

Thursday, 7 June 2012

SYDNEY SEXUAL HEALTH CENTRE LAUNCH CHLAMYDIASTIC! - A FUN SEXUAL HEALTH GAME

Since Chlamydia became a nationally notifiable disease in 1991 (1997 for NSW), transmission rates in Australia have increased with each consecutive year. In 2010, Chlamydia was the most frequently reported notifiable condition in Australia.

Over the last five years, Chlamydia notification rates have increased by 29 per cent, with the 15-19 year and 20-29 year age groups being most affected.

In response to the growing burden of Chlamydia in young people, the Sydney Sexual Health Centre (SSHC), in partnership with the HIV and Related Programs (HARP) Unit at South Eastern Sydney Local Health District (SESLHD), have designed and developed Chlamydiastic! - a fun sexual health game which demonstrates the asymptomatic nature of Chlamydia.

Chlamydiastic! requires 6-10 players, takes 30 minutes to play and creates good opportunities for discussion centred on Sexually Transmissible Infections (STIs) such as Chlamydia, STI testing, condom use and beliefs about relationships and sex.

Aimed at informing young people aged 16-24 years about the importance of getting a test for Chlamydia and other STIs, Chlamydiastic! is also a valuable tool in assisting young people to feel more confident in accessing sexual health clinics, GP's or other health professionals in relation to their sexual health.

Associate Professor Anna McNulty, Director, Sydney Sexual Health Centre said health workers, youth workers and other professionals and agencies working with young people will be able to utilise Chlamydiastic! to engage in a fun, informative and thought-provoking activity, whilst promoting the important messages of STI testing and Chlamydia transmission.

"By playing the Chlamydiastic! game with a facilitator such as a youth or health worker, young people will acquire important skills and information required to make informed decisions about their sexual relationship choices and condom use.

"The Chlamydiastic! game is also a worthwhile resource for isolated communities who may not have access to extensive resources and where close community relationships can inhibit open discussion about issues such as sex and STIs," Dr McNulty said.

Chlamydiastic! will soon be available free of charge to health workers, youth services and youth agencies within the regions SESLHD encompasses, as well as the Illawarra and Shoalhaven Local Health District (ISLHD).

Key stakeholders including young people, youth workers and health promotion officers at SSHC and the HARP Unit were consulted during the game development phase.

Extensive focus testing was conducted by young people attending youth centres and high schools, youth workers and also sexual health workers in the SESLHD and ISLHD for the instructions, content relevance and overall appearance of the game.

South Eastern Sydney Local Health District
Media contact: Poppy Diamantis 02 9382 8398 or 0411 730 842