

SEXUAL HEALTH SCREENING WITHIN A YOUTH HOMELESS SERVICES SETTING AUTHOR(S) AND INSTITUTION AFFILIATIONS

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Background:

Most sexually transmissible infections (STIs) are preventable, easy to test for, and treatable. Young people are a priority risk group for STIs, yet those experiencing homelessness often experience additional barriers to accessing testing and treatment. The Young People's Health Service (YPHS) offer free, opportunistic STI screening to young people who are experiencing or at risk of homelessness.

The aim of this audit was to improve understanding about the acceptability of sexual health screens to young people experiencing homelessness when offered by nurses who are co-located within a social services setting accessed by the demographic.

Methods:

A retrospective audit of electronic medical records was conducted using the Epic "SlicerDicer" function and clinic databases for the years 2019 to 2023 inclusive.

Results:

There were 3007 young people who attended a clinic or outreach visit with the YPHS youth health nurses between 1st January 2019 and 31st December 2023. Thirty-three per cent (n=702) agreed to a urine or swab STI screen, and of those tested, 12% (n=46) returned a positive chlamydia result, and 7% (n=46) returned a positive gonorrhoea result. Twenty-two per cent (n=463) agreed to a blood STI test, and of those tested, 6% (n=29) returned a positive result for a notifiable infection (Hepatitis B or C, HIV, or syphilis).

Conclusion:

Young people who are experiencing homelessness often experience barriers to accessing sexual health care. Our results support the acceptability of, and demonstrate a need for, opportunistic sexual health screens within social services settings.

Disclosure of interest statement:

None