

PB57 Self-reported symptoms of Sexually Transmitted Infections and treatment-seeking behaviour in the Microbicides Development Programme (MDP) feasibility study at the Africa Centre, Umkhanyakude district, KwaZulu Natal, South Africa

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ABSTRACT TEXT

Background:

The Africa Centre site of the Microbicides Development Programme (MDP) feasibility study enrolled 453 women from district clinics. After 2 weeks of enrolment a questionnaire was administered to collect information on symptoms experienced in the previous year related to sexually transmitted infections (STI) and treatment seeking behaviour.

Methodology:

The data was analysed to assess different treatment-seeking behaviour according to type of STI symptom reported (syphilis, genital ulcer, vaginal discharge, lower abdominal pain). Treatment seeking was categorised as at government clinics or hospitals (clinics), private doctors (GP), pharmacy or other outlets, and traditional healers (TH).

Results:

347 (77%) women returned to the clinic 2 weeks after enrolment. 19 (5.5%) women reported having syphilis in the previous year, and 17 (89%) reported accessing treatment, all at a government clinic or hospital. 73 (21%) women reported having genital ulcers, sores or blisters in the previous year, and 59 (81%) sort treatment. 37 (63%) sort treatment at a clinic, 6 (10%) at a GP, 1 (2%) at a pharmacy, 12 (20%) at a TH, and 3 (5%) from a combination of a clinic and GP (1), clinic and TH (1), or GP and TH (1). 143 (41%) reported abnormal vaginal discharge in the previous year, and 118 (83%) sort treatment. 93 (79%) sort treatment at a clinic, 5 (4%) at a GP, 3 (3%) at a pharmacy, 10 (8%) at a TH, and 7 (6%) from a combination of a clinic and GP (4), clinic and pharmacy (1), clinic and TH (1), or GP and pharmacy (1). 109 (31%) women reported lower abdominal pain in the previous year, and 89 (82%) sort treatment. 70 (79%) sort treatment at a clinic, 7 (8%) at a GP, 2 (2%) at a pharmacy, 2 (2%) at a TH, and 8 (9%) from a combination of clinic and GP (4), or clinic and TH (4).

Conclusions:

The level of treatment seeking reported is high and the government clinics or hospitals are the main providers of treatment, although genital ulcers, sores or blisters are more likely to be reported to traditional healers than other types of symptoms.

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