

# Sexual Health

## Contents

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| Making the most of episodic antiviral therapy for genital herpes<br><i>R. Patel</i> 213–214                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | New models for the pathogenesis of recurrent episodes of genital herpes infections suggest that antiviral therapies have only an extremely limited window within which they may impact on symptom control and healing. Accumulating data from ultra-short patient initiated therapy studies show that with appropriate dosing, the duration of some treatments can be reduced to 1 or 2 days for most patients.                                                                                                                                             |
| Assessing female sexual dysfunction in epidemiological studies: why is it necessary to measure both low sexual function and sexually-related distress?<br><i>R. D. Hayes</i> 215–218                                                                                                                                  | Low sexual function and sexually-related distress need to be present for a diagnosis of female sexual dysfunction. However, studies that have used sets of simple questions that do not take sexual distress into account have been widely cited. Recent research has demonstrated that studies that use simple sets of questions can produce substantially different results from studies that use multi-item, validated instruments to investigate both low sexual function and sexual distress.                                                          |
| 2-day versus 5-day famciclovir as treatment of recurrences of genital herpes: results of the FaST study<br><i>N. Bodsworth, M. Bloch, A. McNulty, I. Denham, N. Doong, S. Trottier, M. Adena, M.-A. Bonney, J. Agnew and the Australo-Canadian FaST (Famciclovir Short-Course Herpes Therapy) Study Group</i> 219–225 | This randomised, blinded, active-controlled clinical trial examined the hypothesis that a shorter 2-day course of famciclovir is as effective treatment for genital herpes as the traditional 5-day course with same total dose. In the largest sexually transmissible infections drug trial conducted in Australia to date, 873 patients were enrolled at 59 clinics (and at a further seven in Canada). In a first for GH trials detailed information was collected daily on qol parameters and herpes symptomatology and HIV patients were not excluded. |
| Sexual difficulties and help-seeking among mature adults in Australia: results from the Global Study of Sexual Attitudes and Behaviours<br><i>E. D. Moreira Jr, D. B. Glasser, R. King, F. Gross Duarte, C. Gingell, for the GSSAB Investigators' Group</i> 227–234                                                   | This study reports population-level data on sexual behaviour, the prevalence of sexual difficulties and associated help-seeking behaviours in Australia. We found that middle-aged and older men and women continue to show sexual interest and activity, despite the presence of several sexual difficulties. Few of the individuals who experience such difficulties seek medical help. Appropriate guidance from physicians and other healthcare professionals may encourage patients to discuss their sexual problems.                                  |
| New therapeutic agents in the management of HIV: an overview of darunavir for clinicians<br><i>J. Rotty and J. Hoy</i> 235–241                                                                                                                                                                                        | Darunavir is a promising, new second-generation protease inhibitor with a high genetic barrier to resistance. It has made the goal of complete viral suppression in failing treatment-experienced patients achievable again. This article provides the reader with a systematic overview of darunavir and should give clinicians a sound understanding of when and how to use this new protease inhibitor in the treatment of HIV-infection.                                                                                                                |
| HIV risk practices sought by men who have sex with other men, and who use internet websites to identify potential sexual partners<br><i>H. Klein</i> 243–250                                                                                                                                                          | This paper reports findings from a content analysis of 1316 profiles appearing on one of the internet's most popular websites promoting unprotected sex among men who want to have sex with other men. Very high rates of risky sexual practices and risk-related preferences were found, indicating a great need to provide targeted HIV intervention to this population.                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| HIV/AIDS knowledge and attitudes among West African immigrant women in Western Australia<br><i>P. D. Drummond, A. Mizan and B. Wright</i> 251–259                                                                                                                                                                     | Many West African refugees who had immigrated recently to Australia had misconceptions about how HIV is spread, how to protect against HIV and the effectiveness of condoms in protecting against HIV, and held negative attitudes toward condom use. These findings indicate that educational programs that focus on knowledge about HIV should be tailored to meet the needs and cultural sensitivities of newly emerging immigrant communities in Australia.                                                                                             |
| Can the male-to-female ratio of gonorrhoea in one sexually transmissible infection treatment facility be solely used to judge its efficiency?<br><i>R. Smith, G. Bell and M. Talbot</i> 261–264                                                                                                                       | The authors have analysed at their unit a 'critical incident' in which the male-to-female ratio of gonorrhoea cases was disturbed. Previously utilised as one proxy of control, they argue whether its sole use is helpful. They conclude not.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |

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| Sexually transmissible infection management practices among primary care physicians in Singapore<br><b>R. K. W. Chan, H. H. Tan, M. T. W. Chio, P. Sen, K. W. Ho and M. L. Wong</b>                                                                                  | 265–271 | This survey was carried out on primary care doctors to document the standard of sexually transmissible infection (STI) management practices in Singapore. Information collected included the extent of history taking, relevant laboratory tests ordered, and preferred therapeutic options for different STIs encountered. Other aspects of case management including counselling, contact tracing and disease notification were also obtained from respondents.                                                       |
| Attitudes of men in an Australian male tolerance study towards microbicide use<br><b>W. R. Holmes, L. Maher and S. L. Rosenthal</b>                                                                                                                                  | 273–278 | This study took the opportunity provided by a microbicide safety study to explore the attitudes of Australian men in relation to future microbicide use with women to protect against sexually transmitted infections including HIV infection. The men's views about efficacy, safety and communicating about microbicide use, and their beliefs and concerns about how such a product might be used, should help to inform information materials, and the design of future studies.                                    |
| Is suspicion of genital herpes infection associated with avoiding sex? A clinic-based study<br><b>R. A. Crosby, S. Head, G. Moore and A. Troutman</b>                                                                                                                | 279–283 | A clinic-based study tested the hypothesis that suspicion of genital herpes would be associated with protective behaviour to avoid transmission. Suspicion was associated with avoiding sex with steady partners only. This relationship applied to females, singles, those reporting symptoms, those perceiving that genital herpes would negatively affect sex, and those who subsequently tested positive for HSV-2. Suspicion of herpes infection may translate into protective behaviour for a minority of people. |
| Co-occurrence of intoxication during sex and sexually transmissible infections among young African American women: does partner intoxication matter?<br><b>R. A. Crosby, R. J. DiClemente, G. M. Wingood, L. F. Salazar, D. Lang, E. Rose and J. McDermott-Sales</b> | 285–289 | In a study of young African American women, alcohol/drug use while having sex was not significantly associated with sexually transmissible infection (STI) prevalence. However, their male sex partners' intoxication during sex was significantly associated with STI prevalence. Young women reporting that their sex partners had been drunk or high while having sex were about 1.4 times more likely to test positive for at least one of the three assessed STIs.                                                 |
| Saving 'face' and 'othering': getting to the root of barriers to condom use among Chinese female sex workers<br><b>J. Chapman, C. S. Estcourt and Z. Hua</b>                                                                                                         | 291–298 | This paper explores the cultural systems that give rise to barriers to condom use among Chinese female sex workers, in light of the escalating HIV epidemic in China, and increasing international migration of Chinese women who go on to engage in sex work in their migrant country. Findings have highlighted the importance of unique cultural structures, such as "saving face" and gender norms, in sexual decision-making.                                                                                      |
| Low knowledge and high infection rates of hepatitis in Vietnamese men in Sydney<br><b>C. C. O'Conner, M. Shaw, L. M. Wen and S. Quine</b>                                                                                                                            | 299–302 | A population-based telephone study of Vietnamese men in Central Sydney area demonstrates higher rates of self-reported hepatitis B infection and lower levels of hepatitis knowledge than men in the Australian Study of Health and Relationships.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| Increase in incidence of infectious syphilis in Auckland, New Zealand: results from an enhanced surveillance survey<br><b>S. Azariah, N. Perkins, P. Austin and A. J. Morris</b>                                                                                     | 303–304 | Syphilis is not currently a notifiable condition in New Zealand. This paper reports results from a survey designed to determine the incidence of infectious syphilis in the Auckland region. The results confirm that infectious syphilis incidence is under-reported and that the greatest proportion of cases continues to be diagnosed in men who have sex with men.                                                                                                                                                 |
| Accessibility and acceptability of public sexual health clinics for adult clients in New South Wales, Australia<br><b>V. Ramanathan, M. Kang, S. Jeganathan, E. Jackson, K. Lagios and V. Furner</b>                                                                 | 305–306 | The current study was undertaken in response to the foregoing issues concerning accessibility and acceptability as factors that may influence satisfaction of current users with the services delivered by public SHCs. The findings may be useful in modifying or improving current services. The study was done in 2006 as part of the Principal author's MMed (STI/HIV) degree offered by the STI Research Centre and the University of Sydney.                                                                      |
| Are printed sexually transmissible infection materials for patients appropriate? A physician perspective<br><b>A. Khan and D. Plummer</b>                                                                                                                            | 307–308 | Printed materials on sexually transmissible infections (STI) for patients were found to be inadequate and/or inappropriate by every alternative general practitioners (GPs) participated in a surveyed. Other concerns about printed STI materials include: not available in the GP clinic (23%), did not know where to get the materials (22%), too technical for many patients (18%) and mostly out of date (13%). Efforts to explore patients' views are warranted.                                                  |

HIV prevention during a sexual health consultation:  
a suggested quality audit

***S. Powell, R. Cummings, D. Lee and C. K. Fairley*** 309

The authors recommend HIV-negative men who have sex with men are asked questions relating to the context of high-risk events during a sexual health consultation.

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Book Review

RU 486 – The Abortion Pill

***Reviewed by Caroline Harvey*** 311