Updated Recommendations for STD Screening and Counseling

In late September 2014, the US Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF) published updated recommendations for Screening for Chlamydia and Gonorrhea, and Behavioral Counseling Interventions to Prevent Sexually Transmitted Infections. Both Recommendation Statements are grade “B”, which are defined as highly recommended services because the evidence indicates a moderate to substantial degree of benefit as a result of the service.

The USPSTF recommends screening for both chlamydia and gonorrhea in sexually active women age 24 years and younger, and in older women who are at increased risk for sexually transmitted infections. The evidence showed that screening reduces complications of chlamydial infection in women who are at increased risk; screening for gonorrhea is beneficial because it is highly asymptomatic and responds to antibiotic treatment, thereby reducing infections whereas untreated infections leads to high morbidity; and that screening for chlamydia and gonorrhea reduces complications of infection and transmission or acquisition of either disease or HIV in men.

The Task Force also recommends intensive behavioral counseling for all sexually active adolescents and for adults who are at increased risk for STIs. Evidence indicated that counseling reduced the likelihood of STIs, reduced risky sexual behavior, and increased the likelihood of condom use and other protective sexual behaviors.

The Affordable Care Act mandates that most insurance plans cover all services that receive an “A” or a “B” recommendation by the USPSTF without any co-pays or costs to the patient.


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