

Better sex education urgently needed for at-risk teenagers, researchers say

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Sexually active teenagers who were offered rapid, confidential chlamydia testing and same-day treatment at college mostly did not take up the offer, largely due to ignorance about the risks.

Only 10-13 percent of students in three London-based further education colleges responded to messages inviting them for on-site testing.

But in those who were tested, [high rates](#) of chlamydia were discovered, with one in twenty testing positive.

Interviews conducted by the researchers suggested the very low uptake was associated with a lack of knowledge about [sexually transmitted infections](#), as well as students not feeling they were at risk, or being embarrassed about testing. Students commented: "I don't know anything, to be honest" or "I haven't been taught anything."

Researchers at St George's, University of London and at King's College, London conducted a feasibility sexual health trial over one academic year in 500 students attending six London-based further education colleges. They were using 'test and treat' technology, offering 90-minute chlamydia tests and same day on-site treatment.

Professor Pippa Oakeshott, who led the trial, said: "We were surprised and disappointed by the levels of uptake in teenagers. Sexually active teenagers are at much higher risk of infections than older adults but often know very little about STIs. They urgently need better sex education. In addition the closure of [sexual health](#) clinics, coupled with the new policy of relying on postal testing, is creating a perfect storm for vulnerable young teenagers. It's now even harder for young people to access testing, treatment and contraception. Teenagers must be helped to realise that they are at risk."

The paper, "Test n Treat, a cluster randomized feasibility trial of on-site rapid Chlamydia trachomatis tests and treatment in ethnically diverse, sexually active teenagers attending technical colleges" is published today in *Clinical Microbiology and Infection*.

More information: Pippa Oakeshott et al. "Test n Treat" (TnT): a cluster randomised feasibility trial of on-site rapid Chlamydia trachomatis tests and treatment in ethnically diverse, sexually active teenagers attending technical colleges, *Clinical Microbiology and Infection* (2018). [DOI: 10.1016/j.cmi.2018.10.019](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cmi.2018.10.019)

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