Sexually transmitted diseases: challenges for the 21st century

Dear Colleagues,

In 1974 the World Health Organisation (WHO) replaced the term venereal disease with the term sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) to refer to conditions caused by a diverse category of pathogens spread through sexual contact and usually affecting the genitals.

The number of sexually transmitted infections (STIs) among people aged 15-21 years is nearly 50%, and is connected with early sexual initiation, sex with multiple casual partners, and insufficient awareness, including sex and health-promotion education. The World Health Organisation estimates that about 1 million sexually transmitted diseases are acquired every day worldwide, and there are an estimated 376 million new infections with 1 of 4 STIs: chlamydia, gonorrhoea, syphilis and trichomoniasis.

Sexually transmitted diseases are also significant due to their social character, as they can be a consequence of lifestyle, mainly frequent casual partners. Prevention and treatment of these diseases requires cooperation between patients, their environment, healthcare, and educational units.

The issues associated with STIs are also important from an epidemiological point of view. Progress in medicine and improved hygiene standards have not eliminated these diseases. Paradoxically, for the same reasons, due to the elusive sense of security, they have ceased to be perceived as a threat.

The purpose of this special edition is to deliver additional data, original articles and extensive reviews regarding sexually transmitted infections and the resulting challenges of the 21st century.

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