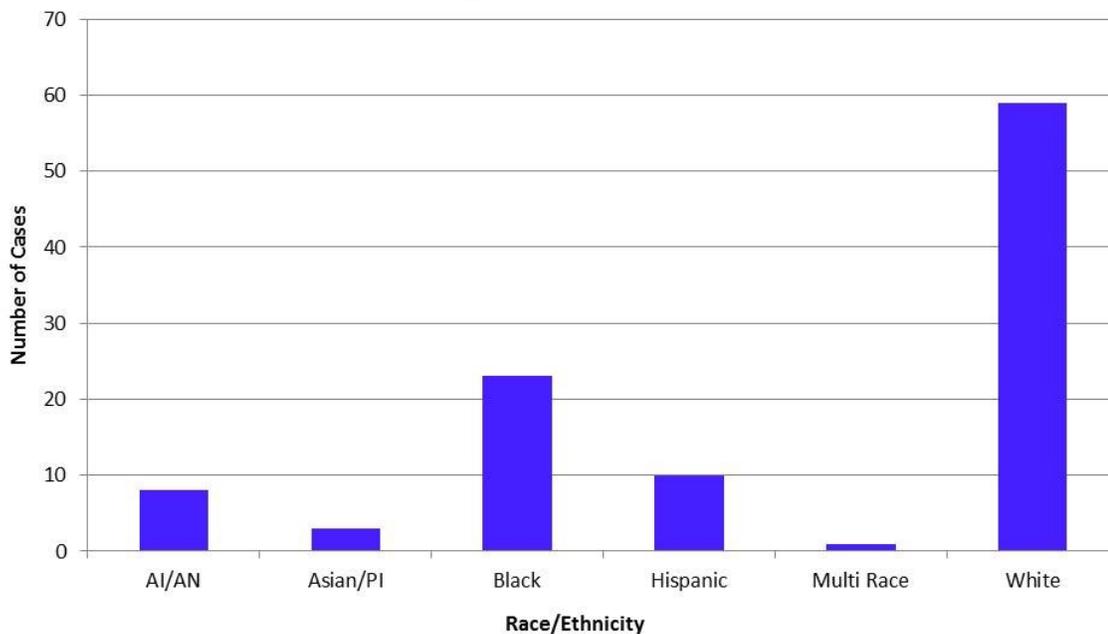


# SYPHILIS AMONG MSM IN 2014

Primary and Secondary Syphilis among MSM, 2014  
By Race/Ethnicity



## OVERVIEW

Syphilis is a genital, ulcerative sexually transmitted disease caused by the bacterium *Treponema pallidum*. Many signs and symptoms of syphilis are indistinguishable from symptoms related to 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 151 cases of P&S syphilis in 2014 at a rate of 3.9 per 100,000. From 2013 to 2014, there was a 25.8% rate increase for P&S syphilis cases, with 118 cases at 3.1 per 100,000 population in 2013.

Males accounted for 89.4% (136) of the P&S syphilis cases in Oklahoma and experienced a 29.1% rate increase from 2013 (5.5 to 7.1 per 100,000). Almost 63% of Oklahoma’s total P&S syphilis cases had a reported risk of MSM<sup>1</sup> (95; 62.9%). Bisexual males, accounting for 6.0% (9) of the cases, are also considered as MSM for this analysis. There were a total of 104 (68.9%) P&S syphilis cases claiming MSM as one of their risk factors; this represents 76.5% of the 136 cases among males in Oklahoma.

## SYPHILIS RISKS FOR MSM

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

## For More Information Contact:

HIV/STD Service  
Surveillance and  
Analysis

1000 NE 10<sup>th</sup> Street,  
MS 0308  
Oklahoma City, OK 73117

405.271.4636

[hivstd.health.ok.gov](http://hivstd.health.ok.gov)



Oklahoma State  
Department of Health

<sup>1</sup>Men who have sex with men

# SYPHILIS AMONG MSM IN 2014

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

53.8% of MSM with syphilis reported sex with anonymous partners.

genital sores caused by syphilis make it easier to both transmit and acquire HIV through sexual contact. Acquiring HIV through sexual contact is two to five times more likely, when syphilis is present.<sup>1</sup>

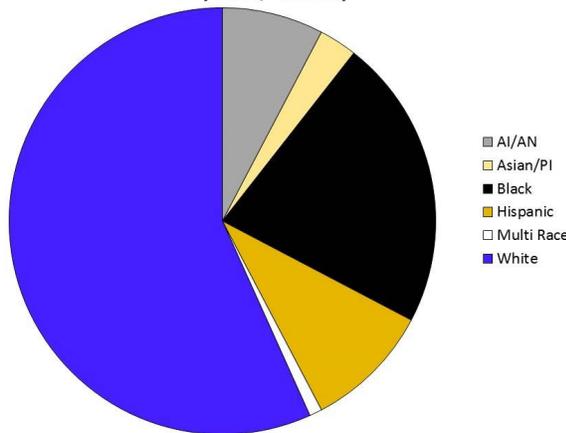
## BY AGE & RACE

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

Age group 40 to 44 years reported 11 cases (13.1%) and 45 to 49 years reported 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 in 2014, By Race/Ethnicity



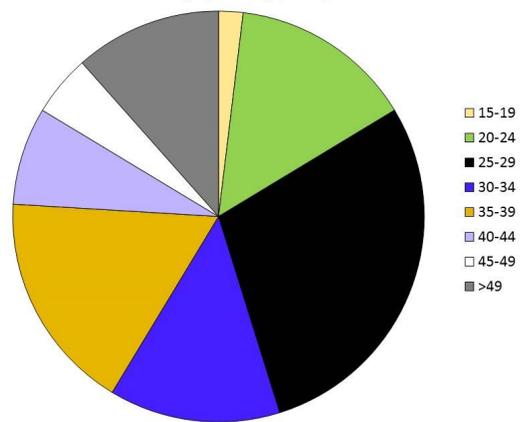
## BY RISK

The majority of the P&S syphilis cases among MSM were primarily identified by a positive test result (89; 85.6%), while 15 (14.4%) were identified through partner

services. Almost all (99; 95.2%) of the MSM cases were interviewed, and the number of partners named during these interviews ranged from zero to fifty-three, with most cases (52.5%) naming one to two partners.

Four (3.8%) of the cases also reported a risk of injection drug use (IDU) and six (5.8%) reported having a sex partner who was an IDU. Over half of the cases (56; 53.8%) reported having sex with anonymous partners, and 28.8% (30) reported meeting partners on the internet. Having sex while intoxicated or high was reported in 43.3% (45) of the cases.

Primary and Secondary Syphilis among MSM, 2014 By Age Group (Years)



## BY GEOGRAPHY

Of the 104 P&S syphilis cases among MSM, over half were found in Oklahoma County (61; 58.7%): this made up 79.2% of the county's total cases (77) and 83.6% of the county's cases among males.

Tulsa County had the second highest P&S syphilis cases among MSM (12; 11.5%), representing 54.5% of the county's total (22) cases and 63.2% of the county's cases among males.

<sup>2</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Sexually Transmitted Disease Surveillance, 2013. Atlanta, GA: U.S. Department of Health and Human Service, January 2014.