



Our Mission:

The Saint Louis University School of Public Health is dedicated to the discovery, translation, and dissemination of public health knowledge to improve the health and well being of all.



Syphilis Elimination Project

As part of CDC's national campaign to eradicate syphilis in the U.S., the School of Public Health collaborated with the St. Louis Department of Health and the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services to conduct formative quantitative and qualitative assessments of high risk populations, including females who trade sex for money and/or drugs, men who have sex with men (MSM), and STD clinic patients. After identifying key message concepts, small media materials to reduce syphilis were developed and disseminated for each population.

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Discovery

What is the health problem?

- ❖ In 2003, syphilis rates in St. Louis were twice the national average.

Translation

How do we take what we know and apply it to high risk populations?

- ❖ Street outreach workers conducted brief street-intercept surveys with 163 self-identified female sex traders.
- ❖ Most interviews took place 'on-the-street', but some occurred at coffee shops, public parks, and crack houses.
- ❖ A survey of 350 MSM was completed at a St. Louis bathhouse with a response rate of 92%.
- ❖ Qualitative in-depth interviews with two-dozen young African-American MSM were conducted at a community health education center.
- ❖ A survey of 2,824 patients at the St. Louis City Health Department's STD Clinic was completed with a response rate of 71%.
- ❖ Small media materials based on message concepts derived from the results of these above assessments were developed, and disseminated by community based organizations, outreach workers, health educators, and medical providers.

Dissemination

How did we disseminate the small media materials?

- ❖ The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention selected the small media materials for inclusion in a CD-ROM containing exemplary health communication products to prevent STDs.
- ❖ The CD-ROM has been distributed nationally, and therefore practitioners from throughout the U.S. can access the materials and adapt them for use in their own communities. In Saint Louis, thousands of small media have been disseminated to high-risk populations.

Change

What change occurred because of the dissemination?

- ❖ Among other findings, the formative assessments indicated several barriers to syphilis testing, including fear of test results, fear of medical procedures, denial of symptoms, and loss of confidentiality.