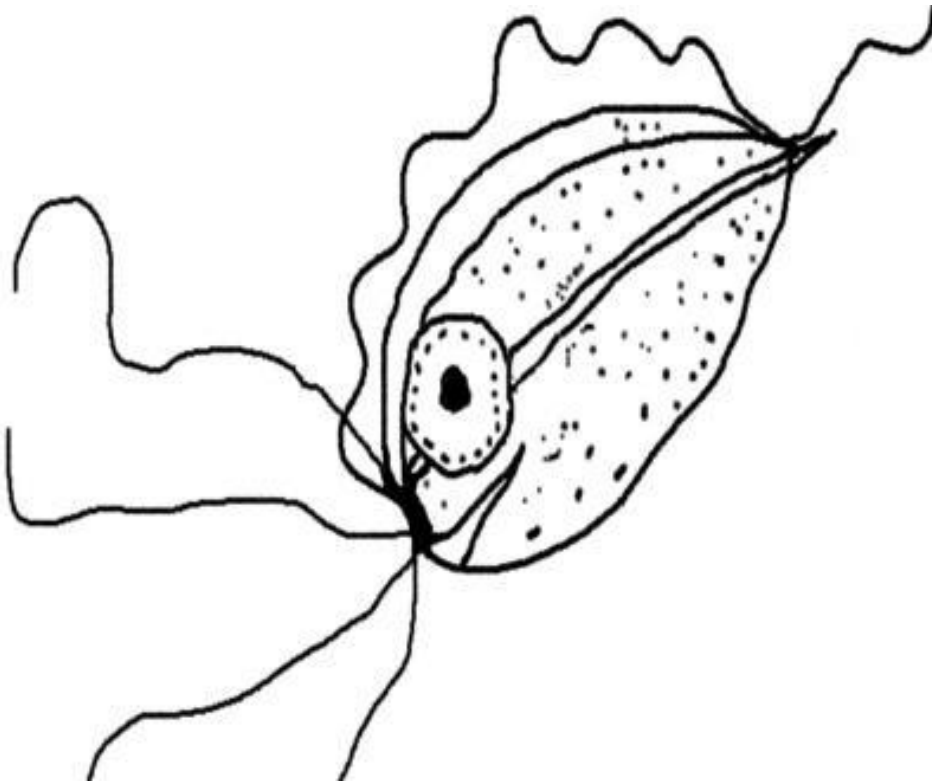
- Plan
- Quiz
- Sexual behaviours over time
- Overview of STIs and blood borne viruses
- Supporting better sexual health – prevention, management, support



# Quiz

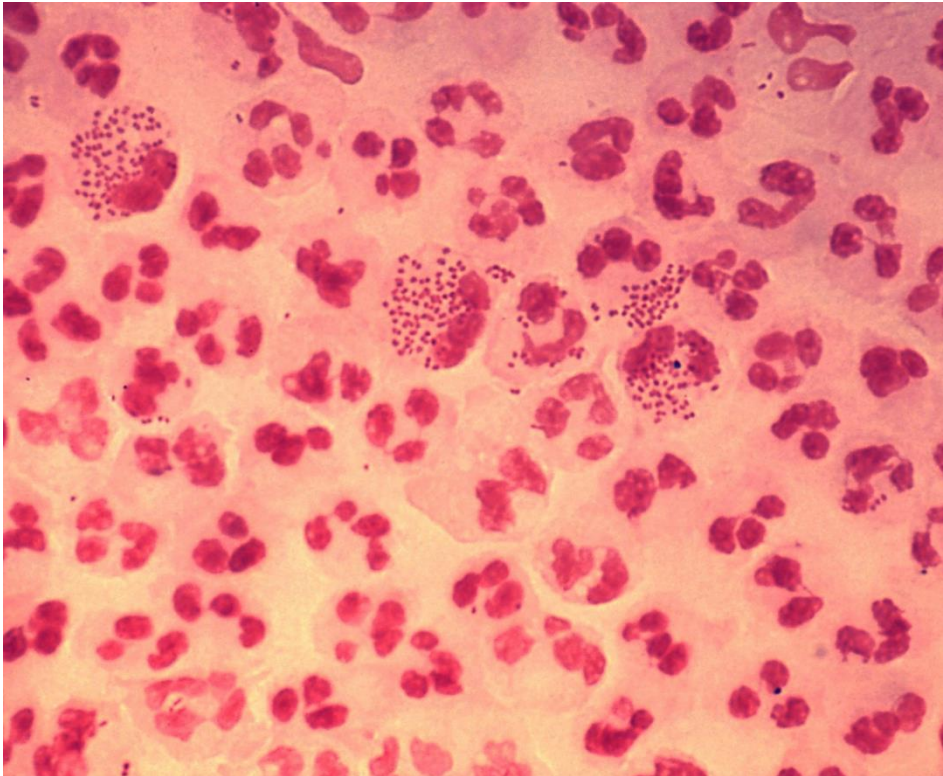
1. What is the most common STI in the UK?
2. What anatomical site is advised for Chlamydia testing in women and people with vaginas?
3. What infection was known as the 'great imitator'?
4. Which STI has had the largest proportional increase between 2022 and 2023?
5. Which STI has nearly disappeared over the last few years?

# Quiz



- 7. What is this?

# Quiz

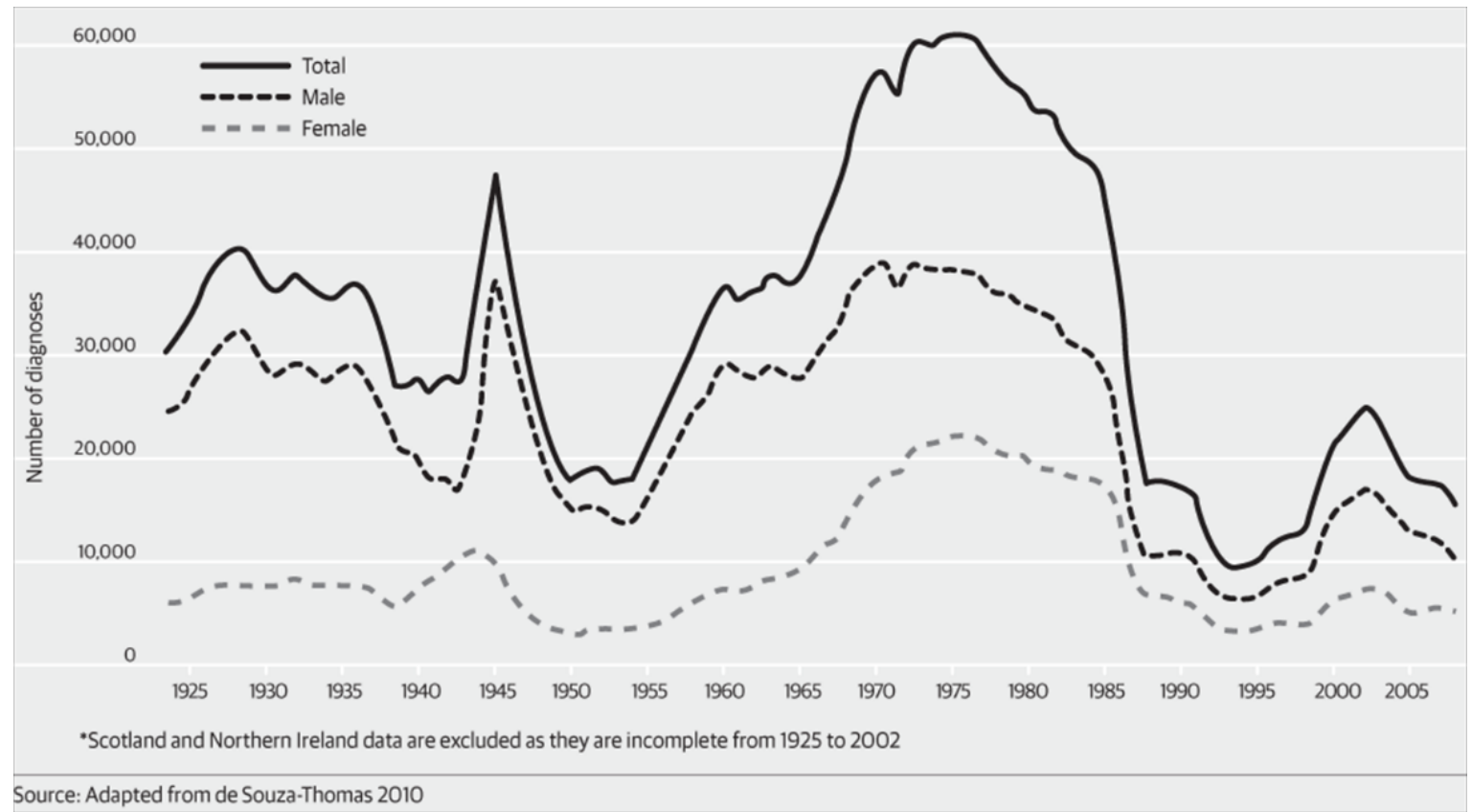


- 8. What could this be?

# Sexual health is...

- "...a state of physical, emotional, mental and social well-being in relation to sexuality; it is not merely the absence of disease, dysfunction or infirmity. Sexual health requires a positive and respectful approach to sexuality and sexual relationships, as well as the possibility of having pleasurable and safe sexual experiences, free of coercion, discrimination and violence. For sexual health to be attained and maintained, the sexual rights of all persons must be respected, protected and fulfilled." (*WHO, 2006a*)

**STIs reflect  
the world  
we live in...**





And in  
COVID-19  
pandemic?

**Sexual behaviour and sexual health in the four months  
following the first UK COVID lockdown in 2020:  
Key findings from the Natsal COVID study Wave One**



**1 in 10**

reported physical intimate contact with a romantic or  
sexual partner from a different household\*



Younger people and those in steady non-cohabiting  
relationships reported this more often

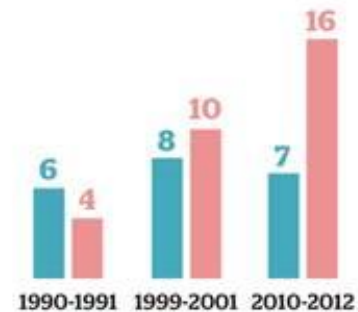
\*During a four-week period towards the end of the first UK national lockdown

## The 20-year-switch

### How sexual activity has changed

Men Women

Percentage of the population who have had a same-sex experience (people aged 16-44)



Average number of partners of opposite sex (people aged 16-44)

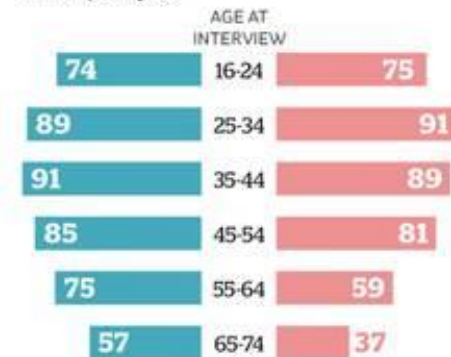
1990-1991 survey



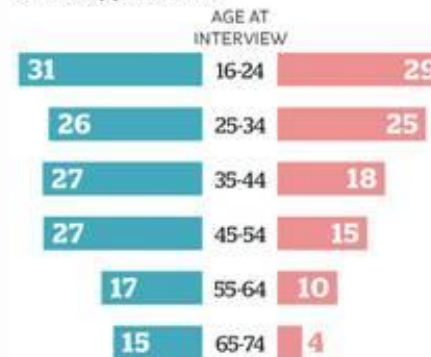
2010-2012 survey



Percentage of people who had vaginal intercourse with the opposite sex in the past year



Percentage who had intercourse before the age of 16 with someone of the opposite sex



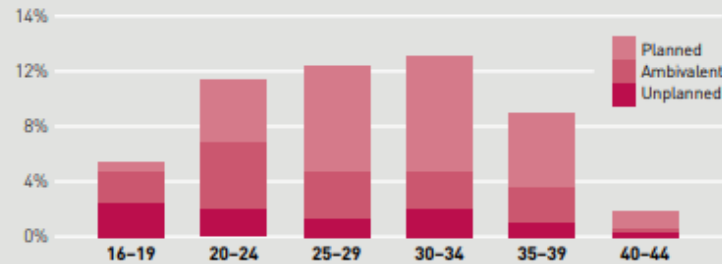


# Sex, pregnancy and co- habitation

## Unplanned pregnancy

10% of women aged 16-44 had been pregnant in the past year (given birth, miscarried, or had an abortion in the past year). An estimated one in six of these pregnancies were unplanned, two in six were ambivalent and three in six were planned.

### Percentage of women who have been pregnant in the past year



Although pregnancies among 16-19 year old women were more likely to be unplanned than those among older women, most unplanned pregnancies were in women aged 20-34, simply because that is when most women become pregnant.

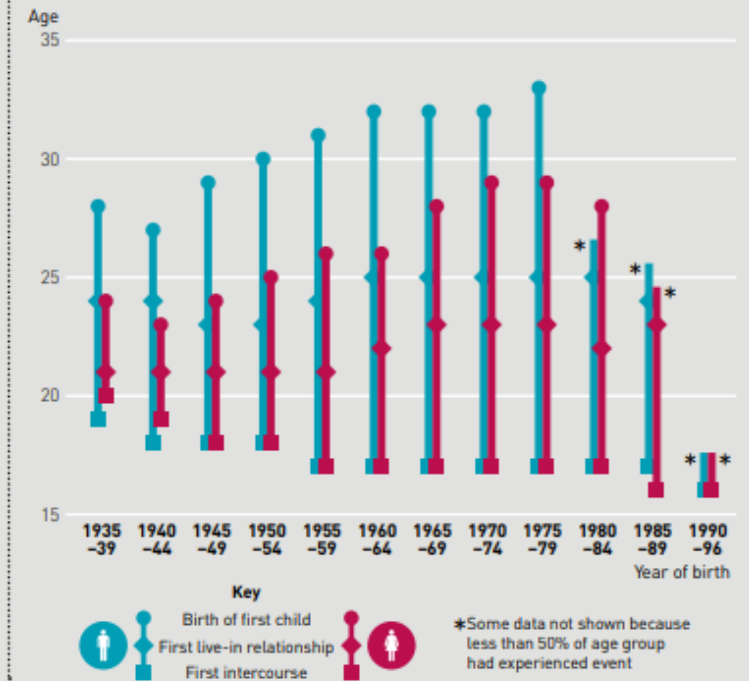
### Age profile of unplanned pregnancies



We found that unplanned pregnancy was less common than has been found in studies done in some other high income countries such as the USA. This may in part reflect the fact that contraception is provided free of charge in Britain under the NHS.

Over the past 60 years, the gap between the age people start having sex, the age they first live with a partner, and the age they have their first child has widened – so there is now a longer period in women's lives where efforts are needed to prevent unplanned pregnancy.

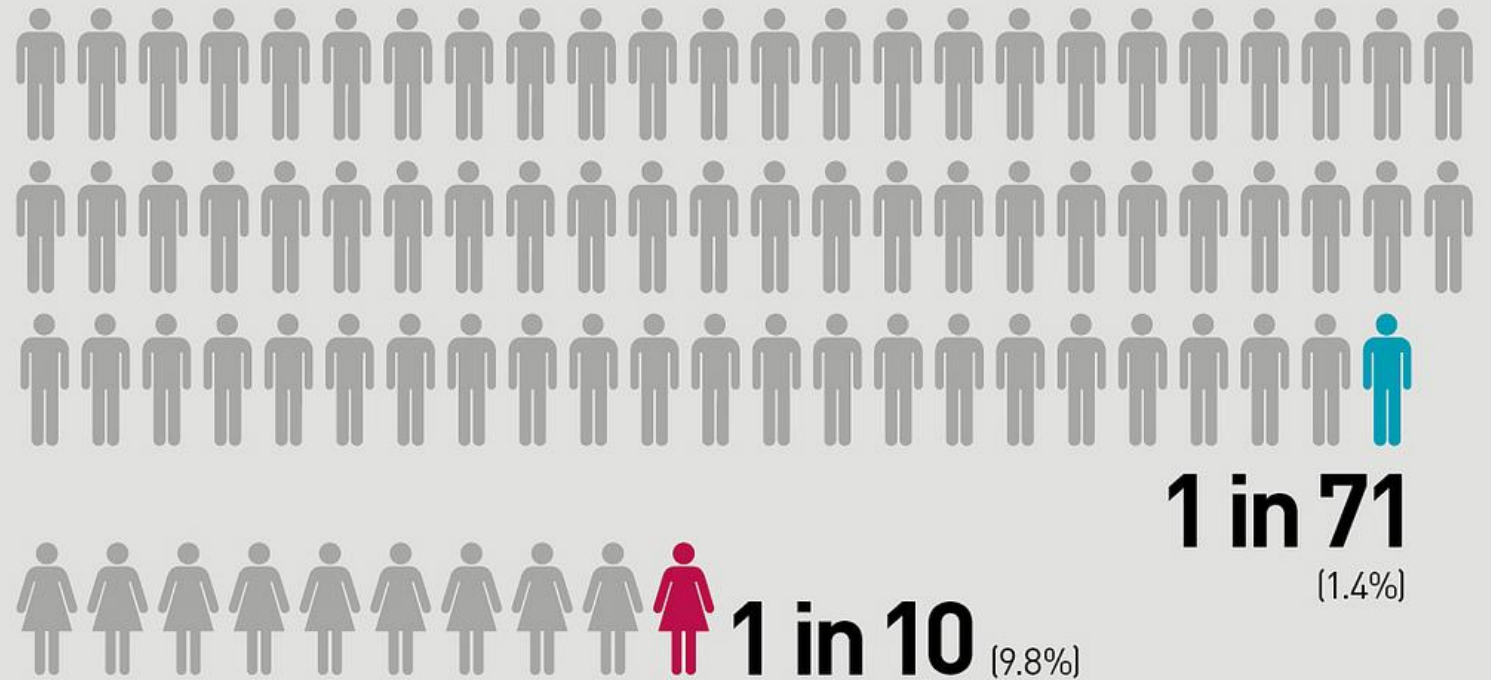
### Median age at first intercourse, first live-in relationship and birth of first child



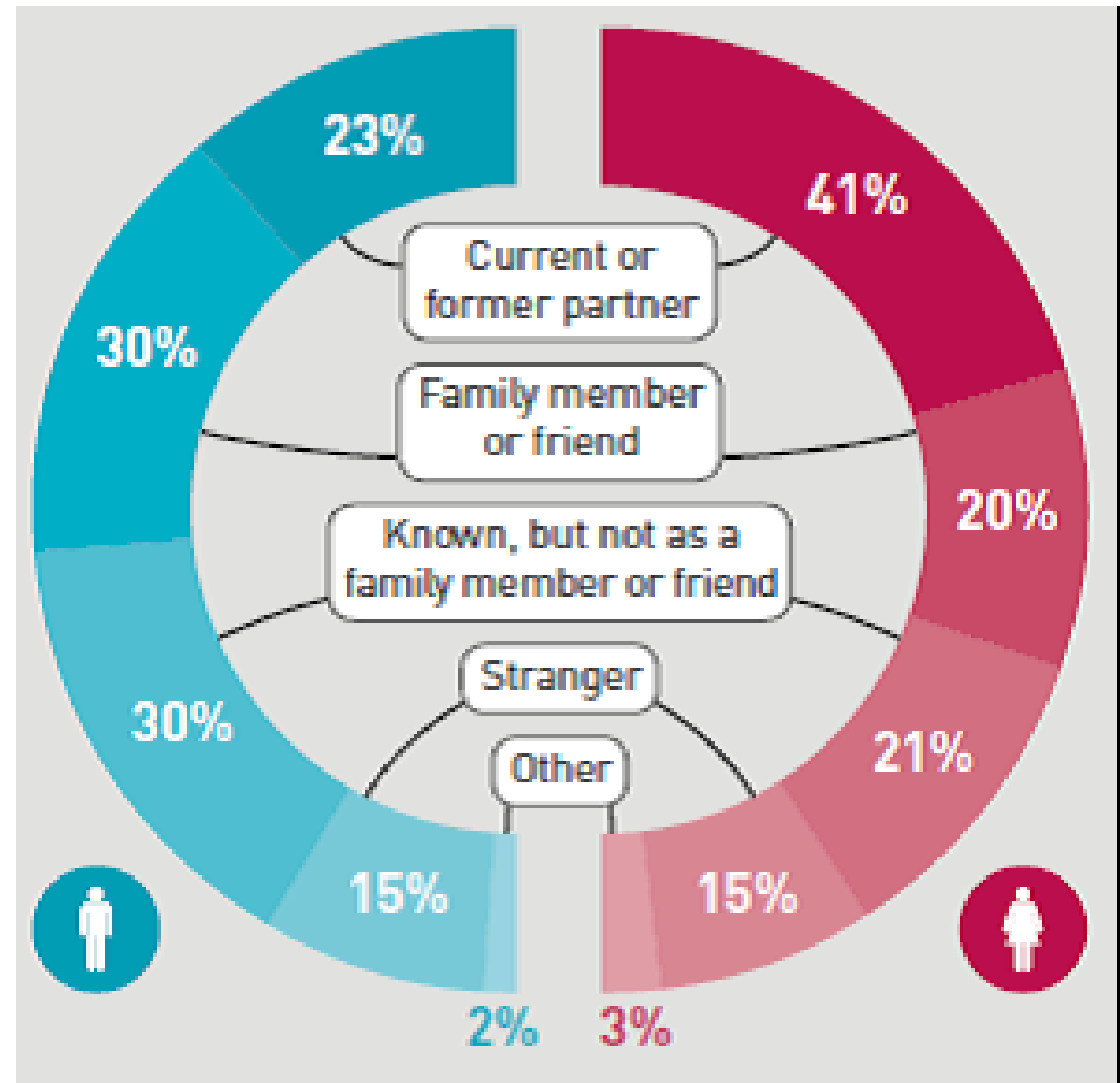
# Unwanted sex

We asked men and women “since the age of 13, has anyone made you have sex with them, against your will?” which we refer to as ‘non-volitional sex’. One in 10 women and one in 71 men said that they had experienced non-volitional sex since age 13.

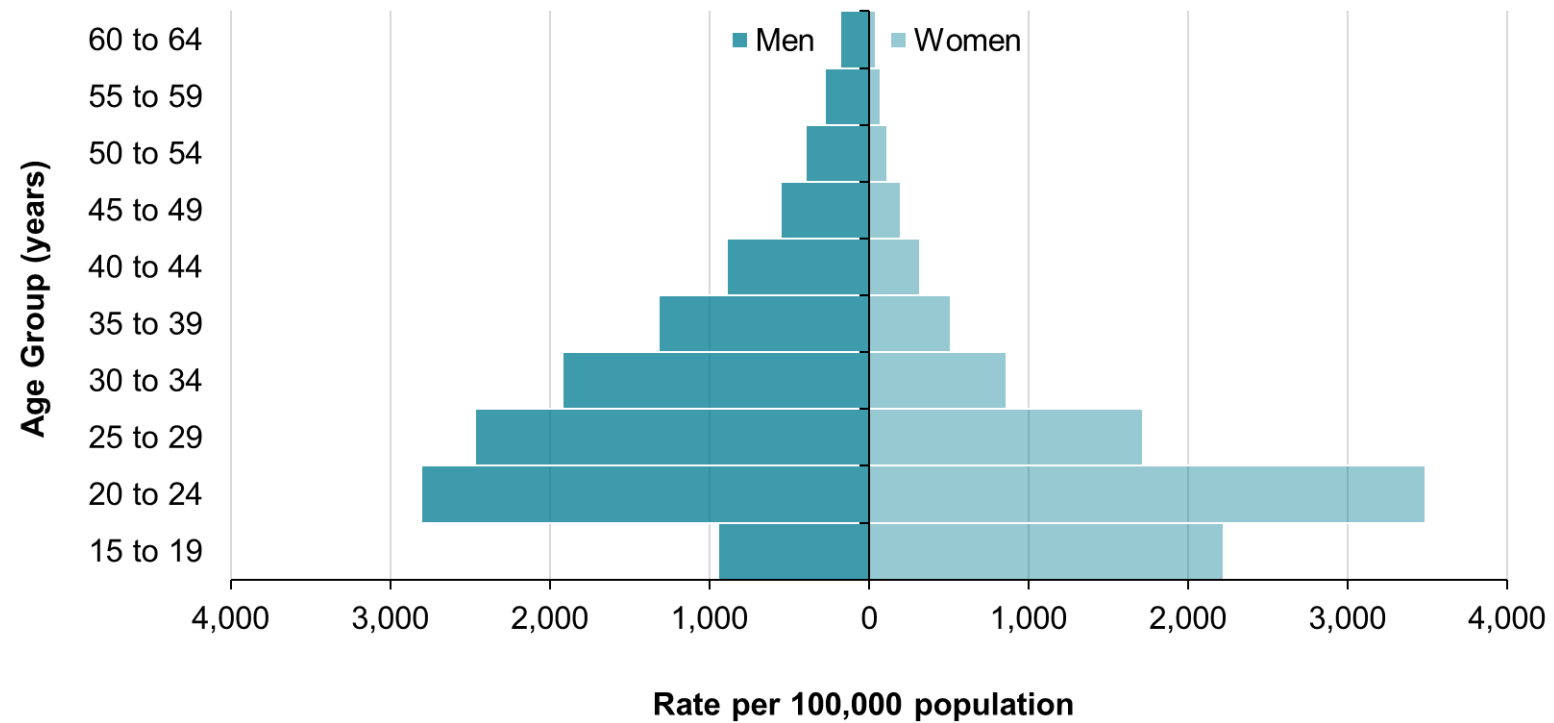
## Proportion of men and women who have experienced non-volitional sex



# Unwanted sex



## Rates of new STI diagnoses by gender and age group: England, 2023



# Groups vulnerable to poor sexual health

Young People (YP)

Men who have sex  
with men (MSM)

Black and minority  
and ethnic groups  
(BME)

People using drugs  
and alcohol

People with learning  
disabilities

People experiencing  
sexual exploitation,  
coercion and  
domestic abuse



# Classification of infections

## Bacterial infections

- Gonorrhoea
- Chlamydia (NSU)
- LGV
- Syphilis
- Mycoplasma genitalium
- Tropical ulcer disease

## Viral

- Herpes Simplex Virus (1&2)
- Human Papilloma Virus
- Pox virus
- HIV / Hepatitis A, B & C

## Infestations

- Pediculosis
- Scabies

## Protozoan

- Trichomoniasis

## Other

- Yeasts

# How might STIs present?

- vaginal/urethral discharge (+/- rectal)
- dysuria
- ulceration: painful/painless
- itching/soreness
- “lumps/growths”
- abnormal bleeding; IMB, PCB
- abdominal pain, testicular pain, rectal pain
- change in bowel habit
- dyspareunia
- systemic symptoms
- ASYMPTOMATIC

# What can we test for?

## Women

- CT GC
- HIV, Syphilis, BBV
- Candida, bacterial vaginosis
- M Gen
- T. Vaginalis
- Microscopy for STIs (candida, BV, T. vaginalis, cervicitis, GNICD, syphilis)
- Enteric infections

## Men

- CT GC
- HIV, Syphilis, BBV
- T. Vaginalis
- M Gen
- GBMSM screening
- Microscopy for STIs (T. vaginalis, non-specific urethritis, GNICD, syphilis)
- Enteric infections

# Basic principles - window periods

- Chlamydia – 2 weeks (based on expert opinion, BASHH May 2008)
- Gonorrhoea - sooner
- Syphilis up to 3 months
- Hepatitis 3-6 months
- HIV – 45 days



# What else can we diagnose?

- Genital warts (HPV)
- Molluscum contagiosum
- Epididymitis
- Cervicitis
- Pelvic Inflammatory Disease (PID)



# Sexual history taking and risk assessment

- Think about where and how you will do this
- Ask permission and explain why you are asking
- History of presenting complaint
- Nature of symptoms
- Men – LPU; Women – LMP, contraception and reproductive history
- Consider gender identity, anatomy
- PMH, DH, allergies
- Sexual history
- What tests are appropriate in your setting?
- Examination
- How will results be communicated?

# Challenges and opportunities

- PrEP – HIV, Doxycycline
- Focussing services on those more at risk of harm
- AMR
- New and emerging infections – Mgen, Mpox

# PrEP

- ARV medication taken before exposure
- Free via NHS sexual health clinics in England, Scotland, Wales
- Daily / event-based regimens
- Injectable PrEP in development



Quiz  
answers!