Using Geo-Targeted Health Alerts to Respond to Local STI Surges Among Gay and Bisexual Men

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Background
Design
Results
Next Steps
The concentration of Syphilis among MSM

2.5% of NZ population

83% of Syphilis notified in NZ, 2011*

GBM diagnosed with an STI in last 12 months*

Condom use during anal intercourse with casual partners among GBM

Saxton, P. Changes in behaviour over 30 years. 8 May 2015.
Syphilis cases in Waikato SHC

*Includes heterosexual males and females. Source: ESR STI Clinic Surveillance: Quarterly Reports Apr-Jun 2015
Syphilis cases in Auckland SHCs

Infectious syphilis diagnosed at Sexual Health Clinics in Auckland*

*Includes heterosexual males and females. Source: Auckland Sexual Health Service
Objective

Prompt syphilis screening to reduce undiagnosed infections among gay, bisexual and other men who have sex with men (GBM) in Waikato and Auckland.
Health alert to MSM

Syphilis is on the rise

Information about risks and symptoms

Encouraged to use condoms for anal sex and to get tested
Channels

Gay news sites: Gaynz.com, Express, Eikon

Hook-up apps: Grindr, Hornet, Growlr, Scruff, Squirt

Porn site: Xtube
Health Alert:
STIs and HIV on the rise in Auckland. A surge in syphilis, gonorrhoea and HIV cases among gay and bisexual men is being reported in the Auckland area. STIs can cause long-term complications if not treated early and can increase risk of HIV transmission. Click for more info and to book a free check-up.
Reach

829,173 advertising impressions

4594 clicks to website
Syphilis tests among males in Waikato DHB

- Syphilis tests among males in Waikato DHB (includes SHC and GPs)

- Health Alert & GP advisory
Syphilis cases in Waikato SHC

Infectious syphilis diagnosed at Waikato Sexual Health Service*

*Includes heterosexual males and females. Source: ESR STI Clinic Surveillance: Quarterly Reports Apr-Jun 2015
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Syphilis cases in New Zealand SHCs

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Conclusions

Geo-targeted health alerts are an effective way of reaching GBM.

Data on GBM testing numbers is not available so we can’t tell to what extent the increase in diagnoses is a result of increased screening.

Patients reported seeing syphilis health alerts to clinicians.
Improve reporting

DHB reporting on GBM testing numbers.

Consider asking “what prompted your test today” in pre-test questionnaire; operational and reporting implications.

SHC data does not include ID and GP cases. Making syphilis notifiable will provide a more complete picture.
Collaborate

NZAF has the expertise to reach GBM and prompt STI screening.

Driving HIV testing among high-risk GBM can have secondary impact on increasing syphilis screening.

Consider extending syphilis rapid testing alongside HIV rapid testing in primary care settings.
Let’s avoid this

Syphilis cases in Victoria, Australia

Source: Ee Laine Tay, Epidemiology and Surveillance Section, Department of Health, Melbourne, Victoria, 8 April 2014.
Acknowledgements

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Thank-you
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