

Australian STI Management Guidelines for Use in Primary Care

Major Guidelines Review Process

Background and purpose

The Australian STI Management Guidelines for Use in Primary Care (“the Guidelines”) were developed under the auspice of the Australasian Sexual Health Alliance (ASHA) and are managed by the Australasian Society for HIV, Viral Hepatitis and Sexual Health Medicine (ASHM). The Guidelines are an online resource for primary care health professionals. They provide concise information to support the prevention, testing, diagnosis, management and treatment of sexually transmissible infections (STIs) for adults and adolescents and are frequently cited and referenced by other guidelines.

The Guidelines Oversight Committee has oversight over the Guidelines. The purpose of the committee is to provide direction and leadership, including editorial standards, shape, scope, content, form and purpose. This committee reviews and updates the guidelines as necessary on an annual basis.

The ASHM sexual health program will regularly seek funding to support a major and complete review of the guidelines (“Major Guidelines Review”). Such a review will occur every 5 years at a minimum, or more often (every 3-4 years) where funding is available. Major Guidelines Reviews are expected to take 6 to 9 months. During this review, every section of the Guidelines will be reviewed and updated (as required).

In order to undertake this review, a Steering Committee, Reference Committee and Writing Group will be established. Membership of these committees will consist of (but not be limited to) members of the Guidelines Oversight Committee, clinical and non-clinical experts, community experts representing key affected populations, representative members of key collaborating sector organisations and the Communicable Diseases Network Australia (CDNA), and jurisdictional representatives from the Blood Borne Viruses and Sexually Transmissible Infections Standing Committee (BBVSS).

Process

The process of a Major Guidelines Review is as follows:

1. The Guidelines Oversight Committee in conjunction with ASHA, the ASHM Sexual Health Board Subcommittee, and the ASHM Sexual Health Program will identify need for a Major Guidelines Review based on factors such as time since last update, and the emergence of evidence of significant practice change and epidemiology. The ASHM Sexual Health Program will seek and confirm funding for the review
2. Three Major Guidelines Review committees/groups will be established by the Guidelines Oversight Committee, ASHA, the ASHM Sexual Health Board Subcommittee, and the ASHM Sexual Health Program:
 - Steering Committee
 - Reference Committee
 - Writing Group

3. The Steering Committee in consultation with the Reference Committee will identify section(s) of the guidelines that require update and/or development
4. Members of the Writing Group will develop, rewrite and/or update section(s) of the guidelines as instructed by the Steering Committee
5. The Reference Committee will then review updated and newly developed section(s) of the guidelines for review and comment
6. Dependent on feedback from the Reference Committee, steps 3, 4 & 5 will be repeated
7. Any conflicting clinical recommendations will be discussed by the Steering Committee & Reference Committee. Where and if appropriate clinical differences between state and territories will be reflected in the guidelines. The Steering Committee will have final decision-making authority
8. The first cycle (steps 3, 4 & 5) will be allocated 3 months to be completed. Subsequent cycles will be allocated 1 month of time to be completed. A detailed timeline will be provided to all committee members
9. The updated guidelines will then be posted on <http://www.sti.guidelines.org.au/> for a period of 2 months and comments will be requested from the sexual health workforce
10. The Steering Committee and Reference Committee will consider comments from the workforce and repeat steps 3, 4 & 5 if required
11. The Steering Committee will finalise and sign off on the Major Guidelines Review
12. The guidelines will be submitted to BBVSS for consideration of endorsement as a national guideline. Organisational representatives to also confirm endorsement of the Guidelines by their organisation
13. A communications plan to promote the updated guidelines will be executed once they have been endorsed

Version history

Version #	Changes made	Date	New Version #
0.1	JM first draft	April 2020	0.2
0.2	JM NM CS process finalisation	June 2020	1.0