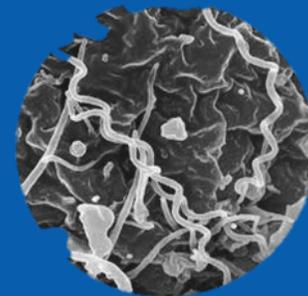
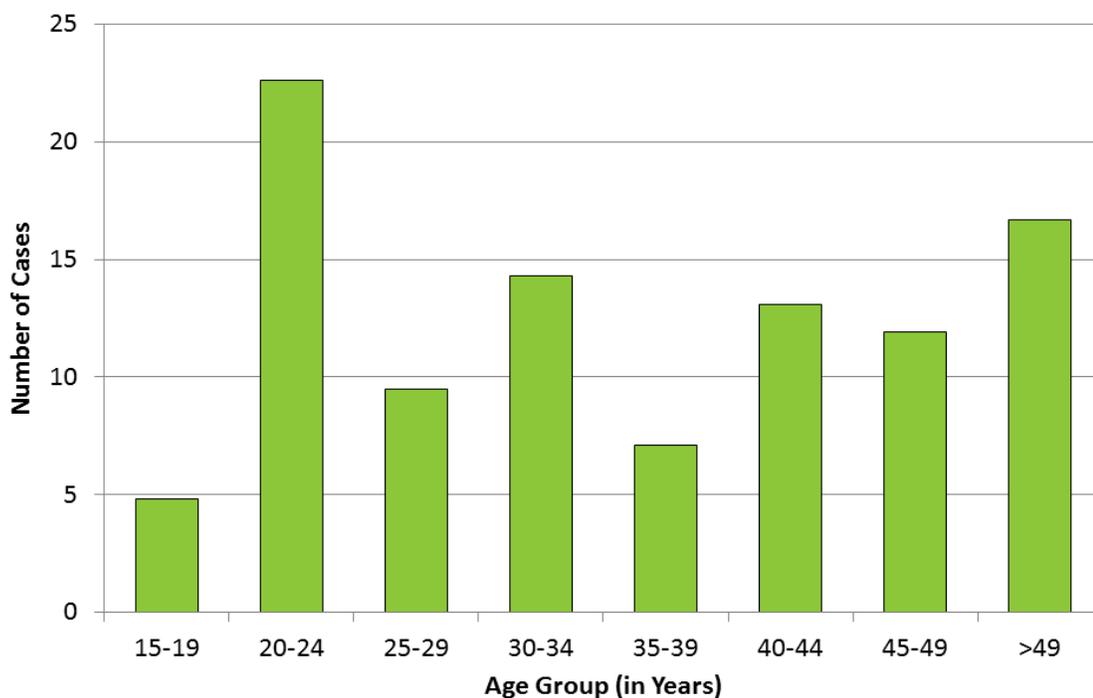


SYPHILIS CASES AMONG MSM¹, 2013



Primary and Secondary Syphilis Among MSM
by Age Group, Oklahoma 2013



OVERVIEW

Syphilis is a genital, ulcerative sexually transmitted disease caused by the bacterium *Treponema pallidum*. Many signs and symptoms of syphilis are indistinguishable from many other diseases, giving it the nickname “the great imitator”. Syphilis is passed from person to person by direct contact with a syphilis sore or lesion (called a chancre). Typically, syphilis transmission occurs during vaginal, anal, or oral sex. Pregnant females with the disease can also pass it to their unborn children.

Primary and secondary syphilis (P&S) are the earliest and most infectious stages. Oklahoma had 118 cases of P&S syphilis in 2013 at a rate of 3.1 per 100,000. From 2012 to 2013, there was a 40.9% rate increase for P&S syphilis cases; there were 83 cases at

2.2 per 100,000 population in 2012. The national rate of P&S syphilis for 2013 was 5.3 per 100,000 population². P&S syphilis rates have increased overall from 2005-2013 on a national level; Oklahoma has followed a similar trend.

Males accounted for 89% (105) of the P&S syphilis cases in Oklahoma and experienced a 34.1% rate increase from 2012 (4.1 to 5.5 per 100,000). The majority, 65.3% (77), of Oklahoma’s total P&S syphilis cases had a reported risk of MSM¹. Bisexual males, accounting for 5.9% (7) of the cases, should also be considered as MSM for this analysis. There were a total 84 (71.2%) P&S syphilis cases reporting MSM as one of their risk factors; this represents 80.8% of the 105 cases among males in Oklahoma. Nationally,

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Oklahoma State
Department of Health

¹ MSM stands for men who have sex with men.

² Patton ME, Su JR, Nelson R, et al. Primary and Secondary Syphilis — United States, 2005–2013. *MMWR* 2014; 63:402-406.

SYPHILIS CASES AMONG MSM¹, 2013

Over half of the P&S syphilis cases were found in Oklahoma County



About 51.2% of P&S syphilis cases among MSM reported having sex with anonymous partners.



65.3% of Oklahoma's P&S syphilis cases had a reported risk of MSM.



42.7% of Oklahoma's P&S syphilis cases reported meeting partners on the Internet.

among reported P&S syphilis cases, MSM accounted for 75% in 2012³.

SYPHILIS RISKS^{3,4}

Increases in syphilis among MSM have been reported across the United States and cases among MSM have been shown to have high-risk sexual behaviors and high rates of co-infection with HIV. It is known that the genital sores caused by syphilis make it easier to both transmit and acquire HIV through sexual contact. Acquiring HIV, if exposed through sexual contact, is two to five times more likely when syphilis is present.

BEHAVIORAL BREAKDOWN

The majority of the P&S syphilis cases among MSM were primarily identified by a positive test result (69; 82.1%), while 15 (17.9%) were identified through partner services. Over 95% of the cases were interviewed; the number of partners named during these interviews ranged from zero to twenty-six, with most cases (53.6%) naming one to three partners. Six (7.1%) of the cases also reported a risk of injection drug use (IDU) and eight (9.5%) reported having a sex partner who was IDU. Just over half of the cases (43; 51.2%) reported having sex with anonymous partners and 42.7% (35) reported meeting partners on the internet. Having sex while intoxicated or high was reported in 39.3% (33) of the cases.

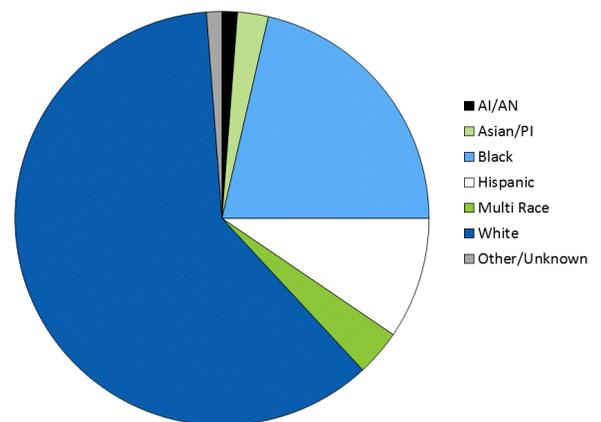
BY DEMOGRAPHICS

Most of the P&S syphilis cases among MSM were among age group 20 to 24 years (19; 22.6%), followed by age groups 50 and older (14; 16.7%) and 30 to 34 years (12; 14.3%). Age group 40 to 44 years accounted for 11 cases (13.1%) and 45 to 49 years accounted

for 10 cases (11.9%). All other age groups, together, comprised 21.4% (18).

Whites accounted for the most cases among MSM (51; 60.7%) followed by Blacks (18; 21.4%) and Hispanics (8; 9.5%). All other racial and ethnic groups made up 8.3% (7).

Primary and Secondary Syphilis Among MSM by Race/Ethnicity, Oklahoma 2013



BY GEOGRAPHY

Of the 84 P&S syphilis cases among MSM, over half were found in Oklahoma County (54; 64.3%). This made up 78.3% of the county's total 69 cases and over 90% of the county's cases among males. Tulsa County had the second most P&S syphilis cases among MSM (15; 17.9%), representing 68.2% of the county's total 22 cases and over 80% of the county's cases among males.

³ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Sexually Transmitted Disease Surveillance, 2012. Atlanta, GA: U.S. Department of Health and Human Service, January 2014.

⁴ Wasserheit JN. 1992. Epidemiologic synergy: Interrelationships between human immunodeficiency virus infection and other sexually transmitted diseases. Sexually Transmitted Diseases 9:61-77