

## **Epidemiology of gonorrhoea in Australia, 2012–2018**

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### **Background:**

Despite the availability of treatment, notification rates for gonorrhoea have continued to increase in recent years. This study aimed to describe the epidemiology of gonorrhoea in Australia and review trends in gonorrhoea tests subsidised through the Medicare Benefit Schedule (MBS) between 2012 and 2018.

### **Methods:**

A retrospective case series study was conducted on gonorrhoea notifications reported to the National Notifiable Diseases Surveillance System between 1 January 2012 and 31 December 2018. Time trend analyses were performed by sex, age group, state/territory, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander status, remoteness areas and site of infection. MBS-subsidised gonorrhoea tests extracted from Medicare Australia Statistics website were used to estimate test positivity.

### **Results:**

Nationally, the gonorrhoea notification rate in 2018 (126.9 per 100,000) was twice that of 2012 (62.0 per 100,000). Infection rates remain high among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. While gonorrhoea notification rates increased in all categories of remoteness, the largest increase was observed in major cities. The number of gonorrhoea tests performed and subsidised through the MBS increased by a factor of 1.4 from 2012 (1,094,913 test) to 2018 (1,548,438 tests). Test positivity increased from 1.27% to 1.99%.

### **Conclusion:**

Gonorrhoea remains a public health challenge. Prevention and control strategies tailored to population groups with persistently high or increasing rates of gonorrhoea are essential to tackling this public health threat.

### **Disclosure of Interest Statement:**

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