

CDC: 110,197,000 Venereal Infections in U.S.; Nation Creating New STIs faster Than New Jobs or College Grads

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(CNSNews.com) - According to new data released by the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, there were 19.7 million new venereal infections in the United States in 2008, bringing the total number of existing sexually transmitted infections (STIs) in the U.S. at that time to 110,197,000.

The 19.7 million new STIs in 2008 vastly outpaced the new jobs and college graduates created in the United States that year or any other year on record, according to government data. The competition was not close.

The STI study referenced by the CDC estimated that 50 percent of the new infections in 2008 occurred among people in the 15-to-24 age bracket. In fact, of the 19,738,800 total new STIs in the United States in 2008, 9,782,650 were among Americans in the 15-to-24 age bracket.

By contrast, there were 1,524,092 bachelor's degrees awarded in the United States in the 2007-2008 school year, according to the National Center for Education Statistics. That means the total number of new STIs in 2008 outpaced the total number of new bachelor's degrees by nearly 13 to 1, and the number of new STIs among Americans in the 15-to-24 age bracket outnumbered new bachelor's degrees by more than 6 to 1.

While the CDC estimates that there were 19.7 million new STIs in the United States in 2008, data published by the Bureau of Labor Statistics indicated that the total number of people employed in the country actually declined by 2.9 million during that year.

The CDC said the new venereal infections contracted each year cost the nation about \$16 billion.

"CDC's new estimates show that there are about 20 million new infections in the United States each year, costing the American healthcare system nearly \$16 billion in direct medical costs alone," said a CDC fact sheet.

The CDC study—"Sexually Transmitted Infections Among U.S. Women and Men: Prevalence and Incidence Estimates, 2008"—was published in the March edition of *Sexually Transmitted Diseases*, the journal of the Sexually Transmitted Diseases Association.

The study distinguishes between "incidences" of a disease, which is the number of new infections in a year, and the "prevalence," which is the total number of new and existing infections.

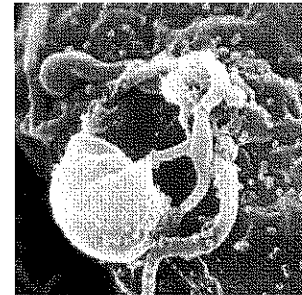
"In 2008, there were an estimated 110 million prevalent STIs among women and men in the United States," said the study. "Of these, more than 20% of infections (22.1 million) were among women and men aged 15 to 24 years. Approximately 19.7 million incident infections occurred in the United States in 2008; nearly 50% (9.8 million) were acquired by young women and men aged 15 to 24 years."

The study focused on estimating the incidences of sexual transmission of particular diseases as opposed to other forms of transmission. For example, it did not include HIV infections that were not sexually transmitted. It also counted the number of infections rather than the number of people infected--recognizing that a single individual could have multiple infections.

"When calculating the number of prevalent and incident infections, only those infections that were sexually transmitted were counted," said the CDC fact sheet. "In general, CDC estimated the total number of infections in the calendar year, rather than the number of individuals with infection, since one person can have more than one STI at a given time (e.g., HPV and chlamydia) or more than one episode of a single STI (e.g., repeat chlamydia infection)."

The most common sexually transmitted infection in the United States in 2008 was human papillomavirus (HPV), which caused 14,100,000 estimated infections that year.

After HPV, in order of magnitude, according to the study, new STIs in the U.S. in 2008 included 2,860,000 new Chlamydia infections; 1,090,000 new Trichomoniasis infections; 820,000 new Gonorrhea infections; 776,000 new Herpes Simplex Virus Type 2 (HSV-2) infections; 55,400 new syphilis infections; 41,400 new HIV infections; and 19,000 new Hepatitis B infections.



Scanning electron micrograph image of HIV-1 budding from cultured lymphocyte. (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention/Cynthia Goldsmith)

The total of 110,197,000 existing STIs in the United States in 2008 included 79,100,000 HPV infections, 24,100,000 HSV-2 infections; 3,710,000 Trichomoniasis infections; 1,579,000 Chlamydia infections; 908,000 HIV infections; 422,000 Hepatitis B infections; 270,000 Gonorrhea infections; and 117,000 Syphilis infections.

As noted, the number of people working in the U.S. in 2008 declined by about 2.9 million (dropping from 146,273,000 in December 2007 to 143,369,000 in December 2008). The Bureau of Labor Statistics has published historical data on the number of people employed in the U.S. going back to 1948. In no year since then has the U.S. economy created anywhere near the 19.7 million new STIs estimated for 2008.

On average during that period, the U.S. has increased employment by 1.3 million per year.

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