

STIs and risky sex still an issue

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New results from the third National Survey of Sexual Attitudes and Lifestyles (Natsal), published in *The Lancet*, provide a picture of sexually transmitted infection (STI) prevalence and testing, uptake of sexual health interventions and service use, and risk behaviours in Britain.

In the decade since the last Natsal survey, of several strategies aimed at improving sexual health in Britain, three have been STI-specific interventions: the English National Chlamydia Screening Programme (NCSP); the UK HPV immunisation programme; and increasing HIV testing in target groups.

Researchers from UCL (University College London), the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine, NatCen Social Research, and Public Health England interviewed nearly 9,000 participants aged 16-44 about their sexual lifestyles and uptake of STI services and interventions. They collected urine samples from over 4,500 16-44 year olds, and tested these for chlamydia, gonorrhoea, high-risk human papilloma virus (HR-HPV), and HIV.

HR-HPV (the virus that causes cervical and other cancers) was the most prevalent infection, detected in 16% of women overall.

Around one in a hundred people aged 16-44 had chlamydia, but this was higher in those aged 16-24 (prevalence of 3.1% and 2.3% in women and men, respectively).

Both chlamydia and HPV prevalence were higher in people who had sex with more partners without a condom, but these STIs were also found in people with only one partner in the last year.

The population prevalence of gonorrhoea in those aged 16-44 was less than 1 in 1,000 (

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