



CWHS

Data Points

RESULTS FROM THE CALIFORNIA WOMEN'S HEALTH SURVEY

Chlamydia, a sexually transmitted disease (STD), is the most commonly reported communicable disease in California.¹ Untreated infections in women are associated with adverse health outcomes such as pelvic inflammatory disease, ectopic pregnancy, and infertility.² Because most women with chlamydia have no symptoms, screening tests are necessary to identify infections for timely treatment and to prevent long-term adverse outcomes.

Correct and specific knowledge about chlamydia contributes to women's awareness of the importance of accessing STD screening. Knowledge of chlamydia may also increase protective behaviors (e.g., condom use). The California STD Control Branch sought to assess the extent of this knowledge.

In 2007, California Women's Health Survey participants were asked, "Have you ever heard of Chlamydia?". Respondents who answered affirmatively were then asked, "What have you heard?". Response options reflecting specific and correct knowledge included: it is an STD; young women get it; it can cause health problems such as infertility; and Other. Multiple responses were allowed. Free-text responses to "Other" were coded as either correct or incorrect knowledge about chlamydia.

Analyses were restricted to women ages 18 to 44 (N = 2,218) and were stratified by age, race/ethnicity, and sexual risk assessment (i.e., "During the past 12 months, did a doctor or other health care

provider talk to you about your personal sexual behavior?"). Chi-square statistics were calculated for comparisons of proportions. Responses were weighted in these analyses by age and race/ethnicity to reflect the 2000 California adult female population.

- Overall, 79.1 percent of respondents reported having heard of chlamydia. No significant differences by age were observed.
- Higher proportions of White and African American/Black women reported having heard of chlamydia (95.5 percent and 93.9 percent, respectively) than Hispanic women (59.1 percent) or Asian/Other women (68.6 percent; all $P < .0001$).
- Hispanic women interviewed in English were substantially more likely to have heard of chlamydia (89.9 percent) than were those interviewed in Spanish (39.8 percent; $P < .0001$), but still less likely than White women (95.5 percent; $P < .01$).
- Among respondents who had heard of chlamydia, 76.8 percent provided at least one specific and correct example of knowledge about the disease, with women ages 25 to 44 significantly more likely to have correct knowledge of chlamydia (78.7 percent) than women ages 18 to 24 (70.4 percent; $P < .05$) (see Figure 1).

Differences in Knowledge of Chlamydia Among California Women, by Age, Race/Ethnicity, and Receipt of Sexual Risk Assessment, 2007

California Department of Public Health
Sexually Transmitted Disease Control Branch
Division of Communicable Disease Control
Center for Infectious Diseases

Public Health Message:

Targeted awareness and health education interventions, including efforts to improve sexual risk assessments, could have an impact on chlamydia awareness and specific knowledge among younger women, Spanish-speaking Hispanic women, and Asian women. This could increase their likelihood of accessing STD services, including recommended screening and other risk-reduction resources.

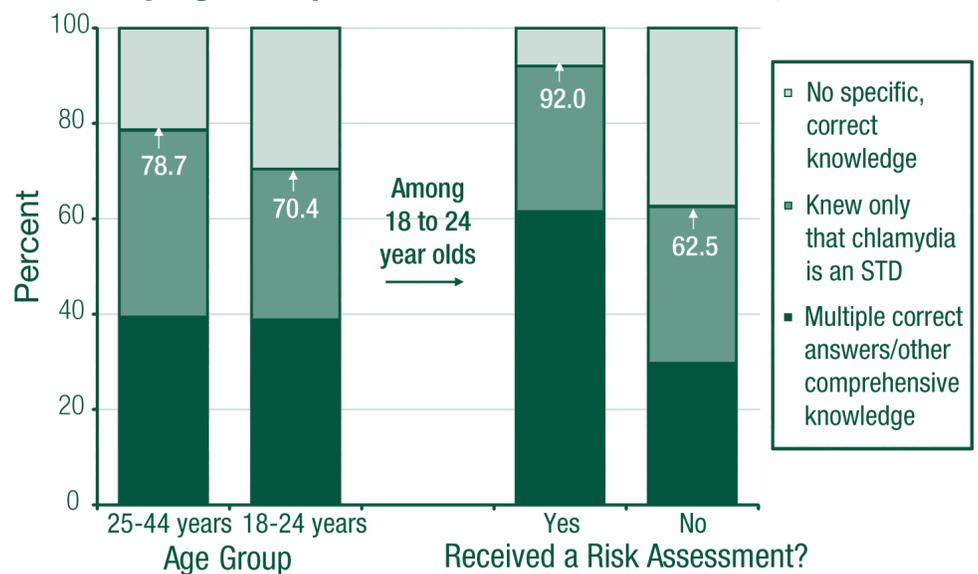
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- Of women who had heard of chlamydia, 39.3 percent identified multiple/other comprehensive facts; an additional 37.5 percent identified only that chlamydia is an STD.
- A greater proportion of Hispanic women (81.5 percent) demonstrated specific and correct knowledge of chlamydia than did White women (74.8 percent, $P < .05$). Although 83.1 percent of African American/Black women and 71.9 percent of Asian/Other women reported specific knowledge of chlamydia, these were based on small numbers and comparisons with White respondents and were not significant.
- Only 20.3 percent of women ages 18 to 44 received a sexual risk assessment in the previous year. Women ages 18 to 24 were more likely to have received a risk assessment (25.7 percent) than women ages 25 to 44 (18.6 percent; $P < .05$).
- Among women ages 18 to 24, those who received a risk assessment demonstrated greater knowledge of chlamydia (92.0 percent; see Figure 1), including 60 percent who identified multiple/other comprehensive facts, compared to those without an assessment (62.5 percent; $P < .0001$). Among women ages 25 to 44, no differences in knowledge of chlamydia were observed between those with a risk assessment and those without, including the proportion citing multiple/other comprehensive facts.

Figure 1

Proportion of California Women With Correct and Specific Knowledge of Chlamydia, Among Those Who Have Heard of Chlamydia, by Age Group and Risk Assessment Status, 2007



Source: California Women's Health Survey, 2007

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of Chlamydia Among
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- 1 *Sexually Transmitted Diseases in California, 2007*. California Department of Public Health, STD Control Branch; 2008. <http://www.cdph.ca.gov/data/statistics/Documents/STD-Data-2007-Report.pdf>. Accessed July 2009.
- 2 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). CDC Fact Sheet - *Chlamydia; 2007*. <http://www.cdc.gov/std/Chlamydia/STDFact-Chlamydia.htm>. Accessed July 2009.

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