



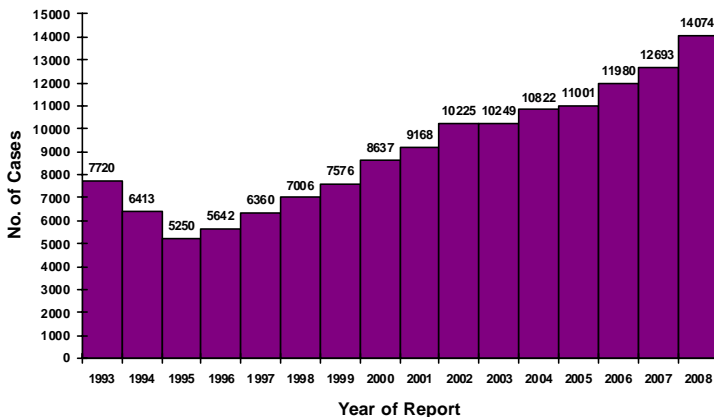
County of San Diego Sexually Transmitted Diseases 2008 Annual Report



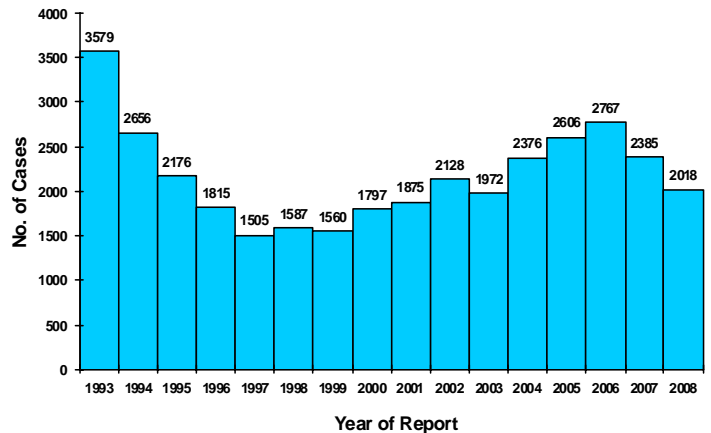
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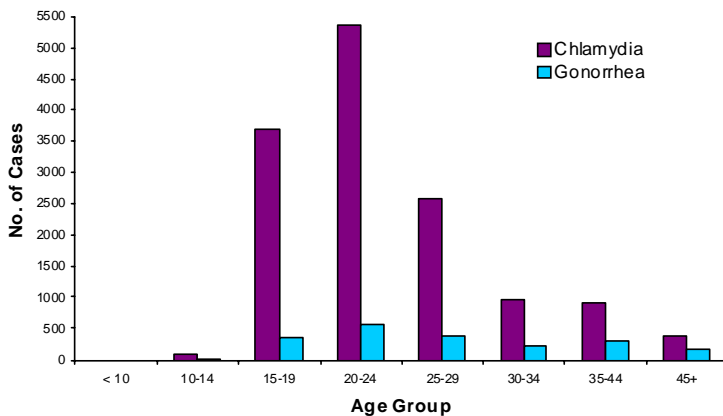
Chlamydia Cases by Year, San Diego 1993-2008



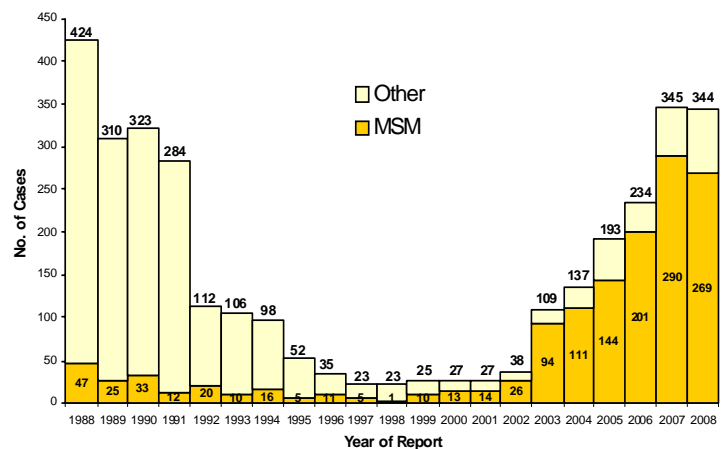
Gonorrhea Cases by Year, San Diego 1993-2008



Chlamydia and Gonorrhea Cases by Age Group, San Diego 2008



Primary & Secondary Syphilis Total and MSM Cases by Year, San Diego 1988-2008



From 2007 to 2008, reported chlamydia cases increased by 11% and reported gonorrhea cases decreased by 15% in San Diego County. These diseases are most common among youth in their teens and twenties; 64% of chlamydia cases and 46% of gonorrhea cases were between the ages of 15 and 24 years. According to a national population-based study conducted by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), one in four teenaged girls in the United States is infected with a sexually transmitted disease (STD). Many STDs are often asymptomatic – approximately 75% of women and 50% of men infected with chlamydia do not have symptoms and most women infected with gonorrhea are also asymptomatic. If left untreated, chlamydia and gonorrhea infections can lead to serious complications such as pelvic inflammatory disease (PID). In the United States, more than one million women develop PID and more than 100,000 women become infertile due to PID each year. This underscores the need for frequent screening. CDC recommends that all women under the age of 26 be screened at least annually for chlamydia; women of any age should be screened periodically based on risk factors such as new or multiple partners, substance abuse problems, or a previous STD. Persons with a chlamydia or gonorrhea infection should be retested approximately 3 months after the original diagnosis as repeat infections are common.

For the first year since 2002, the number of primary and secondary syphilis cases in San Diego County did not increase but, rather, remained stable (345 cases in 2007; 344 cases in 2008). Preliminary data for January – March 2009 suggest that case numbers are not just leveling off in the county but may be decreasing as there were

35% fewer cases in the first quarter of 2009 as compared to the first quarter of 2008. This decline is due in part to the ongoing efforts of County of San Diego communicable disease investigators (CDIs) who work with clinicians to interrupt the spread of disease. CDIs investigate every case of early syphilis and work not only to ensure that each case receives adequate treatment, but that sexual partners are diagnosed and treated as well.

The majority of primary and secondary syphilis cases in San Diego County were men who have sex with men (MSM; 78%). Co-infection with HIV was common among reported cases (50% of all syphilis cases were HIV-positive), with MSM cases having a higher rate of co-morbidity (57%) as compared to females (8%) and heterosexual males (10%). Methamphetamine use was reported by 18% of cases (women: 33%; MSM: 18%; heterosexual men: 14%). These data emphasize the importance of obtaining sexual and behavioral histories to determine the syphilis screening frequency appropriate for each individual. Because of the higher burden of disease in the MSM community, the State of California STD Control Branch recommends screening sexually active MSM every 3 to 6 months.

Syphilis Screening in Men Who Have Sex With Men

In an effort to drive down the prevalence of syphilis among gay men and other MSM, the County of San Diego, the HIV, STD, and Hepatitis Branch (HSHB) of Public Health Services, in conjunction with the California Department of Public Health, STD Control Branch formed the San Diego Syphilis Elimination Community Task Force in August 2008. This task force, which is comprised of members of the affected community as well as representatives from organizations that support and serve the community, decided that increasing the number of gay men and other MSM who access routine syphilis testing and increasing the awareness of the need for such screening were priority activities. In order to accomplish those goals HSHB hosted a series of free syphilis screening events targeting this at-risk population during April 2009. The screening events were held at local partner organizations as well establishments that the target population frequents. The screening events were promoted in the local community paper and through a website that was developed as a part of this initiative, www.sdsoreloser.com. In June of 2009 the website will be used to launch a syphilis symptom recognition awareness campaign targeting gay men and other MSM. The goal of the campaign, which is funded by the California STD Control Branch, is to increase MSM understanding of the different symptoms that can be present during the primary and secondary stages, and provide resources for syphilis testing. In addition, on July 18th and 19th, HSHB will once again offer syphilis and rapid HIV testing at the San Diego Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender PRIDE festival in Balboa Park.