Website Reviews

Websites for information on sexually transmitted infections

Other websites for information on sexually transmitted infections and other genital infections. These can be downloaded using Adobe Acrobat (pdf files). Educational resources, including STIF courses, and details of forthcoming conferences are also listed. The website provides a link to the members’ site that requires registration and you can download an application pack to join the Association. A link to the Faculty of Family Planning and Reproductive Health Care website is included to refer viewers to guidelines on contraceptive issues. Some of these new websites are still under construction. Website: http://bashh.org

The Society of Sexual Health Advisers provides an excellent site. The site map is clearly divided into areas of interest and a click takes you to sections for the public and for professionals. The website section contains an easy-to-use map with the locations of all the GUM clinics and their contact details, together with information about what happens at a GUM clinic. The information on STIs is excellent too — a model of how to explain medical conditions. This is the only site that I felt I could recommend to both patients and professionals. Website: http://www.ssha.info/index.html

This website for the public has a North American slant to its links to relevant resources, references and information pages. It would be useful to recommend to someone newly diagnosed who really wants to read a lot. It does call STIs STDs, i.e. diseases, not illnesses, but the public are not too concerned about what they called! The main criticism is that none of the reference documents seem to be particularly recent. For example, the treatment guidelines link to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), for which free registration is required, is dated September 2002. Website: http://thebody.com/safesex/stdbasics.html

A link page hosted by the specialist STI journal published by the British Medical Journal lists almost everything professionals might need to know about STIs. Unfortunately, quite a few of the links did not work and the site needs updating. Website: http://sti.bmj.com/journals/misc/links.shtml

A visit to the North Thames Regional Audit Programme Genitourinary and HIV Medicine would enable you to evaluate your own audit activities and gain ideas about how to do it (or do it better). You can also download presentations on the management of various STIs or related conditions. These could be used to update your own knowledge and put in your personal development plan how the information will change your practice. Website: http://www.nthr.msc.demon.co.uk

The information previously found on the Public Health Laboratory Service website is now available on the Health Protection Agency site. Other sites are also available from this site. You will need Adobe Acrobat – the software for this can be downloaded via from this site if you have not done this already. Putting ‘STI’ into the search facility brings up many reports and the latest commissioned, 2-year project that aims to find out how a chlamydial screening programme might be cost-effectively designed, implemented and evaluated. The press release summarises the main features of the project. The six arms of the study are dealt with in great detail with meticulous attention to all factors. The website, which provides specifications on what will happen during each arm of the screening programme, is likely to appeal to our colleagues in public health and microbiology.

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Chlamydia websites

With the recent launch of the second phase of chlamydia screening by the Department of Health (DoH), it seems appropriate to review a few websites on chlamydia.

http://www.chlamydia.ac.uk is an excellent website for both the public and professionals. The website is authored and reviewed by well- respected experts in the field. There are three main sections (1) A–Z of chlamydia that encompasses the A–Z of chlamydia, (2) a FAQ section, for anxious and worried clients and (3) ‘about chlamydia’. The salient features are presented very clearly and in outline, quite graphic for quick reference. The fancy cartoons and the vivid illustrations liven up the website. The multilingual information and the feedback at the bottom of each page are likely to improve the user-friendliness of the website.

Health Promotion of England’s website at http://www.hpe.org.uk is linked to the DoH website http://www.dh.gov.uk and provides a wealth of material that includes information on the finished细节 on the health policies, could do well to have some information for the public on chlamydia. The other link to http://www.orgyn.com has a brief review of the signs and symptoms, transmission, diagnosis and treatment, and the long-term effects of chlamydial infection. The same information is duplicated in a fact sheet.

http://www.netdoctor.co.uk provides a general practitioner’s view of chlamydial infection. Information for both men and women are presented alongside each other, making the choice of information free from any possible implications for the partner. Whilst the complication of infertility in women is underplayed, ectopic pregnancy and pelvic pain get no mention at all.

A critical analysis of the screening programmes for chlamydia is provided at http://www.jr2ox.ac.uk/bandolier.html. The authors acknowledge that screening programmes are complex and that their implementation must be preceded by exhaustive thought and testing. Although the screening strategies examined are mostly in a North American setting, the results are very likely to be relevant to UK practice.

http://www.chlamydia.ac.uk is a website exclusively dedicated to ClaSS: chlamydia screening studies. ClaSS is a multicentre, NHS-funded Health Technology Assessment (HTA) commissioned, 2-year project that aims to find out how a chlamydial screening programme might be cost-effectively designed, implemented and evaluated. The press release summarises the main features of the project. The six arms of the study are dealt with in great detail with meticulous attention to all factors. The website, which provides specifications on what will happen during each arm of the screening programme, is likely to appeal to our colleagues in public health and microbiology.

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*J Fam Plann Reprod Health Care* 2004 30: 136
doi: 10.1783/147118904322995744

Updated information and services can be found at:
http://jfprhc.bmj.com/content/30/2/136.citation

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