



Topic: Sexually Transmitted Disease

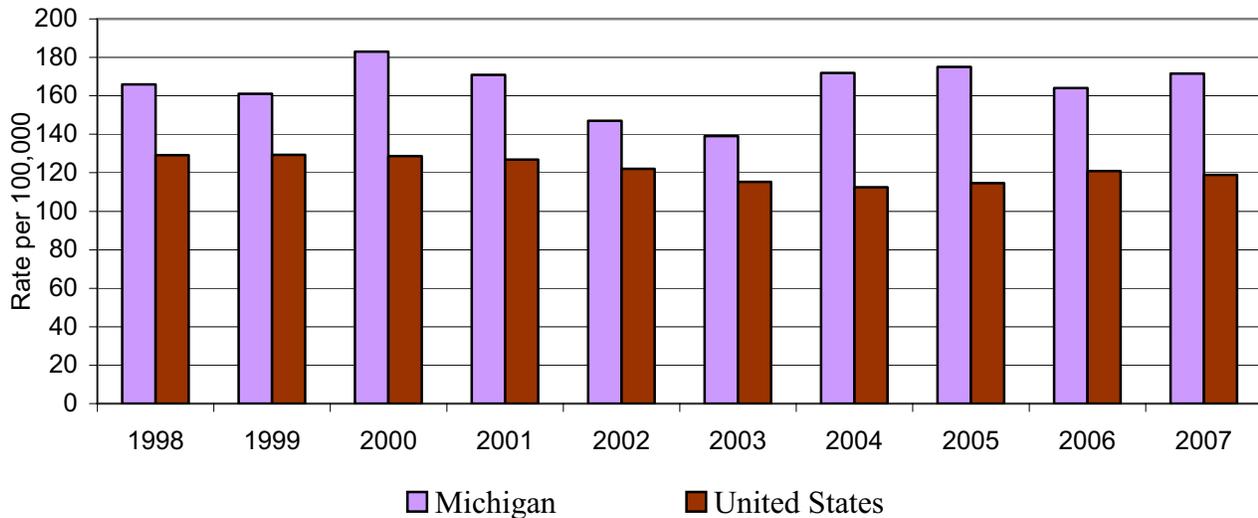
35. Gonorrhea

Gonorrhea is a bacterial infection spread through sexual contact. It is one of the most common sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) in the United States, responsible for over 300,000 cases each year.

Gonorrhea can be successfully treated with antibiotics, but individuals infected with gonorrhea remain infectious until they are diagnosed and treated. Many infections are asymptomatic, and, therefore, difficult to diagnose. Current program resources make it difficult to identify, treat, and provide partner referral to every person infected with gonorrhea.

How are we doing?

Gonorrhea Incidence Rates



In the last decade, the rate of gonorrhea incidence in Michigan has varied from a low of 139 cases per 100,000 in 2003 to a high of 183 in 2000. The 2007 rate was 174 cases per 100,000 with the highest rates in the City of Detroit, and in Genesee, Muskegon, Berrien, and Calhoun Counties. As rates and number of reported cases remain steady while targeting screening to those populations at highest risk, Michigan’s goal is to continue current screening and surveillance practices.

How does Michigan compare with the U.S.?

The rate of gonorrhea in Michigan at 174 per 100,000 population in 2007 is significantly higher than the national rate of 118.9 (provisional) per 100,000.

How are different populations affected?

The highest rates of gonorrhea are found among those 15-24 years old, who accounted for 62% of the cases in 2007. Rates of gonorrhea are higher among women (200 per 100,000) compared to men (147 per 100,000). Rates are significantly higher among Blacks, regardless of gender. The rate among Black women is 16.7 times higher than for White women. The rate among Black men is 52 times higher than



for White men. Rates are somewhat higher among Hispanic men and women when compared to rates for White men and women. Given that sexual activity does not vary by race, this rate is evidence that once a pathogen is in a community or social network, the likelihood of acquiring that infection increases significantly, and higher rates of transmission are the result.

Males are more often symptomatic and treated presumptively (without testing), based on symptoms. Young females are at increased risk for infection because an immature cervix has a thin layer of epithelium; this provides less protection from bacteria than a mature cervix.

What is the Department of Community Health doing to improve this indicator?

The MDCH is working to decrease the prevalence of gonorrhea and its health consequences. The Department participates in the national Infertility Prevention Project (IPP). Adolescents and young adults are populations on which Michigan places special emphasis; IPP is the core of these efforts.

The Division of Health, Wellness and Disease Control, STD Section has been awarded \$750,000 to identify and treat infections in the highest risk population. As part of this, a Request For Proposal (RFP) was released in which 4-6 awards will be made to applicants best demonstrating their ability to screen at least 350 adolescent/young adults ages 15-24 who are considered high risk.

The MDCH and local public health personnel provide follow-up and partner referral to persons testing positive for gonorrhea, with priority placed on females of child bearing age. The Department is exploring innovative methods of partner management, including expedited partner therapy. The MDCH distributes antibiotics to local health department clinics to treat gonorrhea and also provides presentations on the gonorrhea epidemic in Michigan. Increased screening is encouraged as part of local health department reviews, and IPP program evaluation.