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The 'Have I got It?' Pee in a Pot Experiences

The Chlamydia Screening Programme, covering Co. Durham, Darlington, Teesside and part of North Yorkshire, was established in 2004 as part of the Phase Two of the Department of Health's National roll out of the National Chlamydia Screening Programme.

Have I Got It?

The 'Have I Got It?' team consists of health advisers who are specially trained nurses and one of the first areas to target was the local university. With a residential population of 16,000 students the team anticipated great activity and indeed within one day managed to screen 500 students. Some informed the team, via a simple evaluation process, they may not have otherwise accessed a screen for chlamydia in a healthcare setting such as GUM (Genito-Urinary Medicine) clinic or G.P practice. Some students liked the idea that they could access the simple urine test within a setting where they felt comfortable in familiar surroundings.

Since 2004 'Have I Got It?' have offered twice yearly screening events within all colleges, universities and 6th forms within their catchment area. Average screens range from 100-200 tests, depending on population size of the establishment. The team have found the commonest barriers, that stop young people accessing a screen within colleges, are issues around stigma and concerns for what their peers may think. To help with problems the team engage with small groups of young people at the screening events to dispel some of the common myths around chlamydia. These include; how chlamydia is transmitted; 1 in 10 young people may have it - although most will not experience symptoms; the long term

ill health associations of chlamydia - e.g. it may leave someone unable to have children without ever knowing they have had it.

Tutor groups

The health advisers have tried a new way of working by liaising closely with tutors to promote screening prior to the event. Within one 6th form establishment, which had about 600 students, each tutor group were offered chlamydia teaching/awareness raising session. The health adviser was able to eliminate fears students may have had around confidentiality and explain the process for people diagnosed with a positive chlamydia result. Following this session just over half of the students had the test. As a consequence an education session was offered to all tutor groups prior to screening which appears to have increased uptake.

The 'Have I Got It?' team are keen to promote good partnership working and now invite local sexual health workers along to screening events. Colleagues include Teenage Pregnancy teams, GUM representative, drug and alcohol workers, and condom distribution workers. Their involvement will help young people to perceive chlamydia screening as 'normal' as registering with a condom distribution scheme or as normal as discussing, with a contraceptive trained nurse, contraceptive options.

The team often say to young people,

"If you had a chest infection you would seek medical help, seeking screening for chlamydia is no different. If you are having a love life and having sex, then look after yourself and ensure you are practicing safe sex and accessing screening for sexually transmitted infections including chlamydia."