

STIs, HIV and Educators

AFAO STIs Campaign

&

Reflections on HIV Educators
undertaking STI Health Promotion Work
Targeting Gay Men

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Overview

- AFAO National STI Campaign
- Some reflections on HIV Educators developing STI health promotion work
- Looking forward

AFAO National Gay Men & STIs Campaign

- Background: Why an STIs campaign?
 - STI epidemiology – rising prevalence of a number of STIs among gay men & MSM
 - High rates of asymptomatic infections among gay men in some Australian cities
 - STI testing rates among gay men & MSM low(ish)
 - Increased awareness of HIV/STI synergies
 - Transmission & acquisition
 - Manifestation of STIs among HIV positive men
 - Impact of STIs on HIV
 - Gay men: knowledge of STIs low – HIM Study

Campaign Aim

To reduce the impact of sexually transmissible infections on sexually active gay men & MSM

Objectives

- To improve knowledge among gay & MSM of the most common STIs
- Raise awareness of the symptoms of STIs, the possibility of asymptomatic infections and treatments
- Encourage regular presentation for STI screening by sexually active gay men

Objectives II

- Raise awareness of the impact of some STIs on the health of HIV positive men
- Encourage vaccination for hepatitis A and B among gay men
- Raise awareness of STIs & increased risk of HIV acquisition and transmission

Campaign Resources

- AFAO gained permission from the AIDS Council of NSW (ACON) to reproduce its booklet '*Last night I picked up someone... and something: A guide to sexually transmissible infections for gay men*' for national distribution.
- 40,000 copies of the booklet. Distribution in all states and territories other than Victoria.
- A campaign website with an HTML version of the booklet, incl. information on sexual health clinics (5,000 visitors per month)

Resources II

- Web banner advertisements placed on:
 - www.gaydar.com.au
 - www.mogenic.com
 - www.pinkboard.com.au
 - AIDS Council websites
- Posters
- Print advertisements
- Condom & lube packs (Safe Packs)



Last night I picked up someone ... and something!

A guide to sexually transmissible infections for gay men

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Sexually Transmissible Infections (STIs) are infections that are transmitted through close bodily contact, usually sexual. Sexual contact includes fucking, sucking, touching, fingering or kissing/licking a dick or arse.

This website provides basic information and colour pictures of some of the most common Sexually Transmissible Infections (STIs) found among gay men (HIV+ or HIV-). Some of these infections can be transmitted non-sexually.

The information on this website is only a guide as not everyone with an STI will show symptoms that look exactly the same as the ones illustrated here. Some people may have no obvious symptoms, others mild symptoms and some more severe.

If you think you have an STI, get a check up. If your doctor doesn't see many gay men or you don't want him/her to know you are gay, go to a sexual health centre ([see Contacts page](#)).

If you would like to read this information offline, [download the STIs booklet](#) as a PDF (887 KB), which you can read or print. You will need Adobe Acrobat to download this file. [Download Acrobat for free](#) from the Adobe website.

Capacity Building

- Additional aim of campaign was to use it as a vehicle to:
 - Build knowledge and capacity among AFAO member organisations in relation to STI education work
 - improve collaborative work and build better relationships between AIDS Councils and sexual health services

Case Study - WAAC

- WAAC implemented the AFAO STIs Campaign 2H/2004
- Key focus of campaign implementation involved building a partnership with Family Planning Western Australia (FPWA)
 - WAAC staff ran 3 in-house information sessions for FPWA staff on working with gay men
- WAAC & FPWA undertook joint advertising of STI clinical services & editorial placement
- Co-badged safe pack & cards
- Relationship resulted in FPWA's establishment of a Mens' Clinic one night per week

WAAC II

- FPWA Gay & MSM clients went from virtually nil to 132 over 3 months
- FPWA want to participate in future WAAC campaigns
- Better communication about HIV & STI issues between organisations

Reflections

- STIs have always been an issue for educators in face-to-face work with clients
- The increased focus on STIs in recent years has required (HIV) educators to become more expert & develop specific education and policy responses

Some complexities

- Differences between HIV & STI transmission risks
 - Consternation about reconciling these
 - Tensions with other stakeholders about appropriate advice
- Different manifestations of STIs – I.e. range in severity of symptoms, different manifestations in HIV positive men
- Asymptomatic STI infections
- Difficulties in tailoring STI testing guidelines

Complexities

- Gaps in epidemiological & surveillance data
 - Exposure categories
 - Lack of comprehensive program of screening studies & targeting difficulties
 - Importance of building relationships between AIDS Council & sexual health services, high caseload GPs – eg. STIGMA
- Inconsistent advice about ideal frequency of STI testing
 - AIDS Councils, sexual health services
 - Differences in STI prevalence
- Pathology Payment

Complementing and informing Policywork

- Experience & insights from this campaign have helped inform considerations in relation to the proposed joining of a National STI and HIV Strategy
- What should such a strategy say about gay men & sex workers?