



CLINICAL SERVICES

SCREENING OF TRANSGENDER (MALE TO FEMALE) SEX WORKERS FOR SEXUALLY TRANSMISSIBLE INFECTIONS AND BLOOD BOURNE VIRUSES: PROCEDURE

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1. Policy statement

In accordance with The Health Act 1958 and The Prostitution Control Act 1994 (see, CS.Screening Of Sex Workers For Sexually Transmitted Infections And Blood Bourne Viruses: Policy And Proceedure) this procedure seeks to provide a sexual health service framework for practitioners in the provision of services to Male to Female (MTF) transgender persons working in the sex industry.

2. Persons affected

- Sexual Health Nurses (SHNs)
- Medical Officers (MOs)
- Transgender Male to Female Sex Workers

3. Definition of terms

- **Transgender...** refers to someone whose identity or behaviour falls outside stereotypical gender norms. The term male-to-female (MTF) transgender person refers to individuals who are undergoing or who have undergone a process of gender affirmation. (Russell, 2005: p. 321)
- **Neo-vagina...** a surgically formed 'vagina' from the inversion of penile skin (together with bilateral orchidectomy). A urethral meatus is also surgically formed. Some neo-vagina formation procedures also include a portion of the distal colon loop to provide both a longer vaginal barrel and lubrication through the production mucous. Individual who have undergone this procedure are often referred to as 'post-operative' .

4. Responsibility

- Sexual Health Nurses
- Medical Officers
- MTF Sex workers

5. Process

Consistent with the Health Act 1958 and The Prostitution Control Act 1994) Transgender sex workers require

- 1 monthly physical examination and screening for bacterial STIs (gonorrhoea, Chlamydia)

- 3 monthly serological screening (HIV and syphilis)

See, CS.Screening of Sex Workers for Sexually Transmitted Infections and Blood Bourne Viruses: Policy and Procedure

MTF transgender individuals who have a not undergone genital reassignment surgery (i.e. have male genital anatomy)

- These clients are screened for bacterial STIs in the same way as male sex workers (see CS.Screening of Well Men For Sexually Transmitted Infections and Blood Borne Viruses By SHNs: Procedure.)
- For the asymptomatic individual this includes;
 - Ano-genital inspection
 - First Pass Urine for Chlamydia (strand Displacement Amplification: SDA)
 - Pharyngeal swab for gonorrhoea culture and sensitivities
 - Anal swab for gonorrhoea culture and sensitivities
 - Anal swab for chlamydia SDA

MTF who have undergone genital reassignment surgery (i.e. have a neo-vagina)

- The selection of screening tests and the extent of physical examination to undertake for asymptomatic MTF with a neo-vagina differs from biological females for a number of reasons:
 - The lack of a cervix.
 - Differing vaginal pH and vaginal environment.
 - The paucity of evidence about
 - The risk for STIs acquisition through penile/neo-vaginal intercourse
 - The most appropriate STI screening tests to use for post-operative MTF individuals.
- NB. Regardless of whether the MTF transgender persons is pre or post operative, then the MTF transgender individual's risk of STI and BBV acquisition should also account for the inherent risks associated with anal and/or oral intercourse and blood risks (eg Injecting Drug Use).
- Recommendations for asymptomatic examination and STI screening for post-operative MTF transgender sex workers.
 - Ano-genital (vulval) inspection. NB.Speculum examination is not warranted for the asymptomatic MTF transgender sex worker.
 - Pharyngeal swab for gonorrhoea culture and sensitivities
 - Options for testing for vaginal gonorrhoea and chlamydia include;
 - Urethral swab for gonorrhoea micro-culture and sensitivities (MC&S)
 - Urethral swab for chlamydia Strand Displacement Amplification (SDA)
 - Or
 - First Pass Urine (FPU) for gonorrhoea and chlamydia Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) (if this specimen is collected then it should be sent to the Victorian Infectious Laboratory (VIDRL) for processing, rather than the on site lab at MSHC).
 - NB. It is up to the clinicians clinical judgement which method and tests they choose for gonorrhoea and chlamydia testing.

If indicated by the sexual history;

- Anal swab for gonorrhoea (MC&S)
- Anal swab for chlamydia (SDA)

6. Reference documents

CS. Screening of Sex Workers for Sexually Transmitted Infections and Blood Borne Viruses: Policy and Procedure

CS. Screening of Well Men for Sexually Transmitted Infections and Blood Borne Viruses By SHN's: Procedure

Feldman, J.L and Goldberg, J. (2006) Transgender Primary Medical Care: Suggested Guidelines for Clinicians in British Columbia. Web Site

<http://www.vch.ca/transhealth/resources/library/tcpdocs/guidelines-primcare.pdf>

Russell, D. (2004) Sexually Transmitted Infections in Transgender Persons. In Russell, D et al (Eds) (2005) Sexual Health Medicine. Ch 25. pp951-954. IP Communications.