

# Sexually Transmitted Diseases

## The Way They Affect Women

- Activity
- Presentation
- Additional Information

## Objectives

- **Knowledge**

Providing information about sexually transmitted diseases.

- **Attitude**

Understanding the relationship between STDs and HIV.

- **Skill**

Identifying symptoms of STDs and motivating the client and his partner to seek treatment.

- **Expected outcome**

To acquire knowledge about STDs and the ability to identify and motivate clients to seek help.

To understand the need to intervene in case of STDs, which in turn reduces the risk of HIV/AIDS.

- **Lesson plan**

Activity 1      Clarifying myths about HIV.

Presentation    Introduction to STD and why STDs remain hidden.

Activity 2      Understanding the symptoms related to STDs.

Presentation    Commonly seen problems in men and women with STD.

Activity 3      Treatment for STDs.

Presentation    Steps to be taken for treatment.  
The relationship between STDs and HIV.

Activity 4      Communicating appropriately.

## Introduction

Sexually transmitted diseases (STD) are diseases which are transmitted from person to person mainly through sexual contact. In STDs, the genital region is affected. They were earlier named "venereal diseases" (VDs). There is a strong association between the occurrence of HIV infection and the presence of certain STDs. Therefore, early diagnosis and effective treatment of such STDs forms an important strategy for the prevention of HIV transmission.

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### **Why do STDs remain hidden so often? (transparency)**

- Men with STDs, often hide it from their partners.
- Many sexually transmitted infections in women are asymptomatic, hence there is no urge to seek healthcare.
- Many women have limited understanding and awareness of sexual and reproductive health. As a result, even in the presence of symptoms, these are frequently ignored, or not associated with STD.
- Home remedies are seen to be adequate treatment as women feel awkward to discuss sex-related issues with doctors.
- There is apprehension that if she is detected with STD, she will be labelled as one with "loose morals".

## Activity 1 - Clarifying myths

### **Purpose**

To learn about the beliefs prevalent in the community.

To clarify myths and facts related to sexually transmitted diseases.

### **Materials needed**

Chart papers and pens

**Time needed** 20 minutes

**Methodology** 'Fact hunt'

### **Steps**

1. Divide the group into two.
2. Ask the group members to list out the various beliefs prevalent in the community.
3. The list prepared by the first group will be taken up for discussion by the second group. The second group members will state whether that belief is a myth or a fact. Similarly, the list prepared by the second group will be taken up for discussion by the first group.
4. At the end of the activity, list out the myths and facts.

### **Facilitator's Notes**

Some of the common mistaken notions prevalent in the community are:

- STDs are "women's diseases."
- A woman gets STD if she has sex during periods.
- A girl cannot get STD before she has had her first periods.
- Heat is the cause for STD. Long distance driving can cause heat.
- Sex with a virgin, child or animal will cure STD.
- Over the counter medicines will cure the illnesses.
- Once a person has had STD and has been cured, he cannot get it again.
- A woman can get STD only if the man ejaculates inside her.
- Take a shot of penicillin before or after a visit to a sex worker and you can prevent getting infected.
- Washing genitals after sex protects the person from infection.
- Only genital contact will cause transmission.

## Activity 2 - Understanding the symptoms related to STDs

### **Purpose**

To learn the various symptoms related to sexually transmitted diseases and in turn, help women who have symptoms akin to STDs.

### **Materials needed**

Several cards with symptoms of STDs.

Three cardboard boxes with names - syphilis, gonorrhea and chancroid.

### **Methodology**            'Locating the hidden thief'

### **Steps**

1. Keep three cardboards with the names written - syphilis, gonorrhea and chancroid.
2. Prepare several cards with one symptom written on each card.
3. Shuffle the cards and ask the participants to pick up one card each.
4. Ask the participants to identify the symptoms and keep the particular card in that cardboard which represents the illness to which that symptom belongs.

### **Facilitator's Notes**

#### **Symptoms of syphilis**

- Boil or ulcer on the genitals or extra genital ulcers.
- Rash on the whole body.
- Painless enlargement of local lymph nodes (groin).

#### **Symptoms of gonorrhea**

- Acute urethritis in male (burning sensation while urinating).
- Urethritis and cervicitis in female.
- Abscess.
- Urethral stricture.
- Smelly discharge.

#### **Symptoms of chancroid**

- Multiple ulcers which are tender on the genitals.
- Pain on the penis.

### **Commonly seen problems in men with STD (Transparencies for Presentation)**

- Genital ulcer / pimple or a rash.
- Discharge from urethra.
- Pain or burning sensation while passing urine.
- Blisters on and around the genitals.
- Swelling in the groin and scrotum.

### **Commonly seen problems in women with STD (Transparencies for Presentation)**

- Some may not have any symptoms.
- Pain in the lower abdomen.
- Vaginal discharge / burning micturation / itching in genital region.
- Ulcers or blisters around the genitals and swelling in the groin / lymph nodes.
- Low back pain.
- Irregular menstruation with either scanty or excessive bleeding.
- Still birth if pregnant.
- Discharge from eyes in new born.
- Infertility.

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## Activity 3 - Treatment for STDs

### **Purpose**

To learn the steps involved in the treatment of sexually transmitted diseases.

### **Materials needed**

Different cards are prepared with information on treatment - some relevant and some irrelevant.

**Time needed** 15 minutes.

**Methodology** 'The perfect match'

### **Steps**

1. Shuffle the cards
2. Ask the participants to pick up cards that are relevant in the treatment of STDs and arrange them in the order of appropriate management of STDs.

#### Cards

- Bring down the body heat by taking cucumber, tender coconut etc.
- Inform the sexual partner and provide treatment for her.
- If positive, take medicines prescribed by the physician without fail.
- Discontinue medicines as soon as symptoms decrease.
- Consult the physician if symptoms continue.
- Have sex with a virgin.
- Proper medical examination or undergo laboratory tests.
- Take birth control pills.
- Not to have sex until all the symptoms disappear or the course of the medication is completed.
- Immediately take one shot of penicillin.
- Wash the genitals / vagina with disinfectant continuously for one month.
- Condoms will stop the spread of STD. Get cured by using condoms.
- Do not inform sexual partner as she may get upset.
- Consult a trained medical practitioner .

### **Facilitator's Notes**

The steps involved in the treatment of STDs

- Consult a trained medical practitioner.
- Proper medical examination or undergo laboratory tests.
- If positive, take medicines prescribed by the physician without fail.
- Not to have sex till all the symptoms disappear or the course of medication is completed.
- Inform the sexual partner and provide treatment for her.
- Consult the physician if symptoms continue.

### **Treatment for STD (Transparencies for Presentation)**

- Consult a medical practitioner followed by medical examination and laboratory testing.
- Take medicines prescribed by the doctor without fail. Complete and continue the treatment even if symptoms disappear.
- Not to have sex till all symptoms disappear or the course of medication is completed. In case, there is a need to have sex, use condoms.
- Inform the sexual partner and refer her for treatment.
- In case the symptoms persist, contact the medical practitioner for an evaluation.

### **Relationship between STDs and HIV (Transparencies for Presentation)**

- The predominant mode of transmission of HIV and STD is sexual.
- Many STDs significantly enhance the acquisition and transmission of HIV.
- Many of the measures for preventing the sexual transmission of HIV and STD are the same.

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## Activity 4 - Appropriate communication

### **Purpose**

To help in understanding the methodology of communicating information appropriately to the client.

### **Materials needed**

Copies of caselets

**Time needed** 30 minutes.

**Methodology** 'Role Play'

### **Steps**

1. One person has to role play as client and another as the community worker.
2. The community worker has to break the news that the client may have STD and provide her information about STDs and make her understand the need to consult a physician.
3. Four of them can be selected as observers and they can note down the positive and the negative aspects of community worker's communication.

### **Caselets**

- a) Anuradha is leading a happy marital life in a small town. She developed pain in the abdomen and there was vaginal discharge. She approached the female community worker. The community worker suspected that they may be symptoms of STD.

*What information will you provide to Anuradha?*

- b) Bhavani is an unmarried young girl of 20 years. She was accompanied by her mother. Bhavani complained of burning sensation and discomfort while urinating. She has had sexual relationship with her boyfriend which the mother is not aware of.

*What will you say to the mother and the girl?*

## Facilitator's Notes

Anuradha to be provided information on

- STD and its symptoms.
- Method of transmission.
- Treatment regimen.
- The need to inform and provide treatment to her husband.

Bhavani

- Talk to Bhavani in private to ensure if any sexual relations did exist.
- Talk to her mother in private about the possibility of STD diagnosis and provide opportunities to help her deal with her emotions.
- Make them understand the need for appropriate treatment.