

Committee: World Health Organisation

Topic: Mitigating the transmission of sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) in Latin America

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Personal Introduction

Welcome delegates! My name is Pinelopi, I am a Year 12 student at Campion and your deputy president for this year's CSMUN. I started attending MUN conferences when I first arrived at Campion in Year 9 and seeing as this year is my last, it is a truly bittersweet moment. After this, I plan to go on to study Politics and International Relations and I believe MUN was what gave birth to my interest in this field.

On a personal note, I find this topic especially interesting because it highlights how health is never just a medical issue—it intersects deeply with social stigma, inequality, and political will. Addressing STDs means confronting not only viruses and bacteria, but also the barriers created by discrimination, silence, and unequal access to care.

Without further ado, happy reading, happy researching and see you all at CSMUN 2025!

If you have any questions, feel free to reach out to me at pkoumoutsou@campion.edu.gr



Topic Introduction

The transmission of sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) in the Latin America region specifically presents a critical public health concern. Despite decades of effort, the region continues to experience high rates of infection, with emerging evidence suggesting that some areas may be experiencing a resurgence of preventable diseases.

STDs are infections that are primarily transmitted through sexual contact, including vaginal, anal, and oral sex by more than 30 different bacteria, viruses and parasites¹. Eight of these pathogens are linked to the greatest incidence of sexually transmitted disease. Out of these eight infections, four are currently curable; syphilis, gonorrhoea, chlamydia and trichomoniasis. The other four are viral infections and continue to be incurable; hepatitis B, herpes simplex virus (HSV or herpes), HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus), and human papillomavirus (HPV)². These infections can have serious health consequences, including pelvic pain, cancers, infertility, complications during pregnancy and childbirth, enhanced HIV transmission, and psychosocial effects³.

STDs are not merely individual medical concerns; they involve societal dynamics such as stigma, education, socio-economic inequality, and healthcare access. The impact of STDs also extends beyond the infected individual, placing strain on public health systems and economies, whilst reinforcing cycles of poverty and marginalisation. In many Latin American countries specifically, conservative cultural attitudes towards sexuality, limited access to reproductive healthcare, and inadequate sex education hinder effective prevention and treatment.⁴

¹ "Sexually Transmitted Infections (Stis)." *World Health Organization*, World Health Organization, www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/sexually-transmitted-infections-stis)

² *Sexually Transmitted Infections - PAHO/WHO* | Pan American Health Organization. 26 Feb. 2025, <https://www.paho.org/en/topics/sexually-transmitted-infections> .

³ *HIV and Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs)* | NIH. <https://hivinfo.nih.gov/understanding-hiv/fact-sheets/hiv-and-sexually-transmitted-infections-stis> .

⁴ *Bridging the Gaps: Strengthening HIV and STI Prevention and Care in Latin America*. <https://clinicaloptions.com/activities/infectious-disease/hiv-and-sti-prevention-and-care-in-latin-america/63898>



The focus on Latin America is for several key reasons. Firstly, the region is home to some of the highest HIV prevalence rates outside sub-Saharan Africa, particularly among key populations such as men who have sex with men (MSM), transgender individuals, and sex workers. Secondly, many countries in the region face chronic underfunding of health services, political instability, and deeply entrenched stigma around sexual health issues. For example, Venezuela's access to pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) is severely restricted due to political instability, with the medication available only through a private pharmacy chain. In Guatemala, access is limited to an NGO-sponsored project, while Bolivia has outdated guidelines from 2017, which do not mention PrEP.⁵

Addressing the STD crisis in Latin America is not just a regional concern; it is a global health priority. The World Health Organization (WHO) has outlined ambitious goals and taken responsibility in addressing this, for example, through the global health sector strategies on sexually transmitted infections for 2022–2030⁶. These goals cannot be met without concerted regional action in Latin America, supported by international cooperation, sustainable funding, and grassroots mobilisation.

Definition of key concepts

Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs)

“A disease caused by infection with certain bacteria, viruses, or other microorganisms that can be passed from one person to another through blood, semen, vaginal fluids, or other body fluids, during oral, anal, or genital sex with an infected partner.”⁷

Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs)

A Sexually Transmitted Infection (STI) may or may not be symptomatic whereas a Sexually Transmitted Disease (STD) is the more developed form of the infection with symptoms and

⁵Gonzales-Gavancho, Christian, et al. 'Updates on HIV Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis in Latin America: Available Drugs and Implementation Status'. *Le Infezioni in Medicina*, vol. 33, no. 1, pp. 29–49. *PubMed Central*, <https://doi.org/10.53854/liim-3301-4>.

⁶*Global Health Sector Strategies on HIV, Viral Hepatitis and Sexually Transmitted Infections for the Period 2022-2030*. <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240053779>

⁷NCI Dictionary of Cancer Terms
<https://www.cancer.gov/publications/dictionaries/cancer-terms/def/sexually-transmitted-disease>



complications present.⁸ Many medical institutions and professionals use the terms STI and STD interchangeably.

Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV)

“A virus that attacks the body's immune system. Without treatment, it can lead to acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS).”⁹

Stigma

“A strong feeling of disapproval that most people in a society have about something, especially when this is unfair”¹⁰

Pre-exposure prophylaxis (PreP)

“An HIV medicine taken by people who do not have HIV that reduces the risk of getting HIV from sex by about 99% and from injection drug use by at least 74%.”¹¹

Background Information

The History of STDs

STDs have a long and documented history, tracing back to the ancient civilisations such as the Egyptians around 1500 BC. However, the way we treat and perceive these diseases has changed over time. The discovery of antibiotics, such as penicillin in the mid-20th century, revolutionised the treatment of STIs, including syphilis and gonorrhoea.¹² The global HIV epidemic of the 1980s-90s marked a key turning point, forcing medical and political institutions to reevaluate their approach.

⁸ ‘Sexually Transmitted Infections (Sexually Transmitted Diseases)’. *Cleveland Clinic*, <https://my.clevelandclinic.org/health/diseases/9138-sexually-transmitted-diseases--infections-stds--stis>

⁹ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). ‘About HIV’. *HIV*, 31 Jan. 2025, <https://www.cdc.gov/hiv/about/index.html>

¹⁰ Cambridge Dictionary, *Stigma*. <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/stigm>

¹¹ *Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP)* | *National Institutes of Health*. <https://hivinfo.nih.gov/understanding-hiv/fact-sheets/pre-exposure-prophylaxis-prep>

¹² MD, Dr Ananya Mandal. ‘History of Sexually Transmitted Disease’. *News-Medical*, 8 Feb. 2010, <https://www.news-medical.net/health/History-of-Sexually-Transmitted-Disease.aspx>



Initial responses were inadequate, delayed by stigma, and focused primarily on heterosexual transmission, ignoring key populations such as MSM and transgender individuals. However, remarkable scientific progress has followed with the development of highly active antiretroviral treatment (HAART)¹³ and PrEP for prevention of transmission in HIV-negative individuals¹⁴.

STDs in Latin America Today

According to WHO latest estimates, more than 1 million curable sexually transmitted infections (STIs) are acquired every day worldwide in people 15–49 years old, the majority of which are asymptomatic.¹⁵ The Pan-American Health Organization (PAHO) reports that there are 38 million people of this cohort in the Americas alone.¹⁶ In developing countries globally, STDs rank among the top ten causes of illness among young adult males and are the second leading cause among young adult females.¹⁷

Furthermore, the number of new HIV infections in Latin America is estimated to have increased 9% from 2010 to 2023, with approximately 120 000 new infections in 2023.¹⁸ Cases of congenital syphilis also increased by 40% between 2016 and 2022, reaching more than 36,000 cases in 2022.¹⁹ As of data from 2021, Brazil is shown to be the Latin American country with the highest STD rates.²⁰ The

¹³World Health Organization (WHO), *Why the HIV Epidemic Is Not Over*.

<https://www.who.int/news-room/spotlight/why-the-hiv-epidemic-is-not-over>

¹⁴Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP) | NIH.

<https://hivinfo.nih.gov/understanding-hiv/fact-sheets/pre-exposure-prophylaxis-prep>

¹⁵ WHO, *Fact Sheet Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs)*.

[https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/sexually-transmitted-infections-\(stis\)](https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/sexually-transmitted-infections-(stis)).

¹⁶Sexually Transmitted Infections - PAHO/WHO | Pan American Health Organization.

<https://www.paho.org/en/topics/sexually-transmitted-infections>

¹⁷'Sexually Transmitted Diseases Among Adolescents and Young Adults in Brazil'. *Ballard Brief*,

<https://ballardbrief.byu.edu/issue-briefs/sexually-transmitted-diseases-among-adolescents-and-young-adults-in-brazil>

¹⁸Sexually Transmitted Infections - PAHO/WHO | Pan American Health Organization.

<https://www.paho.org/en/topics/sexually-transmitted-infections>

¹⁹ PAHO/WHO Launches New Project to Strengthen Elimination of Mother-to-Child Transmission of HIV, Syphilis, and Hepatitis B in the Caribbean. 7 Apr. 2025,

<https://unsouthsouth.org/2025/04/07/paho-who-launches-new-project-to-strengthen-elimination-of-mother-to-child-transmission-of-hiv-syphilis-and-hepatitis-b-in-the-caribbean/>

²⁰STD Rates by Country 2025'. *World Population Review*,

<https://worldpopulationreview.com/country-rankings/std-rates-by-country>



year 2018 had the highest number of reported cases of syphilis in Brazil since 2010, with 76.2 cases per 100,000 inhabitants.²¹

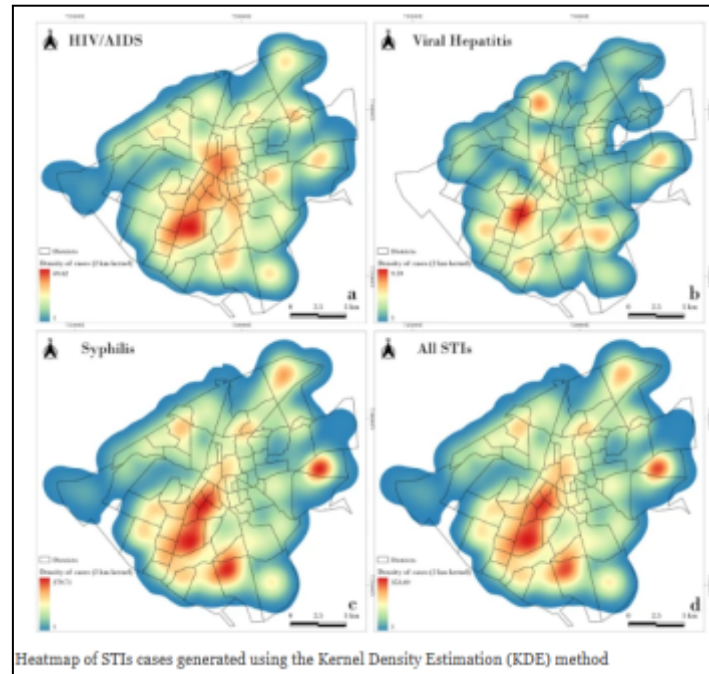


Figure 1: Heatmap of STIs cases generated using the Kernel Density Estimation (KDE) method²²

Causes

Lack of Awareness & Education

Despite substantial progress in some countries, STDs remain a significant threat to public health across Latin America stemming from lack of awareness and education. Educational deficits represent a primary concern, as many young people lack access to comprehensive sexual health education due

²¹ 'Sexually Transmitted Diseases Among Adolescents and Young Adults in Brazil'. *Ballard Brief*, <https://ballardbrief.byu.edu/issue-briefs/sexually-transmitted-diseases-among-adolescents-and-young-adults-in-brazil>

²² Mendonça Gil, Paula Knoch, et al. 'Rethinking STI Control Strategies: Epidemiological and Social Determinants Insights from a Combined Ecological and Cross-Sectional Study in a Brazilian Capital'. *BMC Public Health*, vol. 25, no. 1, Dec. 2025, pp. 1–14. [bmcpublichealth.biomedcentral.com](https://doi.org/10.1186/s12889-025-23589-0), <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12889-025-23589-0>

to conservative cultural attitudes and persistent taboos surrounding sexuality. This knowledge gap is worsened by widespread misinformation about treatment options and the reluctance of infected individuals to disclose their status to partners out of embarrassment. Stigma can also discourage people from seeking testing or treatment, while marginalised communities such as LGBT individuals, sex workers and migrants face outright discrimination when attempting to access healthcare services. Notably, about 70% of transgender people **reported** experiencing stigma when seeking health care from a survey conducted in Bolivia, Ecuador, Nicaragua, Paraguay and Peru.²³

Resource Limitations

Resource limitations pose the most significant challenge for Latin American countries with limited budgets. Healthcare systems struggle with chronic shortages of clinics, diagnostic laboratories, and trained personnel capable of providing STD screening and treatment. Long wait times and inconsistent monitoring programs further compromise the effectiveness of existing services. One important reason is that geographic disparities leave rural populations particularly underserved. High inequality between and within Latin American countries also plays a significant role as individual socio-economic difficulties prevent many from accessing and affording care. The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic as well as recent low economic growth, complex political situations, severe fiscal problems associated with public debt, an increase in migrant flows, and the impacts of extreme natural events have diverted national resources.²⁴

Developing Countries' Difficulties

Addressing these challenges proves exceptionally difficult as many developing countries depend heavily on external funding, creating disparities between nations that perform better and those that continue to struggle.²⁵ Migration and displacement add another layer of complexity, as fear of

²³ UNAIDS. *Global AIDS Update 2024: Latin America*. UNAIDS, 2024, www.unaids.org/sites/default/files/media_asset/2024-unaids-global-aids-update-latin-america_en.pdf

²⁴ UNAIDS. *Global AIDS Update 2024: Latin America*. UNAIDS, 2024, www.unaids.org/sites/default/files/media_asset/2024-unaids-global-aids-update-latin-america_en.pdf

²⁵ "My Biggest Concern Is to Get My Antiretroviral Medicines": HIV and COVID-19 in Latin America | UNAIDS. https://www.unaids.org/en/resources/presscentre/featurestories/2020/may/20200528_MLCM



deportation limits healthcare access and host country insurance systems often exclude uninsured individuals from essential health services. Emerging data from across the region suggest that HIV prevalence among migrants is at least double the regional average.²⁶ Recently, services have been further burdened by the COVID-19 pandemic and funding cuts under the Trump administration²⁷.

Major countries, organisations and alliances

Pan American Health Organization (PAHO)

As the regional office for the Americas of the World Health Organization, PAHO plays a critical role in coordinating health policies and initiatives across Latin American nations. PAHO promotes inter-country collaboration, conducts health surveillance, and provides technical assistance to strengthen national STD response systems. Working under WHO guidelines, it implements its own strategic frameworks like the "Plan of Action for the Prevention and Control of HIV and Sexually Transmitted Infections 2016-2021"²⁸. One of its most successful initiatives focused on the elimination of mother-to-child transmission of HIV, Syphilis, Hepatitis B and Chagas running from 2010 and expanded to 2030.²⁹ So far, Cuba in 2015, Anguilla, Antigua and Barbuda, Bermuda, Cayman Islands, Montserrat, and St. Kitts and Nevis in 2017, and Belize, Jamaica and Saint Vincent in 2024 were recognised by WHO for the dual elimination. In 2024, on World AIDS Day, they also launched the campaign "Better with PrEP" to raise awareness and reduce stigma around HIV treatment.³⁰

UNAIDS (Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS)

²⁶ UNAIDS. *Global AIDS Update 2024: Latin America*. UNAIDS, 2024,

www.unaids.org/sites/default/files/media_asset/2024-unaids-global-aids-update-latin-america_en.pdf

²⁷ *The Impact of the United States Foreign Assistance Pause on the Community-Led HIV Response in Latin America* | UNAIDS.

https://www.unaids.org/en/resources/presscentre/featurestories/2025/march/20250303_latin-america-fs

²⁸ *Sexually Transmitted Infections - PAHO/WHO* | Pan American Health Organization. 26 Feb. 2025,

<https://www.paho.org/en/topics/sexually-transmitted-infections>

²⁹ *Elimination of Mother-to-Child Transmission of HIV, Syphilis, Hepatitis B, and Chagas - PAHO/WHO* | Pan American Health Organization. 7 May 2024,

<https://www.paho.org/en/topics/elimination-mother-child-transmission-hiv-syphilishepatitis-b-and-chagas>

³⁰ *On World AIDS Day, PAHO Launches Better with PrEP Campaign* | United Nations in the Caribbean.

<https://caribbean.un.org/en/284908-world-aids-day-paho-launches-better-prep-campaign>,
<https://caribbean.un.org/en/284908-world-aids-day-paho-launches-better-prep-campaign>.



The Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS leads global action to end AIDS as a public health threat. In Latin America, UNAIDS monitors epidemic trends and regularly publishes its reports on regional and country updates. It also fights against the discrimination of vulnerable populations to reduce HIV stigma, for example through legal support, victim advocacy services and collaborating with local grassroots organisations, particularly in humanitarian settings like Haiti at the moment. They have also helped local community organisations forge links with government institutions to maximise efforts, such as in Colombia.³¹ During 2024, it has also enabled the expansion of PrEP (pre-exposure prophylaxis), HIV self-testing, and integrated outreach across 16 countries.³²

Brazil

Brazil has been a regional leader in STD prevention and treatment since the mid-1990s. In 1996, it became the first Latin American country to guarantee free and universal access to anti-retroviral therapy (ART) for people living with HIV/AIDS.³³ In 2017, it also became the first to provide free PrEP through its public healthcare system to reach key high-risk population groups such as MSM and transgender people.³⁴ Brazil now has over 110,000 PrEP users, reflecting a sevenfold increase in just five years.³⁵ The country has also implemented innovative screening programmes in remote Amazonian communities, expanding diagnostic access.

Peru

The Peruvian Ministry of Health mandates routine HIV and STD testing and supports access to condoms and lubricants. Peru's strategic focus includes regular follow-up care and education on PrEP

³¹Colombian Afro-Descendant Women Are Shaping the HIV Response in Their Own Terms | UNAIDS. https://www.unaids.org/en/resources/presscentre/featurestories/2025/august/2025086_colombia

³²Latin America and the Caribbean | RESULTS AND TRANSPARENCY PORTAL. <http://open.unaids.org/countries/latin-america-and-caribbean>

³³Galvão J. Access to antiretroviral drugs in Brazil. *Lancet*. 2002 Dec 7;360(9348):1862-5. doi: 10.1016/S0140-6736(02)11775-2. PMID: 12480377; <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/12480377/>

³⁴Brazil Begins PrEP Roll-out on World AIDS Day. <https://www.who.int/news/item/28-11-2017-brazil-begins-prep-roll-out-on-world-aids-day>

³⁵Brazil Has Been at the Forefront of HIV Treatment and Prevention in Latin America, Says the Scientific Journal. <https://www.unodc.org/lpo-brazil/en/frontpage/2018/02/brazil-has-been-at-the-forefront-of-hiv-treatment-and-prevention-in-latin-america--says-the-scientific-journal-.html>



adherence. The country has also implemented the Syphilis Interventions Towards Elimination (SITE) tool, a new diagnostic and treatment algorithm tailored to local epidemiology. Peru has notably reduced syphilis prevalence in pregnant women which fell from 2,997 in 2012 to 605 in 2019 – whereas the America regional prevalence increased in that period.³⁶ In 2024, the Peruvian Congress also passed legislation that extends temporary health insurance coverage to migrants diagnosed with HIV.³⁷

Colombia

Colombia faces structural challenges due to internal displacement and migration from Venezuela. The resulting pressures have strained public health services, leaving many migrants without access to diagnosis or care.³⁸ Colombia also confronts the public health implications of sexual tourism, which disproportionately affects impoverished and marginalised groups. Nonetheless, the country has made progress. Between 2022 and 2023, the country scaled up combination HIV prevention services, including PrEP (Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis) access. The QuanPrEP tool enabled over 1,600 high-risk individuals to access PrEP in 2022, rising to over 6,600 in 2023. Training also reached more than 1,900 healthcare workers on HIV, STIs, and TB co-infections, and over 2 million condoms were distributed through local governments.³⁹ A major move in 2024 also involved issuing a compulsory license for the HIV drug dolutegravir, enabling access to lower-cost generic versions.⁴⁰

Portugal

³⁶ *Strategies for the Elimination of Syphilis in Peru. Program Impact and Cost-Effectiveness Projections Using the Syphilis Interventions Towards Elimination (SITE) Model - PAHO/WHO | Pan American Health Organization*. 13 May 2021, <https://www.paho.org/en/node/80562>.

³⁷ *Peru Approves Groundbreaking Law to Extend Health Coverage for Migrants with HIV and TB | UNAIDS*. https://www.unaids.org/en/resources/presscentre/featurestories/2024/october/20241021_peru

³⁸ Montana, Jhon Freddy, et al. 'The HIV Epidemic in Colombia: Spatial and Temporal Trends Analysis'. *BMC Public Health*, vol. 21, no. 1, Jan. 2021, p. 178. *BioMed Central*, <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12889-021-10196-y>.

³⁹ *UNAIDS Colombia | RESULTS AND TRANSPARENCY PORTAL*. <http://open.unaids.org/countries/colombia>

⁴⁰ *UNAIDS Welcomes New Decision in Colombia Allowing More Affordable Access to Quality HIV Medicines | UNAIDS*. https://www.unaids.org/en/resources/presscentre/pressreleaseandstatementarchive/2023/october/20231004_colombia



Portugal has emerged as a leading example in the fight against sexually transmitted infections (STIs) through a combination of strong national strategies and regional cooperation. As part of its commitment to the WHO 2030 elimination goals, Portugal has partnered with other Portuguese-speaking countries—such as Brazil, Angola, and Mozambique—under a coordinated health diplomacy initiative. Exchanges between these Lusophone countries have been promoted since 2014 in Cabo Verde, Mozambique and most recently, in March 2024, in Brazil.⁴¹ This collaboration leverages shared language and cultural ties to harmonise public health approaches, enhance technical exchange, and build capacity across borders.⁴²

Previous attempts to solve the issue

Elimination of Mother-to-Child Transmission (EMTCT) of HIV and Congenital Syphilis

The "Strategy and Plan of Action for the EMTCT of HIV and Congenital Syphilis" was endorsed by PAHO Member States, resulting in notable progress, including Cuba becoming the first country globally to be validated for dual elimination of mother-to-child transmission of HIV and syphilis in 2015 and more recently, in 2024, Belize, Jamaica and Saint Vincent as well.⁴³ The success of this initiative has led to its expansion to also include the elimination of other preventable communicable diseases such as hepatitis B and Chagas disease. This was made possible through the expansion of services and of access to diagnostic tests for pregnant women in antenatal care⁴⁴. After evaluation, however, the program was later revised to also include a focus on human rights, gender equality and

⁴¹ WHO: *Lusophone Countries United to Eliminate HIV, Hepatitis, STIs and TB by 2030*.

<https://www.who.int/news-room/feature-stories/detail/lusophone-countries-united-to-eliminate-hiv--hepatitis--stis-and-tb-by-2030>

⁴² World Health Organization. *Eliminating HIV, Viral Hepatitis, Sexually Transmitted Infections and Tuberculosis as Public Health Problems by 2030 in Lusophone Countries: Meeting Report, Brasília, Brazil, 12–14 March 2024*.

WHO, 25 Oct. 2024, www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240100398

⁴³ *Elimination of Mother-to-Child Transmission of HIV, Syphilis, Hepatitis B, and Chagas - PAHO/WHO | Pan American Health Organization*. 7 May 2024,

<https://www.paho.org/en/topics/elimination-mother-child-transmission-hiv-syphilishepatitis-b-and-chagas>

⁴⁴ World Health Organization. *Implementing the Global Health Sector Strategies on HIV, Viral Hepatitis and Sexually Transmitted Infections, 2022–2030: Report on Progress and Gaps 2024*. p viii. WHO, 22 May 2024, www.who.int/publications/i/item/978924009492



community engagement and improving access to services for vulnerable populations such as immigrants, internally displaced, adolescents, etc.⁴⁵

US: Sexually Transmitted Infections Surveillance Network

The Sexually Transmitted Infections Surveillance Network (SSuN), led by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), is a sentinel surveillance initiative designed to enhance national responses to STIs through high-quality, detailed data collection. Its main aim is to help track infection trends, understand how STIs are being treated, and detect issues like antibiotic resistance. One of SSuN's biggest strengths is that it goes beyond basic statistics, offering insight into who is being affected and how well public health responses are working⁴⁶. However, the network mainly focuses on urban areas and requires a lot of resources and staff training, which can make it harder to apply in more rural or low-resource settings.⁴⁷ Still, it provides a useful model for other regions, including Latin America, where a similar system could help identify health gaps, guide prevention efforts, and improve access to treatment. SSuN has proved to be a useful and impactful initiative that has helped shape national treatment guidelines and improve STI care for vulnerable demographics. The absence of a similar, well-coordinated system in Latin America creates a major gap in its prevention efforts.

Possible solutions

Education, Training and Awareness

A successful STD prevention and control strategy must educate and empower individuals to make safer choices and monitor their health. Education can inform people about risks, equip them with practical skills, and encourage responsible sexual health behaviours. Information can be provided on

⁴⁵ World Health Organization. *Implementing the Global Health Sector Strategies on HIV, Viral Hepatitis and Sexually Transmitted Infections, 2022–2030: Report on Progress and Gaps 2024*. 5 p 41. WHO, 22 May 2024, www.who.int/publications/i/item/978924009492

⁴⁶ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. *Shedding Light on Disease in the US: How STD Prevention Programs Benefit from Strong Data*. CDC, 23 Apr. 2018, www.cdc.gov/sti-funding/media/pdfs/2018-04-23-ssun.pdf

⁴⁷ Rietmeijer, Cornelis A., et al. 'Here Comes the SSuN: Early Experiences with the STD Surveillance Network'. *Public Health Reports*, vol. 124, no. Suppl 2, 2009, pp. 72–77. *PubMed Central*, <https://doi.org/10.1177/003335490912405211>



contraception, consent, condom use, gender identity and healthy relationships. As well as accurate, education should also address misinformation and stigma surrounding the topic. Targeted public awareness campaigns through media and community events can be particularly effective and can also reach broader demographics. Training healthcare workers is another key component to ensure early diagnosis, effective treatment, and partner notification. These measures can also be specifically targeted to demographics such as youth, high-risk populations, and communities with limited access to health services.

Coordination Strategies: Regional and Sectoral

Latin American countries should improve intergovernmental coordination on STD prevention. Cooperation between governments, health agencies, and civil society would make responses more efficient to avoid duplication and maximise impact. The existing organisation of PAHO can aid these efforts.

A regional Latin American framework could enable countries to share best practices, pool resources, and align policies, while national coordinators could adapt strategies to local needs. This collaborative approach would target both policymakers and frontline health providers, ensuring interventions are well-integrated and sustainable.

Resource-Based Interventions

Public health systems across Latin America require strengthening and funding. This includes improving infrastructure, training health workers, expanding services, and reducing wait times for appointments and results. Supply chains must also be stabilised to avoid shortages. Integration of STD treatment into existing health services is one way of reducing logistical and psychological barriers to care. This would mean people do not have to visit specialised or separate facilities for basic sexual health services. HPV vaccination coverage could also be expanded and monitored efficiently to mitigate further spread of infections.



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