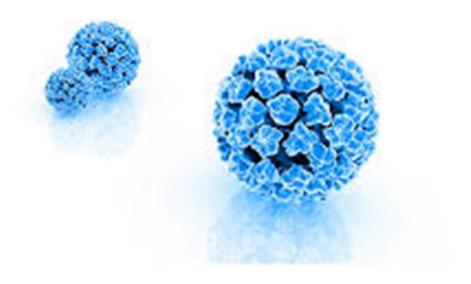
# Sexually Transmitted Infection surveillance in Northern Ireland 2016

An analysis of data for the calendar year 2015





Contents	Page
Summary points	3
Surveillance arrangements and sources of data	4
1: Diagnoses provided in Northern Ireland GUM clinics in 2015	5
2: Chlamydia	7
3: Gonorrhoea	11
4: Genital herpes	16
5: Genital warts	19
6: Syphilis	22
7: Summary and conclusions	26
References	27
Appendices	28

This report aims to provide an overview of STI epidemiology in Northern Ireland by collating and analysing information from a number of sources. Although it reflects epidemiological trends over time, its main focus will be on data collected in 2015.

In order to prevent possible disclosure, where the number of any category of episodes in any one year is between one and four, this is reported either within a cumulative figure, or as an asterix. In addition, where the anonymised figure can be deduced from the totals, the next smallest figure will also be anonymised.

# **Summary points**

# In Northern Ireland Genito-Urinary Medicine (GUM) clinics in 2015

- New diagnoses of chlamydia decreased by 18%; 1,534 diagnoses in 2015 compared with 1,868 in 2014.
- New diagnoses of gonorrhoea increased by 3%; 619 in 2015 compared with 601 in 2014.
- New diagnoses of genital herpes simplex (first episode) decreased by 8%; 381 in 2015 compared with 415 in 2014.
- New diagnoses of genital warts (first episode) decreased by 14%; 1,746 in 2015 compared with 2,020 in 2014.
- New diagnoses of infectious syphilis increased by 17%; 76 in 2015 compared with 65 in 2014.

# Surveillance arrangements and sources of data

#### KC60 returns

The most comprehensive source of surveillance data for sexually transmitted infections (STIs) in Northern Ireland is the statutory KC60 return each quarter from GUM clinics. This return records the numbers of new diagnoses for a range of STIs. Individual patients may contribute more than one diagnosis. For selected conditions, additional age, gender and sexual orientation information are provided. Regularly updated summary statistics are presented at: www.publichealth.hscni.net/directorate-public-health/health-protection/sexually-transmitted-infections.

Northern Ireland GUM clinics are in the process of migrating from KC60 to Sexual Health and HIV Activity Property Type codes (SHHAPT). As a result of the changes gonorrhoea and chlamydia are no longer categorised as complicated and uncomplicated. Therefore the way gonorrhoea and chlamydia

are presented within the report has been amended and some figures are not directly comparable to data from previous years as annotated in the relevant figures.

There are two important limitations to KC60/SHHAPT data. Firstly, as data reflect only those diagnoses made in GUM clinics, it follows that accessibility of those services to the public, as measured by service capacity and geographic location of services, may influence the diagnostic rate of STIs. Thus, direct comparison of different regions, or indeed different time periods within the same region if service access should change, must be interpreted with caution.

Secondly, no residence-based data is collected. Given that the majority of new diagnoses originate from the GUM clinic at the Royal Victoria Hospital (the clinic that provides greatest access), the clinic location is not a useful proxy for patient residence.

# Laboratory reporting

Laboratory data represent an important complementary source to clinician-initiated surveillance arrangements. Laboratory reporting of *Chlamydia trachomatis* in Northern Ireland is provided for 2006–2015 and *Neisseria gonorrhoeae* for 2015. Antibiotic susceptibility information for *Neisseria gonorrhoeae* isolates is provided for 2014–2015.

# **Enhanced syphilis surveillance**

Enhanced surveillance arrangements for infectious syphilis in Northern Ireland have been in place since the outbreak was first recognised in September 2001. Based on anonymised, confidential reporting by GUM clinicians to the Public Health Agency (PHA), a range of demographic, clinical and risk factor data are collected on cases of primary, secondary and early latent stage syphilis.

# 1: Diagnoses provided in Northern Ireland GUM clinics in 2015

**During 2015:** 

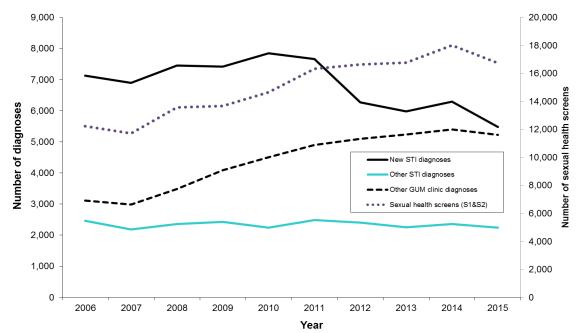
- 5,477 **new STI diagnoses** were made, a decrease of 13% compared with 2014 (6,292);
- 63% (3,447/5,477) of **new STI diagnoses** were in males;
- three types of infection accounted for 73% of **new STI diagnoses** genital warts (first infections) (32%), chlamydia (28%) and non-specific genital infection (13%);
- 2,242 other STI diagnoses were made;
- 5,224 other diagnoses were made at GUM clinics.

#### Trends: 2006-2015

Between 2006 and 2011 the number of **new STI diagnoses** remained relatively stable. However, between 2011 and 2015, the numbers have decreased by 29% (Figure 1.1). The decrease in new STI diagnoses from 2011 must be interpreted with caution. This largely reflects a steep decline in new diagnoses of complicated and uncomplicated non-specific genital infection (NSGI) (Figure 1.2). This decrease is likely to be due to the change in test technology within GUM clinics, whereby the more sensitive dual platform PCR test for gonorrhoea and chlamydia has largely replaced the invasive urethral culture in asymptomatic patients<sup>1</sup>. This has resulted in more detections of organisms with proven pathogenicity, particularly gonorrhoea and thus NSGI diagnoses have fallen (Figure 1.2).

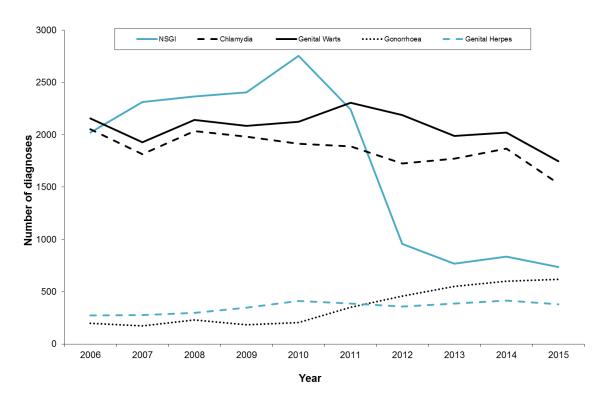
There has been a consistent increase in annual **other GUM clinic diagnoses** since 2007 with the number of **other STI diagnoses** remaining largely stable since 2006. An explanation of STI categories is provided in Appendix 1. The number of sexual health screens performed annually has also shown an increased trend. There was however a fall in 2015 (16,774) compared with 2014 (18,007).

Figure 1.1: Trends in diagnoses and sexual health screens made in Northern Ireland GUM clinics, 2006–2015



During 2006–2015, chlamydia infection, non-specific genital infection (NSGI) and genital warts (first infections) accounted for the highest proportion of new STI diagnoses (83%) made in Northern Ireland GUM clinics (Figure 1.2). Specific disease trends will be examined in chapters 2 to 6.

Figure 1.2: Trends in new diagnoses of STIs in Northern Ireland GUM clinics, 2006–2015



# 2: Chlamydia

Genital chlamydia is a bacterial infection caused by *Chlamydia trachomatis*. The infection is asymptomatic in at least 50% of men and 70% of women. In women, untreated infection can cause chronic pelvic pain and lead to pelvic inflammatory disease (PID), ectopic pregnancy and infertility. An infected pregnant woman may also pass the infection to her baby during delivery. Complications in men include urethritis, epididymitis and Reiter's Syndrome.

Consistent with elsewhere in the UK, chlamydia is the most common bacterial STI diagnosed in Northern Ireland GUM clinics.

Although there is currently no organised regional chlamydia testing programme in Northern Ireland, symptomatic testing is undertaken within primary care and sexual health services.

## Diagnoses made in GUM clinics during 2015

Chlamydial infection accounted for 28% (1,534/5,477) of all new STI diagnoses made in Northern Ireland GUM clinics during 2015.

- There were 1,534 new episodes of chlamydial infection diagnosed in Northern Ireland GUM clinics in 2015, compared with 1,868 in 2014.
- 856 (56%) of these were diagnosed in males.
- The highest rates of infection in both males and females were in the 20–24 years age group, accounting for 39% of male and 46% of female diagnoses.
- The rate of diagnoses in the 16–19 years age group is more than twice as high in females as in males.
- 14% (123/856) of the total male diagnoses occurred in men who have sex with men (MSM).

### Trends: 2006-2015

Between 2006 and 2015, diagnoses of chlamydial infection decreased by 25%, from 2,053 diagnoses in 2006 to 1,534 in 2015 (Figure 2.1).

Number of diagnoses C4A, C4C. C4B, C4 Chlamydial infection Year

Figure 2.1: Diagnoses of chlamydia in Northern Ireland, 2006–2015

## Age and gender trends: chlamydia

From 2012–2015, diagnostic rates in females were consistently highest in the 16–24 years age group, peaking between 20 and 24 years (Figure 2.2). In males, the highest rates were in the 20–34 years age group, again peaking between 20 and 24 years.

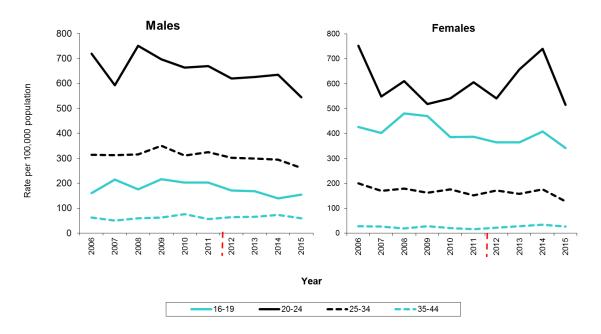
Diagnostic rates in those under 25 years of age were consistently higher in females, with rates in those aged 25 years and over consistently higher in males. Diagnostic rates in females aged over 24 years decrease due to changes in sexual behaviour, as well as decreased susceptibility.

Diagnoses in those under 16 years of age accounted less than 1% (23/6,895) of all diagnoses made during the period 2012–2015.

Diagnoses in the 45+ years' age group accounted for 3% (206/6,895) of all diagnoses made during the period 2012–2015.

The proportion of male chlamydia diagnoses attributed to MSM has ranged from 6% in 2006 to 17% in 2014, with 14% being attributed to MSM in 2015.

Figure 2.2: Rates of chlamydial infection in Northern Ireland, by gender and age group, 2006–2015



Footnote: Rates have been re-calculated from 2012 to include KC60 code C4B - Complicated chlamydia

## Genital chlamydia trachomatis laboratory reporting, 2006–2015

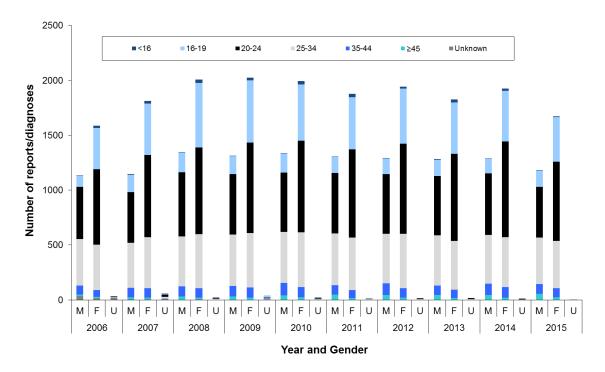
During 2015, 2,864 laboratory confirmed cases of genital chlamydia trachomatis were reported, a decrease of 11% compared with 2014. GP specimens accounted for 36% (1,028/2,864) of cases reported during 2015 (Table 2.1). Between 2006 and 2015, confirmations from GP specimens increased by 43%.

Referral Source	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	TOTAL
GP Number (%)	720 (26.1)	894 (29.7)	979 (29.0)	1025 (30.3)	1124 (33.5)	1096 (34.3)	1207 (37.1)	1102 (35.2)	1093 (33.9)	1028 (35.8)	10,268
Other	2,036	2,121	2,396	2,353	2,231	2,104	2,044	2,023	2,130	1,836	21,274
Total	2,756	3,015	3,375	3,378	3,355	3,200	3,251	3,125	3,223	2,864	31,542

Table 2.1: Referral source of genital Chlamydia trachomatis specimens, 2006–2015

Higher numbers of diagnoses are consistently reported in females, accounting for 58% (1,674/2,864) of all cases reported by laboratories during 2015. The majority (68%; 12,723/18,672) of female cases reported in the period 2006–2015 were aged between 16 and 24 years. Between 2006 and 2015 females accounted for 80% of the diagnoses made by a GP. Males accounted for between 38% and 41% of cases reported annually since 2006. The majority of male cases reported since 2006 were in the 20–34 years age group (Figure 2.3). Information on gender was missing for 1% of cases reported during the period 2006–2015.

Figure 2.3: Laboratory reports of genital *Chlamydia trachomatis*, by age and gender, 2006–2015



# 3: Gonorrhoea

Gonorrhoea is a bacterial STI caused by *Neisseria gonorrhoeae*. Untreated, gonorrhoea can enter the bloodstream or spread to the joints, and in women it can cause pelvic inflammatory disease, ectopic pregnancy and infertility. An infected pregnant woman may pass the infection to her baby during delivery.

# Diagnoses made in GUM clinics during 2015

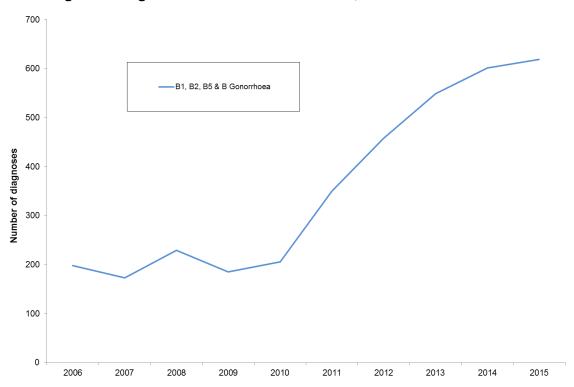
Gonorrhoea accounted for 11% (619/5,477) of all new STI diagnoses made in Northern Ireland GUM clinics during 2015.

- There were 619 new episodes of gonorrhoea diagnosed in Northern Ireland GUM clinics in 2015, compared with 601 in 2014, an increase of 3%.
- 483 (78%) of these were diagnosed in males.
- The highest diagnostic rates in both men and women were in the 20–24 years age group.
- 71% of female diagnoses were in the 16–24 years age group and 24% were in the 25–34 years age group.
- 40% of male diagnoses were in the 16–24 years age group and 38% were in the 25–34 years age group.
- •64% (308/483) of male diagnoses were attributed to MSM.

#### Trends: 2006-2015

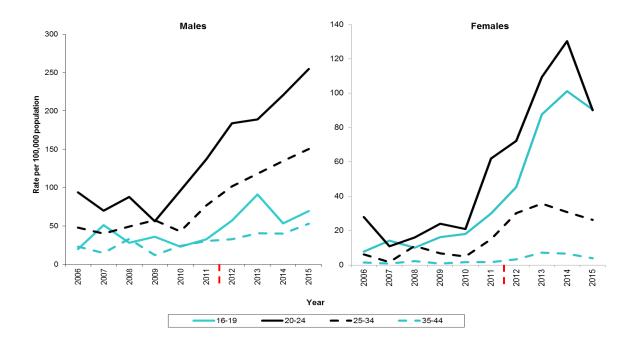
The annual number of diagnoses of gonorrhoea has shown very little change between 2006-2010. However diagnoses rose dramatically between 2010 and 2014 with a 192% increase; 601 diagnoses in 2014 compared with 206 in 2010 (Figure 3.1). The number of diagnoses in 2015 (619) is the highest ever recorded in Northern Ireland. However the rate of increase has slowed with the annual percentage increase (3%: 619 in 2015 compared with 601 in 2014) the lowest since 2010. The proportion of male diagnoses attributed to MSM ranged from 24% in 2006 to 64% in 2015.

Figure 3.1: Diagnoses of gonorrhoea in Northern Ireland, 2006–2015



Age, gender and sexual orientation trends: gonorrhoea

Figure 3.2: Rates of gonorrhoea in Northern Ireland, by age group, 2006–2015

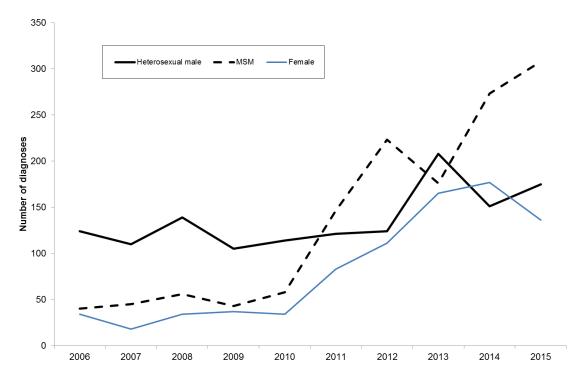


Footnote: Rates have been re-calculated from 2012 to include KC60 code B5 Complicated gonorrhoea

In males, the highest diagnostic rates have consistently been in the 20–34 years age groups (Figure 3.2). From 2012–2015, fewer than 10 diagnoses were made annually in males aged under 16 years. Males aged 45 years and over accounted for 10% (159/1,638) of all male diagnoses during the period 2012–2015.

Trends in age-specific diagnostic rates in females have been less obvious due to small number variation. The increases in 2012 and 2013 have clearly mostly affected the 16-19, 20-24 and 25-34 age groups (Figure 3.2).

Figure 3.3: Number of diagnoses of gonorrhoea by sexual orientation in Northern Ireland, 2006-2015



The increase in diagnoses since 2010 has largely affected MSM and females. There has been a much smaller though still generally upward trend in heterosexual males. In 2015 there was a 13% increase (308 in 2015 compared with 273 in 2014) among MSM.

Interpretation of the increase in diagnoses is made difficult by the introduction across Northern Ireland of combined chlamydia and gonorrhoea PCR testing in both GUM and community settings since 2010. The increase in numbers of people tested, and the increased sensitivity of the test compared with traditional culture methods, particularly at extra genital sites, may at least partly explain the increase seen in both the heterosexual and MSM population.

# Neisseria gonorrhoeae laboratory reporting, 2012–2015

During 2015, 626 laboratory confirmed diagnostic episodes of Neisseria gonorrhoeae (all anatomical sites) were reported. Of those 477 were male and 147 were female (the gender was unreported in two cases). GP referred specimens accounted for 13% (81/626) with the majority of specimens 81% (504/626) received from a GUM clinic.

Effective treatment of gonorrhoea has been compromised by the ability of *Neisseria gonorrhoeae* to develop resistance to successive antimicrobial agents.<sup>2</sup> Ongoing monitoring of antimicrobial resistance in Northern Ireland is important to ensure that first line treatments for gonorrhoea remain effective, as patterns of resistance can change rapidly. During 2015, laboratories reported antibiotic susceptibility data for 221 isolates.

Current treatment guidelines recommend the use of a one-off dose of a combination of oral azithromycin and intra-muscular ceftriaxone and that treatment should be followed by a test of cure. By combining antibiotics in this way it is hoped the development of resistance to either component will be slowed. (Table 3.1).

Table 3.1: *Neisseria gonorrhoeae* antibiotic susceptibility reported activity for antibiotics, 2014–2015

Antibiotics	Susc	eptible	Resista	nt (%)	Indete	rminate	Total specimens Reported				
	2014	2015	2014	2015	2014	2015	2014	2015			
Azithromycin	17	41	2 (11%)	0	0	0	19	41			
Cefixime	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0			
Cefotaxime	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0			
Ceftriaxone	181	206	0	1 (0.5%)	0	0	181	207			
Ceftizoxime	2	5	0	0	0	0	2	5			
Cefuroxime	3	0	0	0	0	0	3	0			
Cephalexin	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0			
Ciprofloxacin	132	153	33 (20%)	48 (24%)	0	0	165	201			
Doxycycline	114	114	32 (22%)	53 (32%)	0	0	146	167			
Nalidixic Acid	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0			
Penbritin	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0			
Penicillin	32	23	134 (80%)	184 (88%)	1	2	167	209			
Spectinomycin	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0			
Erythromycin	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0			
Tetracycline	0	9	0	5 (31%)	0	2	0	16			

Note: There may be variation in laboratory antibiotic susceptibility testing methodology in Northern Ireland. This has not been assessed. Due to the increase in high level azithromycin resistant strains seen in Great Britain since 2015, it is now recommended that all microbiology labs include azithromycin in their testing panels.

# 4: Genital herpes

Genital herpes is caused by the herpes simplex virus (HSV), of which there are two distinct subtypes. HSV2 is almost exclusively associated with genital infection. Historically, HSV1 has mainly been associated with oral infection, but the proportion of genital herpes attributed to HSV1 in the UK is increasing. Genital herpes infection may facilitate HIV transmission, can cause severe systemic disease in those with impaired immunity, and can be potentially fatal to neonates.

# Diagnoses made in GUM clinics during 2015

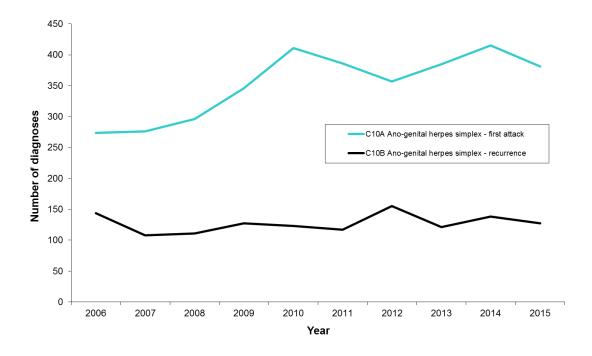
Genital herpes (first episodes) accounted for 7% (381/5,477) of all new STI diagnoses made in Northern Ireland GUM clinics during 2015.

- There were 508 episodes (first infections and recurrent infections) of genital herpes diagnosed in Northern Ireland GUM clinics in 2015.
- 317 (62%) of these were diagnosed in females.
- 381 (75%) of the total attendances for herpes in 2015 were for treatment of first infection and 127 (25%) were for treatment of recurrent infection.
- 26% of male diagnoses (50/191) and 24% (77/317) of female diagnoses were recurrent infections.
- The highest diagnostic rates of first infection in men were in the 20-34 years age group and in women were in the 16-24 years age group.
- Diagnostic rates of first infection in most age groups were higher in females. The diagnostic rate in 16–19 year old females was over 7 times higher than in males of the same age.
- 14% (20/141) of male first diagnoses occurred in MSM.

#### Trends: 2006-2015

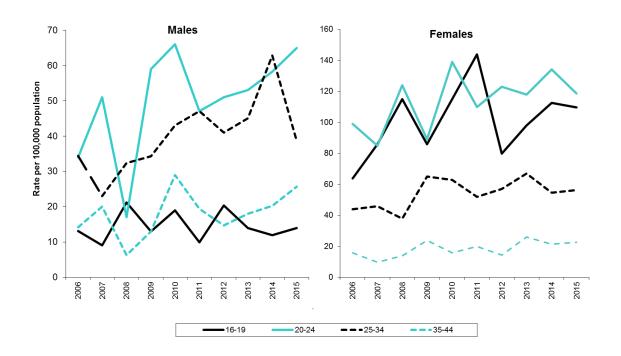
Annual numbers of first diagnoses of genital herpes increased each year from 2008-2010 with numbers remaining similar from 2011 to 2015. (Figure 4.1).

Figure 4.1: Diagnoses of genital herpes in Northern Ireland, 2006–2015



## Age and gender trends: genital herpes (first episode)

Figure 4.2: Rates of diagnosis of genital herpes (first episode) in Northern Ireland, by age and gender, 2006–2015



Diagnostic rates in females were consistently highest in the 16–24 years age group. In males, the highest diagnostic rates were in the 20–34 years age group (Figure 4.2).

Males under 20 years of age accounted for 6% (75/1,229) of all male diagnoses of genital herpes (first episode) made during the period 2006–2015, with diagnoses in the 45+ years age group accounting for 11% (136/1,229).

Females under 16 years of age accounted for 1% (27/2,298) of all female diagnoses made during the period 2006–2015, with diagnoses in the 45+ years age group accounting for 7% (161/2,298).

# 5: Genital warts

Genital warts are caused by human papillomavirus (HPV). More than 90 HPV types have been identified, of which approximately one third are sexually acquired. Although around 20 different types of HPV have been linked to cervical cancer, these particular types are less frequently linked to genital warts.

HPV vaccine for girls was introduced as a school-based programme in Northern Ireland in 2008/09. Until September 2012 the vaccine used protected against the oncogenic types 16 and 18, but not those types causing genital warts.<sup>3</sup> From September 2012 onwards, the vaccine used is protective against types 6 and 11, accounting for 90% of genital warts<sup>4</sup>. In September 2014 the HPV immunisation programme changed from a three dose to a two dose schedule.

## Diagnoses made in GUM clinics during 2015

Genital warts (first episodes) accounted for 32% (1,746/5,477) of all new STI diagnoses made in Northern Ireland GUM clinics during 2015.

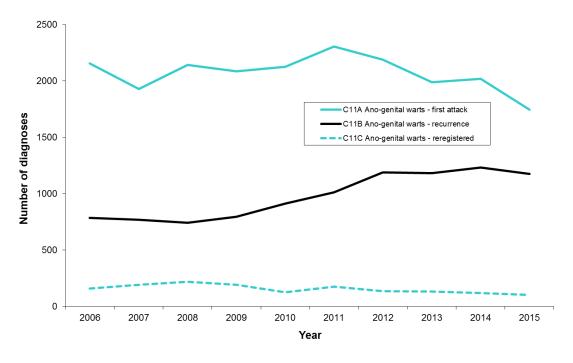
- There were 2,922 episodes (first infections and recurrent infections) of genital warts diagnosed in Northern Ireland GUM clinics in 2015.
- 1,805 (62%) of these were diagnosed in males.
- 1,746 (60%) of the total attendances for genital warts in 2015 were for treatment of first infection and 1,176 (40%) were for treatment of recurrent infection.
- 44% of male diagnoses (789/1,805) were recurrent infections, compared with 35% (387/1,117) of female diagnoses.
- The highest diagnostic rates of first infection in both men and women were in the 20–24 years age group.
- 36% of male diagnoses and 35% of female diagnoses of first infection were in the 20–24 years age group.
- The diagnostic rate in females aged 16–19 years (259/100,000) were almost twice that of males the same age. However, diagnostic rates in those aged over 19 years were higher in males.
- 9% (89/1,016) of male first diagnoses occurred in MSM.

#### Trends: 2006-2015

The number of annual diagnoses of first infections of genital warts has shown little variation between 2006 and 2011. There has been a significant decline, however, since 2011 (Figure 5.1). The decline in diagnostic rates has been greatest in females aged 16-19 years (48%) followed by females aged 20-24 years (32%) (Figure 5.2). There have been smaller declines in diagnostic rates in males aged 16-19 years (29%) and 20-24 years (20%). There has been no significant change to diagnostic rates in other age groups in either sex. It is likely that this pattern in females is at least partly explained by an

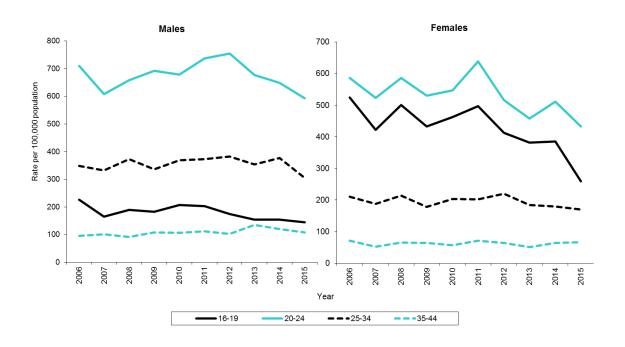
unexpected direct protective effect from the bivalent vaccine introduced in 2009, with a smaller indirect effect being seen in males<sup>5</sup>.

Figure 5.1: Diagnoses of genital warts in Northern Ireland, 2006–2015



Age and gender trends: genital warts (first episode)

Figure 5.2: Rates of diagnosis of genital warts (first episode) in Northern Ireland, by age and gender, 2006–2015



Between 2006 and 2015, diagnostic rates have been consistently highest in 20-24 year old males and females, followed by 16-19 year old females and 25-34 year old males. Individuals under 16 year old accounted for 0.4% (88/20,690) of diagnoses (first episode) made during 2006-2015, while the 45+ year age group accounted for 6% (1,235/20,690).

During 2006-2015, the proportion of male diagnoses attributed to MSM ranged from 2% in 2006 to 10% in 2012, with 9% in 2015.

# 6: Syphilis

Syphilis is a bacterial infection caused by the spirochete *Treponema pallidum*. Its importance lies in its ability to promote both the acquisition and transmission of HIV, and in the potential for serious or even fatal consequences if left untreated. Late syphilis can cause complications of the cardiovascular, central nervous and mucocutaneous systems. Infectious syphilis in pregnant women can cause miscarriage, stillbirth or congenital infection.

Northern Ireland has, in common with elsewhere in the UK and Europe, experienced a marked increase in infectious syphilis since 2000. In the decade prior to 2000, on average only one case of infectious syphilis per year was reported.

## Diagnoses made in GUM clinics 2015

**During 2015:** 

- 45 new episodes of primary and secondary syphilis were reported;
- 75% (30/40) were diagnosed in MSM;
- 31 additional episodes of early latent syphilis were also reported;

### **Enhanced surveillance 2015**

Information from enhanced surveillance arrangements is available for 70 cases:

- 64 episodes occurred in Northern Ireland residents and, in 44 episodes, syphilis was likely to have been acquired through exposure within Northern Ireland;
- 19% (13/70) also reported as being HIV positive;
- diagnosed co-infections also included chlamydia, gonorrhoea, genital warts and herpes;
- 39% (27/70) reported having had one sexual partner in the three months preceding diagnosis;
- the highest number of reported sexual partners of any one individual in the preceding three months was 8:

#### **Trend information**

Infectious syphilis is now endemic within Northern Ireland. Annual numbers of new diagnostic episodes have been consistently highest in MSM (Figure 6.1). Following an annual decrease from 2004 to 2007, numbers have increased from 2008 with a further increase again in 2015. Numbers in females and heterosexual males have remained relatively constant, although in 2015 there was an increase in heterosexual males with 17 diagnoses made compared with 10 in 2014.

Men who have sex with men (MSM) Heterosexual men Heterosexual women Number of Syphilis diagnoses 

Figure 6.1: Number of infectious syphilis diagnoses in Northern Ireland, by gender and sexual orientation, 2001-2015

Note: Data derived from enhanced syphilis arrangements from 2001-2010 and from KC60 for 2011- 2015

#### Age and sexual orientation

Analysis of cumulative data by age and sexual orientation shows the highest number of episodes in heterosexual females was in the 25–34 years age group (51%; 40/79). In MSM, the highest number of episodes was in the 25–44 years age group (59%; 341/579). In heterosexual males, diagnoses were more evenly spread across the age bands, with those aged 25+ years accounting for 75% (89/119) of diagnoses. Information on age was missing for seven episodes (Figure 6.2).

200 - Meterosexual men Men who have sex with men (MSM) Heterosexual women 50 - 425 25-34 35-44 45-54 ≥55 Unk

Figure 6.2: Age distribution of syphilis diagnoses in Northern Ireland, by gender and sexual orientation, 2001–2015

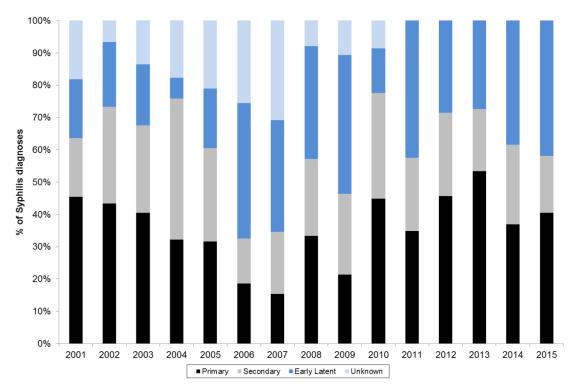
Note: Data derived from enhanced syphilis arrangements from 2001-2010 and from KC60 returns for 2011 -2013

#### Stage of disease

Since 2001 the majority of diagnoses have been made at the primary or secondary stage of disease, although there has been some significant year to year variation. Interpretation is difficult also due to variation in the extent to which stage is unknown. Over the past 5 years the percentage of diagnoses of primary and secondary syphilis had ranged from 58% to 73%. This suggests there is still a significant lack of awareness of the signs and symptoms of infectious syphilis in the affected population.

Age group

Figure 6.3: Stage of disease, by year of diagnosis



Note: Data derived from enhanced syphilis arrangements from 2001-2010 and from KC60 returns for 2011-2015

# 7: Summary and conclusions

Although 2015 saw a 13% decrease in annual numbers of new STI diagnoses made in Northern Ireland GUM clinics this masks an increase in diagnoses of gonorrhoea and infectious syphilis.

Between 2010 and 2015, diagnoses of gonorrhoea have tripled. This has largely been driven by an increase in MSM and females. In 2015 there was a further increase albeit to a much smaller degree (3%). Although the rise in diagnoses coincides with the introduction of more sensitive PCR testing the continued increase is also likely to represent increased transmission.

The highest diagnostic rates of the common STIs occur in 16-24 year old females and 20-34 year old males. People aged 16-34 year old account for 82% of new STIs.

MSM are at disproportionate risk of contracting some STIs accounting for 75% of male syphilis, 64% of male gonorrhoea, 14% of male herpes and 14% of male chlamydia infections. Safer sex messages should continue to be promoted to the general population, young people and MSM. The risks to health of unprotected casual sex, both within and outside Northern Ireland, need to be reinforced.

Individuals can reduce their risk of acquiring or transmitting an STI by:

- Always using a condom when having sex with casual and new partners;
- Getting tested if at risk, as these infections are frequently asymptomatic;
- MSM having unprotected sex with casual or new partners should have an HIV/STI screen at least annually, and every three months if changing partners regularly;
- Reducing the number of sexual partners and avoiding overlapping sexual relationships.

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# **Appendix 1: STI groupings**

# **New STI diagnoses**

Chlamydial infection (uncomplicated and complicated)

Gonorrhoea (uncomplicated and complicated)

Infectious and early latent syphilis

Genital herpes simplex (first episode)

Genital warts (first episode)

New HIV diagnosis

Non-specific genital infection (uncomplicated and complicated)

Chancroid/lymphogranuloma venereum (LGV)/donovanosis

Molluscum contagiosum

**Trichomoniasis** 

**Scabies** 

Pediculus pubis

## Other STI diagnoses

Congenital and other acquired syphilis

Recurrent genital herpes simplex

Recurrent and re-registered genital warts

Subsequent HIV presentations (including AIDS)

Ophthalmia neonatorum (chlamydial or gonococcal)

Epidemiological treatment of suspected STIs (syphilis, chlamydia, gonorrhoea, non-specific genital infection)

# Other diagnoses made at GUM clinics

Viral hepatitis B and C

Vaginosis and balanitis (including epidemiological treatment)

Anogenital candidiasis (including epidemiological treatment)

Urinary tract infection

Cervical abnormalities

Other conditions requiring treatment at a GUM clinic

Appendix 2: Number of new episodes of selected diagnoses by gender and age group, Northern Ireland, 2006-2015

			2006			2007			2008			2009			2010			2011			2012			2013			2014			2015^	
		М	F	Total	М		Total	М		Total	М		Total	М		Total	М	F	Total												
	<16	*	*	22	*	*	11	*	*	13	0	8	8	*	*	11	0	9	9	0	*	*	*	*	8	0	6	6	*	*	5
_	16-19	87	220	307	115	206	321	93	243	336	113	236	349	105	192	297	104	191	295	87	177	264	85	175	260	70	194	264	78	162	240
l∺ë	20-24	445	458	903	375	342	717	477	385	862	447	327	774	423	338	761	424	374	798	390	329	719	387	396	783	391	443	834	336	309	645
<u> </u>	25-34	362	239	601	365	205	570	371	220	591	416	201	617	373	220	593	390	191	581	366	217	583	362	200	562	359	223	582	318	162	480
<u>a</u>	35-44	80	39	119	65	36	101	76	27	103	81	39	120	96	28	124	71	20	91	77	29	106	78	35	113	85	42	127	70	34	104
Chlamydia	45+	*	*	27	*	*	23	*	*	41	33	5	38	*	*	46	47	9	56	39	*	*	*	*	44	45	9	54	*	*	60
0	Total	993	986	1,979	938	805	1,743	1,050	896	1,946	1,090	816	1,906	1,036	796	1,832	1,036	794	1,830	959	764	1,723	946	824	1,770	950	917	1,867	856	678	1534
	% in MSM	6%			4%			4%			11%			14%			15%			10%			12%			17%			14%		
	<16	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	*	*	*	*	*	0	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	0	*
ές.	16-19	*	*	15	27	7	34	15	5	20	19	8	27	12	9	21	17	15	32	*	22	*	46	42	88	27	48	75	35	43	78
ĕ	20-24	58	17	75	44	7	51	56	10	66	36	15	51	61	13	74	87	38	125	116	44	160	117	66	183	136	78	214	157	54	211
غ ا	25-34	55	7	62	*	*	49	58	13	71	69	8	77	51	6	57	93	19	112	123	38	161	143	45	188	164	39	203	183	33	216
6	35-44	*	*	32	*	*	21	*	*	45	*	*	16	*	*	32	*	*	40	*	*	44	48	9	57	47	8	55	*	*	67
3onorrhoea^	45+	*	*	11	17	0	17	*	*	24	*	*	9	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	41	*	*	*	*	*		*	*	*
ĕ	Total	163	32	195	155	17	172	194	32	226	148	32	180	172	32	204	259	77	336	347	111	458	384	165	549	424	177	601	483	136	619
	% in MSM	24%			29%			29%			29%			34%			56%			65%			46%			64%			64%		
	<16	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	16-19	0	*	*	*	0	*	*	0	*	0	0	0	0	0	0	*	*	*	*	0	*	*	0	*	*		*	*	*	*
<u>.s.</u>	20-24	*		13	5	0	5	*	*	10	*	*		*	*	12	5	0	5	15	0	15	*		13	11	*	13	*	0	*
ਾ≣	25-34	10	0	10	*	*	9	*	*	10	*		11	18	0	18	11	0	11	18	0	18	*		19	12	*	13	14	*	16
Syphilis	35-44	*	0	*	*	0	*	*	0	*	9	0	9	6	0	6	*	*	*	8	0	8	*	0	*	5	*	7	*	*	9
S)	45+	*	0	*	*	0	*	8	0	8	6	0	6	*	*	10	10	0	10	*	0	*	10	0	10	*	0	*	9	0	9
	Total	*	*	30	*	*	22	*	*	33	*	*	29	*	*	46	*	*	38	50	0	50	48	*	*	34	7	41	40	5	45
	% in MSM	52%			52%			45%			78%			75%			78%			90%			83%			76%			75%		
	<16	0	*	*	0	*	*	0	*	*	0	*	*	0	*	*	0	6	6	0	5	5	0	0	0	0		•	0	*	*
	16-19	7	33	40	5	44	49	11	58	69	7	43	50	10	57	67	5	71	76	10	39	49	7	47	54	6	54	60	7	52	59
ģ	20-24	21	60	81	32	53	85	11	78	89	38	56	94	42	87	129	30	68	98	32	75	107	33	71	104	36	81	117	40	71	111
Herpes	25-34	39	52	91	27	55	82	38	47	85	41	80	121	52	79	131	56	65	121	50	72	122	55	85	140	76	69	145	47	71	118
<u>ē</u>	35-44	18	21	39	26	13	39	8	19	27	17	32	49	36	21	57	24	26	50	18	18	36	21	32	53	24	27	51	30	28	58
_	45+	6	*	*	13	*	*	10	*	*	18	*	*	13	*	*	14	21	35	17	21	38	14	20	34	14	*	*	17	*	*
	Total	91	183	274	103	173	276	78	218	296	121	225	346	153	258	411	129	257	386	127	230	357	130	255	385	156	259	415	141	240	381
	% in MSM	2%			4%			6%			7%			12%			11%			10%			23%			16%			14%		
	<16	*	•	11	*	*	5	٠	*	10	*	*	18	*	*	11	•	*	10	0	10	10	0	6	6	0	•	•	*	*	*
	16-19	122	270	392	88	216	304	100	253	353	95	217	312	107	230	337	104	245	349	88	200	288	78	183	261	78	172	250	*	*	196
ıγ	20-24	440	356	796	384	326	710	419	369	788	444	334	778	432	342	774	467	394	861	475	314	788	419	276	695	401	308	709	365	259	624
Warts	25-34	401	249	650	387	227	614	439	262	701	400	221	621	442	255	697	448	254	702	462	278	739	427	232	659	456	226	682	371	214	585
Ĭ	35-44	123	95	218	131	70	201	119	88	207	138	86	224	135	74	209	138	91	229	124	82	206	160	64	224	142	81	223	126	83	209
	45+	*	*	89	*	*	95	*	*	84	*	*	133	*	*	98	*	*	154	99	58	157	89	55	144	100	*	*	80	*	*
	Total	1,142	1,014	2,156	1,050	879	1,929	1,132	1,011	2,143	1,160	926	2,086	1,179	947	2,126	1,237	1,068	2,305	1,248	942	2,188	1,173	816	1,989	1,177	843	2,020	1,016	730	1,746
	% in MSM	2%			3%			2%			6%			8%			8%			10%			9%			9%			9%		
Total diagnose		6,292				5,110		6,546			6,966				5,222			5,729					5,728	4,752	10,480		4,937	10,890	5,481	4,186	9,667
Total workload	l	8,871	7,104	15,975	8,480	6,488	14,968	9,897	8,321	18,218	11,903	9,698	21,601	13,242	10,542	23,784	14,035	11,704	25,739	16,140	11,887	28,027	15,720	11,381	27,101	16,955	12,129	29,084	15,446	10,842	26,288

#### Notes on using these tables:

% in MSM represents the propotion of the total male diagnoses attributed to men who have sex with men (MSM)

^ It is likely that the use of more sensitive Nucleic Acid Amplification Tests (NAATs) has contributed to the increase in gonorrhoea.

#### \* Data is confidentia

Following recent ONS guidance on data disclosure, the rules on publication of STI data with small cell sizes have changed. Cells with a value between 1 and 4 will now be anonymised with an astrix. In addition, where the anonymised cell can be deduced from the totals, the next smallest cells will also be anonymised.

Due to a GUM clinic migrating to new GUMCAD softw are using SHHAPT codes figures from 2012 have been recalculated to include B5 (complicated gonorrhoea) and C4B (complicated chlamydia) and SHHAPT code B and C4

#### Definitions of selected conditions:

Chlamydia Genital chlamydial infection, KC60 code C4a, C4c & C4B and SHHAPT code C4

Gonorrhoea Gonorrhoea, KC80 code B1, B2 & B5 and SI+HAPT code B
Syphilis primary and secondary infectious syphilis, KC80 code A1, A2
Herpes angenital herpes simplex (first attack), KC90 code C10a
Warts anogenital warts (first attack), KC90 code C11a
Total diagnoses
Total workload all diagnoses made, includes all A, B, C and E KC80 codes

Appendix 3: Rates of new episodes of selected diagnoses by gender and age group, Northern Ireland, 2006-2015

			2006	2006		2007		2008				2009			2010			2011			2012			2013			2014			2015^	5^	
		М	F	Total	М	F	Total	M	F	Total	M	F	Total	M	F	Total	M	F	Total	М	F	Total	М	F	Total	М	F	Total	М	F	Total	
	<16	*	*	28.8	*	*	14.6	*	*	17.4	0.0	22.1	10.8	*	*	14.9	0.0	25.0	12.2	0.0	*	*	*	*	11.2	0.0	17.7	8.6	*	*	7.4	
	16-19	161.1	427.1	291.0	215.4	402.6	307.0	176.1	481.1	325.3	216.4	471.1	341.1	203.0	386.2	292.8	203.1	387.7		171.6	364.3	265.9	167.9	365.0	263.8	139.0	409.0	269.9	155.8	342.3	246.4	
Chlamydia	20-24	718.5	753.3	735.7	593.0	548.5	570.9	749.5	610.9	680.6	697.1	519.2	609.0	663.5	540.7	602.7	669.5	606.0	638.2	619.1	540.5	580.4	625.3	656.6	640.8	634.2	739.8	686.2	546.5	523.2	535.1	
2	25-34	314.2	201.1	256.8	313.3	169.8	240.3	314.5	179.6	245.8	349.5	162.5	254.2	311.0	176.3	242.3	324.6	152.1	236.4	302.4	172.0	235.9	299.1	158.5	227.3	295.0	176.9	234.9	260.2	128.8	193.6	
<u>a</u>	35-44	62.1	29.3	45.4	50.2	27.0	38.4	58.8	20.2	39.2	63.4	29.4	46.1	76.2	21.4	48.3	57.3	15.5	36.0	63.3	22.9	42.7	65.6	28.1	46.4	72.5	33.9	52.7	59.9	27.5	43.3	
<u> </u>	45+	*	*	4.2	*	*	3.5	*	*	6.1	10.3	1.4	5.6	*	*	6.6	14.0	2.4	7.9	11.4	*	*	*	*	6	12.7	2.3	7.2	*	*	7.9	
"	Total	116.4	110.8	113.5	108.8	89.5	98.9	120.6	98.7	109.4	124.1	89.2	106.3	117.1	86.5	101.5	116.5	85.8	100.9	107.2	82.2	94.5	105.4	88.4	96.7	105.2	97.8	101.4	94.2	71.9	82.8	
	<16	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	*	*	0.0	*	*	*	*	*	0.0	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	0	*	
a	16-19	*	*	14.2	50.6	13.7	32.5	28.4	9.9	19.4	36.4	16.0	26.4	23.2	18.1	20.7	33.2	30.4	31.9	*	45.3	*	90.9	87.6	89.3	53.6	101.2	-	69.9	90.8	80.1	
ĕ	20-24	93.6	28.0	61.1	69.6	11.2	40.6	88.0	15.9	52.1	56.1	23.8	40.1	95.7	20.8	58.6	137.4	61.6			72.3	129.2	189.1	109.4	149.8	220.6	130.3		255.3	91.4	175	
Ē	25-34	47.7	5.9	26.5	*	*	20.7	49.2	10.6	29.5	58.0	6.5	31.7	42.5	4.8	23.3	77.4	15.1		101.6	30.1	65.1	118.2	35.7	76.0	134.7	30.9	81.9	149.7	26.2	87.1	
2	35-44	*	*	12.2	*	*	8.0	*	*	17.1	*	*	6.1	*	*	12.5	*	*	15.8	*	*	17.7	40.4	7.2	23.4	40.1	6.5	22.8	*	*	27.9	
Gonorrhoea	45+	*	*	1.7	5.6	0.0	2.6	*	*	3.6	*	*	1.3	*	*	2.7	*	*	*	*	*	5.7	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	
0	Total	19.1	3.6	11.2	18.0	1.9	9.8	22.3	3.5	12.7	16.8	3.5	10.0	19.4	3.5	11.3	29.1	8.3	18.5	38.8	11.9	25.1	42.8	17.7	30.0	47.0	18.9	32.7	53.1	14.4	33.4	
	40	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	- 0.0	
	<16 16-19	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	
<u>.v.</u>	20-24	*		10.6	7.9	0.0	4.0	*	*	7.9	*	v.u	0.0	0.0	*	9.5	7.9	0.0	4.0	23.8	0.0	12.1	*	*	10.6	17.0		10.7	*	0.0		
Ξ	25-34	8.7	0.0	4.3	*	*	3.8	*	*	4.2	*	*	4.5	15.0	0.0	7.4	9.2	0.0	4.5	14.9	0.0	7.3	*	*	7.7	17.8 9.9	*	5.2	11.5	*	6.5	
Syphilis	35-44	*	0.0	*	*	0.0	*	*	0.0	0.8	7.0	0.0	3.5	4.8	0.0	2.3	*	*	*	6.6	0.0	3.2	*	0.0	*	4.3	*	2.9	*	*	3.7	
တ	45+	*	0.0	*	*	0.0	*	2.6	0.0	1.2	1.9	0.0	0.9	*	*	1.4	3.0	0.0	1.4	*	0.0	*	2.9	0.0	1.4	*	0.0	*	2.5	0.0	1.2	
	Total	*	*	1.7	*	*	1.2	*	*	1.9	*	*	1.6	*	*	2.5	*	*	2.1	5.6	0.0	2.7	5.4	*	*	3.8	0.7	2.2	4.4	0.5	2.4	
	<16	0.0	*	*	0.0	*	*	0.0	*	*	0.0	*	*	0.0	*	*	0.0	16.7	8.1	0.0	14.0	6.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	*	*	0.0	*	*	
	16-19	13.0	64.1	37.9	9.4	86.0	46.9	20.8	114.8	66.8	13.4	85.8	48.9	19.3	114.7	66.1	9.8	144.1	75.6	19.7	80.3	49.4	13.8	98.0	54.8	11.9	113.8	61.3	14.0	109.9	60.6	
Herpes	20-24	33.9	98.7	66.0	50.6	85.0	67.7	17.3	123.8	70.3	59.3	88.9	74.0	65.9	139.2	102.2	47.4	110.2	78.4	50.8	123.2	86.4	53.3	117.7	85.1	58.4	135.3	96.3	65.1	120.2	92.1	
<u> </u>	25-34	33.8	43.8	38.9	23.2	45.5	34.6	32.2	38.4	35.3	34.4	64.7	49.8	43.4	63.3	53.5	46.6	51.8	49.2	41.3	57.1	49.4	45.4	67.3	56.6	62.4	54.7	58.5	38.5	56.5	47.6	
Ξ̈	35-44	14.0	15.8	14.9	20.1	9.7	14.8	6.2	14.2	10.3	13.3	24.1	18.8	28.6	16.1	22.2	19.4	20.2	19.8	14.8	14.2	14.5	17.7	25.6	21.8	20.5	21.8	21.2	25.7	22.7	24.1	
	45+	2.0	*	*	4.2	*	*	3.2	*	*	5.6	*	*	4.0	*	*	4.2	5.6	4.9	5.0	5.5	5.3	4.0	5.2	4.6	3.9	*	*	4.7	*	*	
	Total	10.7	20.6	15.7	11.9	19.2	15.7	9.0	24.0	16.6	13.8	24.6	19.3	17.3	28.0	22.8	14.5	27.8	21.3	14.2	24.8	19.6	14.5	27.3	21.0	17.3	27.6	22.5	15.5	25.5	20.6	
	<16	*	*	14.4	*	*	6.6	*	*	13.4	*	*	24.2	*	*	14.9	*	*	13.6	0.0		13.6	0.0	17.2	8.4	0.0	*	*	*	*		
	16-19	226.0	524.2	371.6	164.8		290.7	189.4	500.9	341.7	182.0	433.2	305.0		462.7	332.3	203.1	497.3	347.4		411.7		154.1	381.7	264.8	154.9	362.6				201.2	
Σ	20-24	710.4	585.5	648.6		522.8	565.3	658.4	585.5	622.1	692.4	530.4	612.1		547.1	613.0	737.4	638.4	688.5		515.8		677.0	457.6	568.8		514.3	583.4	593.6	438.6	517.7	
Warts	25-34	348.0	209.6	277.7	332.2		258.8	372.1	213.9	291.5	336.0	178.6	255.8	368.6	204.3	284.8	372.8	202.3	285.7	381.7		299.4	352.8	183.8	266.5	374.7	179.2	-	303.6	170.2	235.9	
≥	35-44	95.4	71.4	83.2	101.2	52.5	76.5	92.1	65.9	78.8	108.0	64.9	86.0	107.1	56.6	81.4	111.4	70.6	90.6	102.0	64.7	83.0	134.6	51.3	91.9	121.1	65.4	92.5	107.7	67.2	86.9	
	45+ Total	133.9	112.0	13.9 123.7	121.8	07.7	14.5 109.5	130.0	111 2	12.6 120.5	132.0	101.2	19.5 116.3	122.2	102 C	14.1	139.1	115 F	21.7 127.0	28.9 139.5	15.2 101.4	21.7	25.5	14.2 87.5	19.6 108.7	28.2	89.9	109.8	22.2 111.8	77.5	94.3	
	Iotai	133.9	113.9	123.7	121.8	91.7	109.5	130.0	111.3	120.5	132.0	101.2	116.3	133.3	102.9	117.8	139.1	115.5	127.0	139.5	101.4	120.1	130.7	07.5	108.7	130.4	69.9	109.8	111.8	11.5	94.3	
																				<u> </u>												

#### Notes on using these tables

Diagnoses are calculated on GUM clinics in the region, rates are calculated for the region's resident population

Diagnostic rates for specific age groups were estimated by dividing the annual number of diagnoses in each age bracket by the estimated mid-year resident population of Northern reland for each age group. The denominators used to calculate rates in people under 16 and over 44 years of age were the population aged 13 to 15, and the population aged over 44 years respectively. The total population was used for the calculation of overall rates.

2001-2011 rates have been revised using revised mid year estimates to take into account the 2011 Census

Due to a GUM clinic migrating to new GUMCAD softw are using SHHAPT codes figures from 2012 have been recalculated to include B5 (complicated gonorrhoea) and C4B (complicated chiamydia) and SHHAPT code B and C4

#### \* Data is confidential

Following recent ONS guidance on data disclosure, the rules on publication of STI data with small cell sizes have changed. Cells with a value between 1 and 4 will now be anonymised with an astrix. In addition, where the anonymised cell can be deduced from the totals, the next smallest cells will also be anonymised.

#### Definitions of selected conditions:

Chlamydia Genital chlamydial infection, KC60 code C4a, C4c & C4B and SHHAPT code C4

Gonorrhoea Gonorrhoea, KC60 code B1, B2 & B5 and SHHAPT code B
Syphilis primary and secondary infectious syphilis, KC60 code A1, A2
Herpes anogenital herpes simplex (first attack), KC60 code C10a
Warts anogenital warts (first attack), KC60 code C11a



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