Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs)

Outline

- Definition STI and its Magnitude
- Types and common symptoms
- Mode of transmission
- Importance of early diagnosis, treatment and partner notification
- Complications of untreated STIs
- Prevention

Definition

- STIs are a variety of clinical syndromes caused by pathogens that can be acquired and transmitted through sexual activity and, sometimes, by blood transfusion and from mother to child.
- STIs are commonplace worldwide and may be caused by bacteria, fungi, protozoa, parasites, or viruses.

STIs…

- STIs can be recognized as ulcerative and non-ulcerative or can be classified as curable and incurable.
- The common curable STIs are gonorrhea, Chlamydia infection, syphilis, chancroid, trichomoniasis, and lymph granuloma venereum
- The STIs that are preventable but not curable are the viral STIs which includes HIV, Human papilloma virus, hepatitis B virus, and HSV

STIs…

- STIs are not only a cause of acute morbidity in adults, but may result in complications including male and female infertility, ectopic pregnancy, cervical cancer, premature mortality

Epidemiology of STIs

- What is epidemiology?
  - Epidemiology involves the study of incidence and prevalence of disease in large populations as well as detection of the source and cause of epidemics of infectious disease.
    - *Who*, *what*, and *where*
  - Why is this important?
    - Helps us know where disease is occurring, and who is getting it
    - Helps us plan for control and prevention activities

Epidemiology of STIs

- STIs have public health importance because of their magnitude, potential complications
- The largest proportion of STIs occur in developing nations
- STIs are a major public health problem in all countries, especially in developing countries, where access to adequate diagnostic and treatment facilities is very limited or non-existent.

Distribution of STIs

- Prevalence higher in urban than rural
- Higher in unmarried & young adults
- More frequent among females than males between the ages of 14-19
- After the age of 19, there is slight male preponderance

The link between STI & HIV

- STIs facilitate the transmission of HIV
  - STIs that primarily cause genital ulcers, which enables HIV easy access through such defects in the skin.
- The presence of HIV can make people more susceptible to the acquisition of STIs
  - Immune suppressed individuals have increased susceptibility to STIs
- The presence of HIV increases the
  - Severity of STIs and
  - Their resistance to standard treatment

STI & HIV…

Note:

- STIs and HIV infection share similar risk factors (*same mode of transmission*)
- STIs facilitate the acquisition and transmission of HIV infection
- Effective management of STIs can reduce HIV infection.

Types of STIs

- Bacterial (Chlamydia, Gonorrhea, Syphilis)
- Viral (HSV(Herpes simplex virus), Hepatitis B, HIV)
- Parasitic (Pubic lice, scabies, trichomoniasis)

Common STIs symptoms

- Abnormal discharge from Vagina/penis
- Painful urination
- Lower abdominal pain (In women)
- Bleeding after sex and between periods (In women)
- Pain during sex
- Small blisters on the genital area
- Soft, flesh-colored warts around the genital area
- Neonatal conjunctivitis

Medical Complications of STIs

- Infertility,
- Eectopic pregnancy,
- Urethral stricture
- Blindness in infants
- Organ & tissue damage
- Genital cancer, obstructed labor

Gonorrhea

- Grow rapidly and multiply easily in the warm, moist areas of the reproductive tract.
- The most common symptoms of gonorrheal infection are a discharge from the vagina or penis and painful or difficult urination.

Gonorrhea



Genital Herpes

- Genital herpes is a contagious infection caused by the herpes simplex virus (HSV).
- Symptomatic HSV typically causes painful, watery skin blisters on or around the genitals or anus
- However, substantial numbers of people who carry these viruses have no or only minimal signs or symptoms.

Genital Herpes



Chlamydia

- Chlamydia is a common STI caused by the bacterium Chlamydia trachomatis.
- Chlamydia can be transmitted during vaginal, oral, or anal sexual contact with an infected partner.
- While many individuals will not experience symptoms, chlamydia can cause fever, abdominal pain, and unusual discharge of the penis or vagina.

Chlamydia



Mode of transmission

- Sexual Intercourse
  - vaginal
  - anal
  - oral
- Blood-to-blood contact
- Sharing needles or other drug-use equipment
- Tattoo or body piercing
- Infected mother to her baby

FACTORS INCREASING VULNERABILITY TO STI / HIV INFECTIONS AMONG ADLESCENTS

- Biological Factors
  - Underdeveloped vaginal epithelium, which could be easily infected by etiologies of STIs
- Social Factors
  - Multiple sexual partnership
  - Commercial sex
  - Poor health seeking behavior
  - Poor self-esteem
  - Substance Abuse
  - Peer pressure

Consequences of STIs

- The most serious health consequences of STIs tend to occur in women and newborn children
- Complications in women include
  - cervical cancer,
  - pelvic inflammatory disease with resulting infertility,
  - chronic abdominal pain,
  - ectopic pregnancy,
  - preterm labor and related maternal mortality.

Consequences…

- Complications in newborns include
  - congenital syphilis,
  - premature deliveries,
  - low birth weight,
  - growth retardation.

- The main complication that occur in men who are not treated early is infertility.
- STIs have also enormous social and economic consequences.

Prevention and Control of STIs

- Effective prevention and care can be achieved by use of a combination of responses.
- **Primary Preventive measures** to avoid STIs includes :
  - *Abstinence and/or delaying sexual activity till one is ready for marriage.*
  - *Mutually faithful sexual relationship or "Mutual monogamy" if both partners are not already infected.*
  - *Correct and consistent use of condoms*
  - *Safer Sex practices*

Prevention and Control of STIs…

- **Secondary prevention** measures**:**
  - Promoting STI care-seeking behavior through:
    - Public education
    - Providing non-stigmatizing and non-discriminatory health services
    - Providing quality STIs care
  - Early diagnosis & prompt and correct treatment
    - Providing comprehensive STI case management
    - Offer voluntary HIV testing and counseling service
  - Case finding and screening:
    - Screening women attending maternal, child health , family planning services and ART clinics

COMPREHENSIVE CARE PACKAGE FOR ADOLESCENTS WITH STIs SHOULD INCLUDE

- Effective medical treatment
- Health education and counseling on risk reduction
- HIV testing and counseling
- Contact tracing and management
- Promotion and provision of condoms

CHALLENGES OF STIs PREVENTION AND CONTROL

- The challenges are related to three major factors:
  - Health system factors
    - Inaccessibility and unavailability of health services
  - Biological factors
    - 70%-80% of infected women may be asymptomatic and so will not seek treatment.
  - Socio-cultural and behavioral factors.
    - Reluctance to seek health care
    - Ignorance or misinformation

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