

WHO global research priorities for sexually transmitted infections

The WHO global STI research agenda prioritizes **40 research areas** to inform STI policies and programmes by 2030 across four key domains: **diagnosis, prevention, management and epidemiology**.



1 Diagnosis

- **Develop low-cost, rapid STI point-of-care tests:**
 - for *N. gonorrhoeae* and *C. trachomatis* infections
 - to distinguish active syphilis from latent or past infection
 - for antimicrobial resistance in *N. gonorrhoeae* and *M. genitalium*.
- **Evaluate implementation of STI testing (e.g. acceptability, feasibility, effectiveness, cost-effectiveness):**
 - screening for *T. pallidum* infection
 - screening for *N. gonorrhoeae*, *C. trachomatis* and *T. vaginalis* infections
 - assessing STI symptoms with tests as opposed to syndromic management
 - self-sampling or self-testing for STIs.
- **Develop multiplex platforms for diagnosing etiologies of STI syndromes.**
- **Develop other low-cost, rapid STI point-of-care tests for:**
 - HSV infection
 - *T. vaginalis* infection
 - *M. genitalium* infection.
- **Design improved tools for diagnosing pelvic inflammatory disease.**



2 Prevention

- **Design multipurpose prevention technologies to prevent STIs and pregnancy.**
- **Develop STI vaccines for:**
 - *N. gonorrhoeae* infection (including group B meningitis vaccines)
 - HSV infection
 - *T. pallidum* infection
 - *C. trachomatis* infection.
- **Develop communication strategies to increase STI awareness, prevention and service engagement.**
- **Evaluate screening and treatment for STIs to reduce adverse pregnancy outcomes.**
- **Evaluate pre- and post-exposure prophylactic strategies for STIs and their implementation.**



3 Management

- **Develop new therapeutics for *N. gonorrhoeae* infection at multiple anatomic sites.**
- **Identify oral alternatives to benzathine penicillin for treating syphilis during pregnancy.**
- **Evaluate the implementation of STI partner management, especially in LMICs.**
- **Develop improved STI therapeutic and management options for:**
 - congenital syphilis, neurosyphilis and other syphilis complications
 - HSV infection, ideally curative treatment
 - *T. vaginalis* infection, including drug-resistant infections
 - *M. genitalium* infection, including drug-resistant infections.
- **Design strategies to reduce stigma and adverse psychosocial consequences associated with STI diagnoses.**



4 Epidemiology

- **Estimate the prevalence and incidence of:**
 - *T. pallidum* infection
 - *N. gonorrhoeae* and *C. trachomatis* infections
 - genital HSV infections.
- **Assess patterns of STI healthcare-seeking behaviour in diverse populations.**
- **Evaluate STI antimicrobial resistance and treatment failures at different anatomical sites.**
- **Evaluate the burden of disease outcomes due to:**
 - *T. pallidum* infection
 - *N. gonorrhoeae* and *C. trachomatis* infections
 - genital HSV infections.
- **Evaluate quality of life effects, disability weights, and societal costs associated with STIs.**
- **Gain better understanding of STI transmission in populations using innovative methods.**
- **Investigate whether *M. genitalium* infections lead to important disease outcomes.**
- **Evaluate the interactions between STIs and the vaginal microbiome.**

For more information on the WHO global STI research priority setting process and detailed results, please see:



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