

Gonorrhoea cases increase in ACT

ACT Health Chief Health Officer, Dr Paul Kelly is reminding the Canberra community to be aware of the symptoms of gonorrhoea and ensure they practice safe sex.

“There have been 45 cases of gonorrhoea notified in the ACT between 1 January 2011 to 31 March 2011, compared with 13 cases for the same time period in 2010,” the Chief Health Officer said.

Gonorrhoea is a sexually transmissible infection (STI) caused by the bacterium *Neisseria gonorrhoeae*, and is usually spread through sexual intercourse including oral sex.

Men who have sex with men are particularly at risk, but diagnoses are also increased in heterosexual men and women.

“Gonorrhoea is one hundred percent treatable through a single dose of antibiotics, and therefore it is important that people with symptoms see their local GP immediately,” the Chief Health Officer said.

Gonorrhoea can affect the urethra, throat, rectum, cervix and eye. Urethral gonorrhoea is usually symptomatic and may cause discharge, a burning pain during urination or pain in the abdomen. Gonorrhoea at other sites is often asymptomatic, or symptoms may be relatively minor.

“Some of the increase in notifications can be attributed to the introduction of a more sensitive test at Canberra Sexual Health Centre. However, this change in diagnostic method does not explain the full extent of the increase in notifications seen in ACT,” Dr Kelly said.

“I urge Canberrans with symptoms to seek immediate medical attention by visiting their local GP or by contacting the Canberra Sexual Health Centre on 02 6244 2184 for further information,” the Chief Health Officer said.

Statement Ends 15 April 2011

Media Contact: Hasnah Scheduling 6205 0837 (w) 0417 236 835 (m)

media release