

## **Management of Sexual Transmitted Infections (STI)**

STIs are common ailments in the entire world hence STI prevention and control remains a priority for any health care system. The HIV and AIDS epidemic has brought new challenges and renewed urgency to STI management. Evidence has shown that common STIs such as syphilis, chancroid, and genital herpes facilitate HIV transmission and therefore Botswana, through Ministry of Health has responded swiftly to this challenge.

In general STI prevention has been undertaken as part of general HIV prevention for sexual transmission by promoting abstinence, delay in sexual debut, partner reduction, mutual fidelity, and consistent and correct condom use. STI care is provided through syndromic management in health facilities by trained providers. Botswana developed a robust programme of training providers on treatment guidelines and clinical skills. In 2003, the MOH started revising the treatment guidelines to incorporate routine HIV testing, risk reduction counseling and treatment of HSV-2. Health Provider-Initiated routine HIV testing has been integrated into STI services management, giving those clients who present with STI symptoms the opportunity of knowing their HIV status.

The prevention of STIs is one of the National Strategic Framework's core technical strategies for preventing further transmission of HIV. Not only are HIV and other STIs transmitted sexually, but STIs are also a co-factor in the transmission of HIV. The relationship between HIV and other STIs in the Botswana epidemic is well documented. Prevalence is reportedly high among female patients with vaginal discharge (40–60 percent), and in men with urethral discharge (about 60 percent).

Recently Ministry of Health commissioned a study that sought to understand the complexity of partner tracing and notification.

Further information and guidelines can be obtained from [www.moh.gov.bw](http://www.moh.gov.bw)