

a resource for  
interpreters,  
translators &  
other workers  
in health settings

simple definitions  
for keywords about  
blood-borne  
viruses and  
sexual health



multicultural health  
& support service



centre for  
culture,  
ethnicity  
& health

# acknowledgements

## **Multicultural Health & Support Service**

The Multicultural Health & Support Service (MHSS) is a community service that provides education, information and support on HIV/AIDS, sexually transmissible infections and viral hepatitis. We work with migrant and refugee communities, and also with health service providers.

MHSS is part of the Centre for Culture, Ethnicity & Health.

## **Centre for Culture, Ethnicity & Health**

The Centre for Culture, Ethnicity & Health (CEH) assists health, government and community services to offer a high quality of care to clients from migrant and refugee backgrounds. CEH provides workplace training, social marketing services, community education and support, resources, project management and a specialist library on diversity and health.

MHSS gratefully acknowledges funding and support provided by the Victorian Department of Health.

(03) 9342 9700 | [www.ceh.org.au](http://www.ceh.org.au) |  
[www.ceh.org.au/mhss](http://www.ceh.org.au/mhss)

This is a joint project of the following individuals and agencies:

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- Australian Institute of Interpreters and Translators (AUSIT)
- Multicultural Health & Support Service
- Hepatitis C Victoria
- St Vincent's Health
- HIV CALD Service – Alfred Health
- Australian Research Centre in Sex, Health and Society
- Melbourne Health Resourcing Health and Education in the Sex Industry (RhED)

# Glossary : A

## **Abnormality**

A finding that something (a test, a sign or symptom) is not within the normal range.

## **Abortion**

A procedure to end a pregnancy.

## **Abstinence**

To stop or avoid – voluntary restraint from an activity, e.g. sex, alcohol or drugs.

## **Acute infection**

Recent or early infection, as opposed to chronic (long-term) infection.

## **Adolescence**

A stage of change and development in a young person's life, which occurs between the onset of puberty and adulthood. Sometimes called 'teenage years'.

## **AFP (Alpha-fetoprotein)**

Elevated levels in the blood can indicate cirrhosis or liver cancer (HCC). Used for screening for HCC.

## **AIDS (Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome)**

The last stage of HIV infection, when a group of illnesses occur because HIV has severely weakened the immune system.

## **Alcohol dependence**

The state of depending on or needing alcohol to avoid symptoms of withdrawal.

## **ALT (Alanine aminotransferase)**

An enzyme produced by the liver that can indicate ongoing liver damage.

## **Amphetamine**

An illegal stimulant drug.

## **Anaemia**

A decrease in haemoglobin (in red blood cells) that can cause various symptoms including tiredness and breathlessness.

## **Anal sex**

When a man puts his penis into his male or female partner's anus.

## **Analgesics**

Medications that reduce pain, sometimes called 'pain killers'.

## **Anti-Hbe**

Antibody to hepatitis B e antigen

**Antibiotic**

A drug used to treat bacterial infections, but is ineffective against viral infections.

**Antibody**

A special protein produced by the immune system, generally in response to infection or vaccination.

**Antibody test**

A blood test that indicates whether a person has been exposed to a particular antigen, for example through infection.

**Antibody to Hepatitis C**

A positive hepatitis C antibody test means that the person has been infected with hepatitis C. Approximately 1 in 4 people with a positive hepatitis C antibody test will not be chronically infected, i.e. they have naturally cleared the virus. This can only be determined with a PCR test.

**Antibody to HIV**

A positive HIV antibody test means that a person has HIV infection.

**Antigen**

A substance (usually protein) recognised by the immune system as foreign (typically an infection e.g. virus or bacteria) which stimulates the immune system to make antibodies.

**Antiretroviral drug**

Drugs used to treat HIV and prevent AIDS.

**Antiviral therapy**

Drugs used to treat viral infections e.g. herpes, HIV, viral hepatitis.

**ART (Antiretroviral Therapy)**

A class of antiviral drugs used to treat HIV and prevent AIDS.

**Ascites**

A complication of advanced liver disease (including disease related to viral hepatitis) where fluid collects in the abdomen (stomach area).

**Asymptomatic**

When a person has no signs or symptoms of a particular disease or infection they have, but may not be aware of.

# Glossary : B

## **Bacterial infections**

Infections caused by bacteria and which can be cured or treated with antibiotics.

## **Balanitis**

Inflammation of the glans of the penis.

## **BBV (Blood-Borne Virus)**

A virus that is transmitted by blood (and some body fluids). Examples are hepatitis B (HBV) and hepatitis C (HCV) and HIV.

## **Beats**

Venues where MSM seek sexual partners.

## **Birth defects**

Conditions that cause the abnormal development of a baby during pregnancy.

## **Bisexual**

Sexually attracted to or has sex with both men and women.

## **Blood to blood**

Blood to blood contact occurs when one person's blood is able to enter the bloodstream of another person. HIV, hep B and hep C can be transmitted this way.

## **Blood transfusions**

A medical procedure involving the transfer of donated blood to a recipient.

## **Body fluids**

Fluids (liquids) within the body that are not blood e.g. vaginal secretions, semen, saliva, breast milk.

## **Body piercing**

The practice of puncturing or cutting a part of the body for the purpose of creating an opening through which jewellery can be worn.

## **Brothel**

An establishment where sexual services are provided in exchange for money.

## **BSL (Blood Sugar Level)**

A test to measure sugar levels in the blood, often to diagnose or monitor diabetes.

## **BV (Bacterial vaginosis)**

A common syndrome which can be associated with an abnormal vaginal discharge.

# Glossary : C

## **Caesarean section (C-section)**

A surgical operation to deliver a baby through an incision in the lower abdomen of a pregnant woman.

## **CALD**

Culturally and Linguistically Diverse.

## **Cannabis**

An illegal depressant drug which is usually smoked. Some people use cannabis, or marijuana, for medicinal purposes.

## **Casual sex**

Sexual activity outside of a traditional monogamous relationship.

## **CD4 cell**

A type of white blood cell (lymphocyte) which is needed to fight infection. CD4 cells are reduced in HIV infection and very low levels are associated with progression to AIDS.

## **Cell**

The smallest part of the body. The body is made up of millions of cells.

## **Cervical cancer**

Cancer of the cervix, the opening at the top of the vagina which leads to the uterus (womb). Most commonly caused by the human papilloma virus (HPV). Cervical cancer can be detected through pap smears, and a vaccine against HPV has recently been developed.

## **Cervicitis**

Inflammation of the cervix, can indicate the presence of an STI.

## **Chancre**

A painless ulceration formed during the primary stage of syphilis. Usually found in the genital area.

## **Chancroid**

An STI which causes genital ulcers.

## **Chlamydia**

A bacterial STI which may not have symptoms.

## **Chronic**

An illness that happens over a long time frame (more than 6 months) and sometimes a lifetime.

### **Chronic HBV or HCV infection**

HBV or HCV infection which lasts at least six months and often for life. These infections can cause liver damage over many years.

### **Circumcision**

In men, removal of the foreskin.

### **Cirrhosis of the liver**

Late stage liver disease with severe fibrosis (scarring) of the liver. Can lead to complications including liver failure and liver cancer (HCC).

### **Clearance**

The removal of (viral) infection from the body. Often used in terms of treatment response. Resolution of (often chronic) infection.

### **Clinical trials**

Research that tests the effectiveness of experimental medicines on groups of voluntary participants who may benefit.

### **Clitoris**

A small organ near the opening of the vagina, partially hidden by the labia, which is highly sensitive and can be a source of sexual pleasure.

### **Closeted**

Refers to the state of being gay, lesbian or same sex attracted in secret, without telling family/friends/or community.

### **CMV (Cytomegalovirus)**

A common viral infection which can cause opportunistic infection in people with AIDS, and also cause foetal abnormalities if acute infection occurs in pregnancy.

### **Cocaine**

An illegal stimulant drug that can be snorted, injected, smoked or swallowed.

### **Coercion**

Occurs when a person is forced to do something they do not agree with e.g. having sex, having tests, treatment or procedure.

### **Cognitive impairment**

Reduced skills in thinking or reasoning, as a result of a disease or injury.

### **Coinfection**

Infection with two or more infectious agents e.g. HIV and HCV.

### **Coitus Interruptus**

A method of contraception where the penis is withdrawn from the vagina before ejaculation.

### **Cold sores**

Clusters of small blisters on the edge of the lips, caused by Herpes Simplex Virus.

### **Combination therapy**

Treatment (typically of chronic infections such as HIV or TB) with more than one drug.

**Complementary medicine**

Also known as natural therapies and includes treatments such as naturopathy, herbal medicines and acupuncture.

**Condom (female)**

The female condom is a soft plastic sheath with two rings, one of which is inserted in the vagina.

**Condom (male)**

Male condom is a thin rubber (latex), which fits on a man's erect penis. It is used to prevent pregnancy and the spread of sexually transmitted infections (STIs).

**Confidentiality**

A rule which stops health workers, doctors and interpreters from repeating what people tell them or talking about their health to other people.

**Consent**

When a person willingly agrees to take part in an activity.

**Contraception**

The use of a device or a method which prevents conception, or pregnancy, as a result of sexual activity.

**Counselling**

To discuss problems or concerns with someone. When a person or family engages in a process to identify and understand their issues, or make important decisions.

**CT/CAT scan**

A special type of x-ray scan which produces detailed images of the inside of the body, used to help diagnose a variety of medical problems.

## Glossary : D

**Dam**

A square piece of latex used to cover the vagina or anus during oral sex.

**Dementia**

A progressive organic mental disorder where there is a loss of mental function (confusion, memory loss, loss of ability to think and act clearly) that can develop in older age but also when someone has AIDS.

**Dependence**

Having to rely on or need something or somebody, often used in relation to drugs or alcohol.

**Depression**

Not simply sadness, but a potentially serious illness that has physical and psychological symptoms and affects social interactions. Depression occurs commonly in people with chronic and/or severe illness.

**Dermatitis**

Inflammation of the skin. Can be caused by allergies, drugs, or other causes.

**Detectable viral load**

A detectable viral load means that the virus can be measured in the blood. Viral loads are measured in the treatment of chronic viral infections e.g. HIV, HBV, HCV.

**DHS (Department of Human Services)**

Victoria's largest government organisation which funds or delivers many health and community services, including child protection services.

**Diagnosis**

The conclusion a doctor makes regarding a patient's health condition after assessing their patient's medical history, symptoms, signs, and test results.

**Diarrhoea**

Liquid or 'loose' watery faeces.

**Dietician**

A health professional who specialises in advising people about healthy food and fluid intake.

**Disclosure**

In the health context, disclosure means telling someone that you have a disease. This needs careful consideration because people infected with HIV or HCV may face stigma and discrimination when they tell others about their positive status.

**Discrimination**

Treating someone unfairly because they are different (immigrants, women, persons living with HIV or AIDS, or persons with a disability) than you are. In Australia, many types of discrimination are against the law.

**DNA**

Deoxyribonucleic acid – genetic material. DNA or RNA form the genetic code of all forms of life.

**DNA test**

Used to detect the presence of the genetic material of some viruses or bacteria Eg HBV (RNA for HCV & HIV).

**Donor**

A human or other organism that gives living tissue to be used in another body, e.g. blood for transfusion, liver for transplant.

**Douche**

Rinse with water or other liquid to cleanse the vagina or anus.

**Drink spiking**

The act of placing a intoxicating drug into someone's drink without their consent or knowledge. It is often associated with robbery or rape.

**Drug (illicit)**

An illegal chemical or substance that is taken via smoking, snorting, swallowing or injecting. People use illicit drugs for their physical and social effects, despite the associated harms.

**Drug (medications)**

A medicine used to treat an illness.

**Drug dependence**

The powerful physical or mental need to maintain long-term use of drugs, usually for non-medical purposes. Also called drug addiction.

**Drug interaction**

Occurs when the effect of one drug is affected by taking a second drug or eating certain foods during the same period of time.

**Drug reaction**

An unwanted or unexpected response to a drug taken in normal doses.

**Drug resistance**

A drug is no longer effective because the bacteria or virus has developed resistance to the drug.

**Drug tolerance**

In physical drug dependence, the body has adjusted to the prolonged use of the drug. Larger doses are required to maintain the same effect.

**Dual Protection**

Prevents pregnancy and STIs e.g. condoms.

# Glossary : E

**Early diagnosis**

Person is diagnosed when asymptomatic and in the early stages of infection before serious illness or damage has occurred.

**Ecstasy**

An illicit stimulant drug, usually in pill form and MDMA.

**Ejaculation**

The release of semen from the penis during sex, usually associated with feelings of pleasure.

**Emergency contraception**

Tablets which if taken within 72 hours after unprotected sex can prevent a pregnancy. Also called morning after pill.

**Encephalopathy**

A brain condition or disease affecting the ability to think and reason. Can be caused by severe liver disease (Hepatic encephalopathy) or by AIDS.

**Erection**

The penis becomes stiff and hard when the man becomes sexually excited.

**Escort**

A sex worker who provides a “visiting” or “out-call” service.

**Exposure**

Where a person has experienced an event which could potentially result in infection.

# Glossary : F

**Faeces**

Digested waste material that is excreted through the anus.

**Fasting**

To stop eating or drinking – may be required for some tests.

**Fertility**

The ability to conceive and have children.

**Fibroscan**

An non-invasive scan currently being evaluated which can indicate the amount of liver damage or fibrosis that is present and may be an alternative to liver biopsy in staging liver disease caused by HCV or HBV.

**Fibrosis**

Scarring, often referring to the liver. Severe scarring (cirrhosis) can affect the functioning of the liver and lead to serious complications.

**Fibrosis score**

Indicates the amount of liver scarring on a numbered scale Eg 0 to 4. 0 is no detectable damage and 4 is advanced scarring (cirrhosis) when measured with a liver biopsy.

**Filter**

A function of the liver. The liver filters blood of toxins, e.g. alcohol and drugs

**Flare**

Increase in viral activity, symptoms and/or associated damage, typically referring to viral hepatitis.

**Foreplay**

Mutual sexual fondling, generally occurs prior to intercourse.

**Formula feeding**

Using artificial formula to feed a baby instead of breastfeeding.

**Fungus**

A type of parasitic life form which can cause infection in humans e.g. candida.

# Glossary : G

**Gastroenterologist**

A health professional who specialises in disease of the gastrointestinal tract (digestive system).

**Gay**

A word used to describe a man who is sexually attracted to or has sex with other men. A member of the gay community. Sometimes also used to describe lesbians.

**Gender**

The social meaning of being male or female, which includes ideas about normal behaviours, roles and characteristics. Not the same as biological sex (being born a woman or man), which is a physical trait.

**Gender identity**

How a person imagines or understands their own gender. Sometimes people can identify as being a gender different to their biological sex.

**Genital discharge**

Fluid leaking from the genital tract (vagina or penis) which can be sign of an STI e.g. gonorrhoea.

**Genital herpes**

An STI of the ano-genital region, caused by HSV1 or HSV2.

**Genital warts**

A fleshy projection from the skin or mucous membranes around the genitals or anus caused by infection with the human papillomavirus (HPV).

**Genitals**

The reproductive organs – Penis & Vagina.

**Genotype**

Different genetic types or strains of an organism. Often used clinically in reference to chronic viral infections, especially HCV.

**Glans penis**

The tip (head) of the penis.

**Gonorrhoea**

A treatable bacterial STI associated with genital discharge which can be prevented by using condoms.

**GUD (Genital ulcer disease)**

A break in skin or mucous membrane associated with a range of STIs e.g. herpes, syphilis.

**Gynaecologist**

A health professional (doctor) who specialises in diseases of women's reproductive organs.

# Glossary : H

**HAART (Highly Active Antiretroviral Therapy)**

Highly Active Antiretroviral Treatment. Combination therapy with 3 or more ARV drugs used to treat HIV.

**Haemoglobin**

The substance in red blood cells that carries oxygen.

**Haemophilia**

An inherited (genetic) disease which causes abnormally easy bleeding or bruising. Some people with haemophilia have been infected with BBVs through contaminated blood products.

**Harm reduction**

A principle that accepts the reality that it is difficult to stop people performing risky activities (such as drug use or unsafe sexual practices) and instead aims to reduce the harms associated with those activities.

**HAV (Hepatitis A virus)**

Hepatitis A is an acute viral infection of the liver, usually transmitted through contaminated food or drink but which can also be sexually acquired, especially through oro-anal contact.

**HBV (Hepatitis B virus)**

Hepatitis B is a virus that affects the liver which is very common worldwide. Approximately 95% of otherwise healthy adults will recover from acute HBV infection without progressing to chronic infection, but most babies and young children will develop chronic infection. Vaccine-preventable and treatable.

## **HCC (Hepatocellular Carcinoma)**

Liver cancer. Most commonly occurs as a complication of chronic viral hepatitis, especially HBV.

## **HCV (Hepatitis C virus)**

Hepatitis C is a virus that affects the liver. Approximately 75% of people who are infected will develop chronic HCV infection. Some people will clear the virus naturally or following antiviral treatment. No vaccine available.

## **HDV (Hepatitis D virus)**

Hepatitis D is a virus that can only infect people who have hepatitis B infection. HDV can lead to serious liver disease and is difficult to treat. Vaccination against HBV protects against HDV because only people with HBV can be infected with HDV.

## **Health Undertaking**

A condition of immigration visas granted to people with certain health conditions, that requires them to undergo further medical follow-up once they arrive in Australia.

## **Heart disease**

Conditions which affect the function of the heart, including angina, heart attacks, and heart failure.

## **Hepatitis**

Inflammation of the liver, usually caused by one of the hepatitis viruses. Hepatitis B, C (and in some cases D) viruses are those with the potential to produce chronic (long-term) infection and liver damage. Hepatitis A and E typically cause acute (short-term) hepatitis, and are acquired through contaminated food or water.

## **Hepatitis B core antibody**

An antibody which is present in anyone ever infected with HBV, including those with chronic or resolved infection.

## **Hepatitis B e antigen**

A marker of viral replication and infectivity.

## **Hepatitis B Immunoglobulin**

A blood product rich in antibodies against HBV which can be injected into people (including newborn babies) who have been exposed to HBV to help prevent infection.

## **Hepatitis B surface antibody**

Indicates immunity after past infection with, or vaccination against HBV.

## **Hepatitis B vaccine**

A series of injections which can immunise a person against HBV infection.

## **Hepatologist**

A doctor or nurse who specialises in liver disease, usually working out of a liver clinic.

## **Heroin**

An illicit depressant drug that produces feelings of happiness and reduces physical pain.

## **Herpes Zoster (Shingles)**

A virus that causes a painful rash that occurs in people who have had chicken pox. It is caused by the VZV (chickenpox) virus, not by HSV (herpes simplex) virus.

## **Heterosexual**

A word used to describe someone who is attracted to or has sex with people of the opposite sex.

## **HEV (Hepatitis E virus)**

Hepatitis E is spread through contaminated food and water like hepatitis A, but is less common in Australia and usually seen in returned travellers from endemic areas.

## **High risk practices**

High risk practices are activities that have an increased chance of harm, including contracting or transmitting a BBV or STI.

## **HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus)**

The virus that causes AIDS. There is no cure and no vaccine to protect against HIV infection, but treatments are available to prevent progression to AIDS and keep people with HIV healthy.

## **HIV antibody**

Protein produced by the immune system in response to HIV infection.

## **HIV test**

A test used to find out if a person has HIV. This is usually an antibody test. Results can be positive, negative or indeterminate.

## **Homophobia**

Fear or intense dislike of homosexual people because of their sexuality.

## **Homosexual**

A word used to describe a man who is sexually attracted or has sex with other men or a woman who is sexually attracted to or has sex with other women.

## **Hormonal contraception**

Hormone based medication that prevents a pregnancy from occurring.

## **HPV (Human Papilloma Virus)**

A virus which infects the skin and mucous membranes. Some HPV are sexually transmitted. Causes genital and anal warts, and cervical cancer. A vaccine against HPV has recently become available.

## **HSV (Herpes Simplex Virus)**

A common virus which has two types: HSV 1 and HSV2. Herpes can occur on and around the mouth and the genitals. Can be sexually transmitted.

## **Hyperlipidemia**

Abnormally high levels of cholesterol and other lipids (fats) in the blood, which increases the risk of diseases such as heart attack or stroke. Can be caused by some ART drugs used in HIV treatment.

# Glossary : I

## **IDU (Injecting drug user)**

An expression used to describe a person who injects drugs into their body; usually illicit drugs.

## **Immune Reconstitution Syndrome**

An uncommon syndrome following commencement of treatment for HIV/AIDS where an excessive response to opportunistic infections by the recovering immune system leads to disease.

## **Immune system**

The immune system protects the body by fighting infection and disease. HIV impairs the functioning of the immune system so that a person with HIV is less able to fight off infections.

## **Immunodeficiency**

The immune system has been weakened by HIV or some medicines e.g. to treat cancer, organ transplants.

## **Immunosuppressed**

Describes a person with immunodeficiency because their immune system has been weakened by HIV or some medicines. This person is more likely to get opportunistic infections (OIs).

## **Impotence**

The inability of a man to have or maintain an erection of his penis.

## **Indeterminate test result**

A term describing when a diagnostic test gives neither a clear positive or negative result. The test may need to be repeated or a different test used.

## **Infection control**

To prevent the transmission of infection and disease by treating all blood and body fluids as potentially infectious. Infection control practices include the wearing of gloves and are standard in hospitals and should be used in community settings if people are exposed to blood or body fluids.

## **Infectious diseases**

A disease caused by an infectious (communicable) agent that can be passed from person to person.

## **Infectious Diseases Physician**

A doctor who specialises in the treatment of infectious diseases.

## **Infectious, infectiousness**

Able to be transmitted and cause infection.

**Infertility**

Inability to conceive or have children.

**Inflammation**

Caused by the body's response to disease or other injury, usually consisting of swelling, redness, pain and sometimes loss of function.

**Informed consent**

When a person agrees to a certain test or treatment, after having the disease, the test or treatment fully explained to them.

**Inject**

To introduce a liquid substance into the body with a needle and syringe.

**Injecting equipment**

A term which usually refers to the things needed to inject drugs. These include needle, syringe, swab, spoon, filter, and tourniquet.

**Insertive partner**

During sex, the insertive partner is the person who puts their body part (usually penis) inside their partner's mouth, vagina or anus.

**Interferon**

A protein made by the body to fight infection. It can also be made as a drug treatment for Hepatitis B or C. e.g. Pegylated interferon.

**Intersex**

An individual who has the physical characteristics of both sexes.

**Itchy**

To feel a sensation, usually on the skin, that makes you want to scratch.

**IUD (Intrauterine device)**

A contraceptive device inserted into the uterus to prevent a pregnancy.

## Glossary : K

**KS (Kaposi's sarcoma)**

A cancer caused by Human Herpes Virus 8, most commonly seen in people with HIV/AIDS.

# Glossary : L

## **Labia**

The folds of tissue at the opening of the vagina.

## **Late diagnosis**

Person is diagnosed when sick and in the late stages of infection or disease.

## **Lesbian**

A word used to describe a woman who is sexually attracted to, or has sex with other women.

## **Lesion**

A very general term meaning an abnormal change or injury to any tissue or organ in the body.

## **LFTs (Liver Function Tests)**

A set of blood tests that evaluate the functions of the liver.

## **Libido**

Sexual urge or desire. Illness, medications, depression or stress can lower libido, thus lowering desire for sex.

## **Lipoatrophy**

An abnormal body shape caused by redistribution of body fat. A side effect of some ART drugs used for HIV treatment.

## **Liver biopsy**

A medical procedure that involves removing a very small sample of the liver by inserting a needle into the abdomen. The liver tissue can then be examined under a microscope.

## **Living positively**

Coping well with HIV or other serious illness, by having a positive attitude, knowing about the disease and its treatment and looking after one's health. If HIV-positive or HCV-positive, protecting self and others from infection. Being able to disclose to others, to give and receive psychosocial support.

## **Lubricant**

A slippery water-based liquid (jelly) that increases the 'wetness' within the vagina or anus.

## **Lymph node**

A small rounded mass of tissue containing lymphocytes which help fight infection. Can enlarge or become swollen and be felt as a 'lump' during various illnesses including infections and cancer.

## **Lymphadenopathy**

Swelling of the lymph nodes in response to disease

## **Lymphocyte**

A type of white blood cell that helps fight infection. The CD4 (T4 or T-helper cells) affected in HIV are a type of lymphocyte.

# Glossary : M

## **MAC (Mycobacterium Avium Complex)**

An opportunistic infection that can occur in someone with HIV/AIDS.

## **Mantoux test**

A skin test used to detect prior infection with tuberculosis. Can also be positive in people who have had BCG vaccination against TB.

## **Marginalised groups**

Groups that are given lower social standing in a community.

## **Masturbation**

Using the hands to stimulate the genitals of self or another person in order to achieve sexual pleasure.

## **MDR (Multidrug Resistant Tuberculosis)**

Tuberculosis that is difficult (MDR) or almost impossible (XDR) to cure with current medications.

## **Medication**

Any substance intended for use in the diagnosis, cure, treatment, or prevention of infection or disease.

## **Meningitis**

Inflammation of the meninges (the coverings) of the brain.

## **Menstruation**

The loss of the lining of the uterus that a woman experiences as blood loss from her vagina when she is not pregnant. A natural healthy process.

## **Mental health**

Mental and emotional well-being. Resilience and ability to cope with the stress of normal life.

## **Methamphetamine**

An illicit stimulant drug that can be snorted, smoked, injected or swallowed.

## **Midwife**

A health professional (nurse) who is specialised in the care of a woman who is pregnant, during childbirth and care of the newborn after birth.

## **Molluscum contagiosum**

A virus which causes round white swellings on the skin, caused by skin-to-skin contact. More common and extensive in people with HIV/AIDS.

**Monitoring**

A process of regular tests and clinic visits to follow how a disease develops, decide when to start treatment, observing if treatment works.

**Monotherapy**

Treatment with one drug.

**MSM**

A term used to describe men who have sex with men. This includes bisexual men and men who do not identify or see themselves as homosexual.

**Mucosa**

Thin sheet of tissue that cover or line various parts of the body – usually those areas that are ‘wet’, e.g. vagina, mouth, eyes, nose.

**Mucus**

The thick secretions or liquid produced by mucus membranes.

**Mutation**

A change in the genetic code of an organism.

# Glossary : N

**Needle exchange**

A service where you can get new (clean) needles and syringes and have your used needles disposed of.

**Neovagina**

An artificial vagina created by surgery.

**Neutrophils**

Neutrophils are a type of white blood cell that fight infections. Neutropenia is a reduction in the number of neutrophils in the blood.

**Non-compliance**

Missing doses or not taking medicines correctly.

**Non-penetrative sex**

Any sex which does not involve penetration.

**NSU (Non-specific urethritis)**

Inflammation of the urethra where no cause is found despite extensive testing.

# Glossary : O

## **Obstetrician**

A health professional (doctor) who is specialised in the care of pregnancy, childbirth and care of the newborn.

## **Oncologist**

A health professional who specialises in cancer and its treatment.

## **Opiate replacement therapy**

A pharmacotherapy used to treat opiate (heroin) addiction by substituting the illicit drug with a long lasting lower dose of synthetic opiate.

## **Opportunistic infection**

An infection which typically only occurs in a person with a weakened immune system.

## **Oral contraceptive**

Hormones taken orally in order to prevent conception and pregnancy.

## **Oral health**

Health of mouth, teeth and gums.

## **Oral sex**

Sexual activity in which the mouth is used to stimulate the vagina, anus or penis. Can transmit STIs.

## **Orgasm**

Sexual climax in women and men – ejaculation.

# Glossary : P

## **Pap smear**

Cervical smear; a sample of cells is taken from the cervix (the opening of the uterus as the top of the vagina) to examine for abnormalities. Screening test for cervical cancer.

## **Partner notification**

Follow-up of the partners of a patient infected with an STI.

## **PCP (Pneumocystis pneumonia)**

An opportunistic infection of the lungs, most commonly seen in HIV/AIDS.

**PCR (Polymerase chain reaction)**

A laboratory technique that amplifies genetic material (DNA or RNA). In infectious diseases, PCR is used to detect the presence of an infection (including viruses, bacteria and other infections) and sometimes to monitor infections (e.g. viral load testing).

**Peer support**

The support of someone who has experienced the same illness or issue as the patient.

**Penetrative sex**

Putting an erect penis into a mouth, anus or vagina. Can also include putting a finger, tongue, another body part or an object into the vagina, anus or mouth.

**PEP (Post-Exposure Prophylaxis)**

Drug treatment used after exposure to an infection (in the workplace), to reduce the risk of becoming infected e.g. HIV, HBV.

**Perinatal transmission**

Transmission of infection from an infected mother to her baby – Also called vertical transmission. Perinatal transmission occurs during childbirth and breastfeeding.

**Peripheral neuropathy**

Loss of nerve sensation – usually in the feet or hands. Peripheral means nerves beyond the brain or spinal cord.

**Pharmacist**

A health professional who specialises in preparing and dispensing medications.

**Pharmacotherapy**

See opiate replacement therapy.

**Physiotherapist**

A health professional who specialises in helping a person with movement (may also be involved in helping with the movement of secretions from the lungs).

**PID (Pelvic Inflammatory Disease)**

A general term meaning inflammation of the reproductive organs in a female – fallopian tubes, uterus, ovaries – Can be caused by an STI.

**Positive status**

A person is infected by a virus and who has tested positive (e.g. HIV, HBV, HCV). For example, an HIV-positive person is infected with HIV and has had a positive HIV PCR or antibody test.

**Pre-test counselling**

Before an HIV or HCV test is done, the client should first be given pre-test counselling to discuss their risk of infection and the implications of a positive or negative test result. In post-test counselling, the client is given the test result and a discussion to start assisting them cope with the test result.

**Prevention**

Commonly means the prevention of a disease or infection (primary prevention).

**Proctitis**

Inflammation of the rectal mucosa.

**Prophylaxis**

Treatment given to prevent infection.

**Protected sex**

Vaginal, oral or anal sex with condom.

**Psoriasis**

A chronic inflammatory skin condition.

**Psychiatrist**

A doctor who specialises in the treatment of mental illness through counselling and medications.

**Psychologist**

A professional who specialised in the treatment of mental illness through counselling.

**Psychosocial support**

Support to help people to cope with the psychological and social problems that accompany serious and stigmatised diseases like HIV, AIDS or HCV infection. This may include counselling and the support of other people who have the same disease.

**Pubic area**

The lower abdomen and pelvic area near the genitals.

**Pubic lice**

An STI where body and pubic hair infested by lice (a type of tiny insect).

## Glossary : Q

**Quantiferon**

A blood test used to detect prior infection with TB. Alternative to Mantoux test.

# Glossary : R

**Rape**

Forcing somebody to have sex against their will/when they do not want to. Can include oral, anal or vaginal sex with penetration by the penis, another part of the body or an object.

**Rash**

An eruption on the skin which is typically flat or only slightly raised.

**RBC (Red blood cell)**

Red blood cells (erythrocytes) contain haemoglobin and carry oxygen.

**Reactivation**

Relating to virus – when the virus comes back or returns.

**Receptive partner**

Person receiving penis, sex toy, oral sex etc.

**Rectum**

The lower part of the bowel that stores faeces.

**Relapse**

To show symptoms of an infection or disease again after it was thought you had recovered.

**Reproductive health**

Health of the reproductive organs.

**Reproductive organs**

Female – uterus, fallopian tubes, ovaries, breasts. Male: Penis, testes.

**Resistance**

A bacteria or virus is no longer sensitive to a particular drug treatment.

**Respite care**

Short-term or temporary care to relieve (or give the person a short break) for those who are caring for family members.

**Ribavirin**

A drug used in combination with pegylated interferon injections to treat HCV.

**Risk factor**

Events or activities in a person's history that mean they might be at higher risk of a particular condition. Can relate to practices, country of birth or family history.

**RNA**

Ribonucleic Acid – Genetic material. RNA or DNA form the genetic code of all forms of life.

**Rough sex**

Sexual practices which involve vigorous movement or increased force, and can include pain. Rough sex can increase risk of BBV/STI transmission or impact.

# Glossary : S

## **Safe injecting**

The practice of injecting drugs in a clean hygienic way.

## **Safe sex**

Sexual contact when there is no or minimal risk of catching or passing on sexually transmissible infections.

## **Same-sex attraction**

A term used to describe the state of being gay, lesbian, bisexual or attracted to someone of the same sex.

## **Scabies**

An infection caused by a type of tiny insect which can be spread by skin-to-skin contact or by sharing bedding, clothes or other personal items. Causes itching, especially at night and after hot showers.

## **Scarification**

To cut the skin to deliberately cause scarring.

## **Section 100 drugs**

S100 drugs are specialised medications and include those used to treat HIV, HBV and HCV. There are strict rules on their use and only specially trained or licensed doctors can prescribe them.

## **Self-care**

Personal health maintenance. Taking action to stay healthy and prevent illness.

## **Semen**

The fluid which is ejaculated by a man's penis, containing sperm.

## **Seroconversion**

A test for a specified virus changes from negative to positive following recent infection. Can be associated with symptoms, i.e. seroconversion illness in HIV infection.

## **Serodiscordant**

A couple where one partner has a BBV and the other partner is not infected.

## **Serology**

Blood tests – identifying antibodies or antigens in the blood to make a diagnosis.

## **Sex**

Refers to a person's status as either male or female, and relates to the physical biology of a person's body (e.g. having a penis or a vagina). This is not the same as gender.

## **Sex toys**

An object or device used to facilitate sexual pleasure.

**Sex work**

The exchange of sexual services for money or goods.

**Sex Worker**

An individual whose job is to exchange sexual services for money or goods.

**Sexual debut**

Having sexual intercourse for the first time.

**Sexual health**

Women's and men's ability to enjoy and express their sexuality free from risk of sexually transmissible infections, unwanted pregnancy, violence and/or discrimination.

**Sexual intercourse**

See penetration.

**Sexual orientation**

Related to which gender you identify with.

**Sexuality**

A personal characteristic combining a complex interaction of sexual attraction, expression (action) and identity.

**Sexually adventurous**

Persons open to sexual experimentation.

**Sharps container**

A container designed for safe disposal of used needles and syringes or any sharp object that has come into contact with blood or body fluids.

**Side effect**

The unwanted effects of a drug.

**Sign**

Something you can see or measure as an indicator of illness, e.g. rash, lesion.

**Spermicides**

A substance that kills sperm but will NOT kill infection or a virus.

**Sputum**

The thick mucus secretion 'coughed up' from the airways or lungs.

**SSAY (Same-sex attracted youth)**

People who are physically, emotionally and sexually attracted to other people of the same sex.

**Standard precautions**

The minimum standards required to prevent the spread of infection, e.g. washing hands, wearing gloves to avoid contact with blood or other body fluids. Used in hospitals and encouraged in the community.

**Sterilisation (fertility)**

A surgical procedure to prevent pregnancy.

**Sterilisation (instruments)**

Instruments that have been treated to kill all bacteria and viruses

**STI (Sexually transmissible infection)**

A disease which can be passed on from one person to another during sexual contact.

**Stigma**

Severe social disapproval of personal characteristics or beliefs that are against cultural norms.

**Subcutaneous injection**

An injection into the fat lying under the skin. Usually given in the abdomen (stomach area) or in the upper part of the leg (thigh).

**Superinfection**

An infection occurring in someone already infected with a different organism, e.g. infection with HBV occurring in someone already infected with HIV.

**Surgeon**

A doctor who specialises in the treatment of illness through operations (surgery).

**SVR (Sustained virological response)**

Negative HCV PCR test 6 months after completing treatment for hepatitis C. Highly likely to represent viral clearance.

**Swab**

Usually a small piece of paper or material used to clean the skin prior to injection. Or a device used to take a sample of fluid for diagnostic testing consisting of cotton or other material on the tip of a length of wood or plastic.

**Symptom**

Something a person experiences that may indicate illness, e.g. nausea, burning sensation when passing urine.

**Syphilis**

A treatable bacterial STI with 3 stages of infection. The first stage is shown by a painless sore. If not treated, syphilis can progress and affect the brain. No vaccination is available.

# Glossary : T

**T-cell (T-lymphocyte)**

A type of lymphocyte (white blood cell) that helps fight infection. These lymphocytes are affected by HIV.

**Tattooing**

A permanent marking on the skin made by inserting ink or ash or another substance into the layers of the skin.

**TB (Tuberculosis)**

A serious infection which is a major health problem worldwide. TB most commonly involves the lungs (pulmonary TB) but any part of the body can be affected. Management of active pulmonary TB requires the person to be isolated for a period to prevent transmission to others.

**Terminal illness**

An illness that is causing someone to come close to the end of their life.

**Termination (of pregnancy)**

To stop a pregnancy.

**Tests to diagnose/monitor HBV infection**

LFTs, AFP, Anti-HBc, Anti-HBe, Anti-HBs, HBsAg, HBeAg, HBV DNA viral load, clotting studies, FBE, ultrasound, liver biopsy, fibroscan...

**Tests to diagnose/monitor HCV infection**

LFTs, HCV antibodies, HCV RNA PCR, HCV viral load, HCV genotype, FBE, clotting studies, AFP, ultrasound, liver biopsy, fibroscan...

**Tests to diagnose/monitor HIV infection**

CD4 count, HIV viral load, HIV antibodies, Western blot, FBE, LFTs, lipids, STI screening, CXR, U&Es...

**Thalassaemia**

An inherited (genetic) disease of haemoglobin in red blood cells. Some people with thalassaemia have been infected with BBVs through contaminated blood products.

**Thrush**

A fungal infection (candida) which most commonly occurs in the genitalia. Can infect other areas such as the mouth, throat and other mucosal or skin areas, more commonly in people with immunodeficiency.

**Tourniquet**

A device that constricts or stops blood flow or causes it to build up in one area, e.g. to make a vein swell so that it is easier to inject.

**Toxicity**

Damage or side effects of a drug or medication.

**Transactional sex**

Sex in exchange for money or goods.

**Transgender**

A broad term describing a person whose gender identity is not the same as their biological sex.

**Transmission**

The passing of an infection from one person to another.

**Transplant**

To transfer an organ or tissue from one person to another e.g. liver transplant.

**Transvestite**

A person who dresses in the clothing of the opposite sex for sexual pleasure or comfort.

**Treatment**

Something that a person does so that they can stay healthy or get better. Treatments can involve taking western medicine, Chinese medicine, herbal medicine and/or changes in lifestyle.

**Treatment failure**

When treatment does not work.

**Trichomoniasis**

An STI which causes inflammation of the vagina or urethra, often associated with genital discharge.

**Triple therapy**

Treatment with 3 drugs, as in many regimens of HAART for HIV.

**Tubal Ligation**

To 'tie' or cut the fallopian tubes so that ova (eggs) cannot be released – a form of sterilization (contraception).

# Glossary : U

**U & Es (Urea and Electrolytes)**

Blood tests to monitor kidney function.

**UAIC (Unprotected anal intercourse)**

Anal sex which does not involve the use of condoms and lubricant.

**Ultrasound**

A non-invasive test that can examine the structure and function of organs. Safe in pregnancy, unlike many x-rays.

**Universal precautions**

Used in hospitals and encouraged in the community. The minimum standards required to prevent the spread of infection e.g. washing hands and using gloves if contact with blood or body fluids.

**Unprotected sex**

Having sex (penetrative sex and oral sex) without using condoms or dams.

**Urethritis**

Inflammation of the urethra, the tube that carries urine from the bladder out of the body (and conducts sperm in men). Usually caused by an infection.

**UTI (Urinary tract infection)**

An infection of any of the organs of the urinary tract.

# Glossary : V

**Vaccine**

A medication given to produce immunity against infection. Usually given by injection but some are given orally.

**Vaginal fluid**

The natural lubricant inside the vagina

**Vaginitis**

Inflammation of the vagina.

**Vasectomy**

Removal of or cutting of the tubes that carry semen and sperm so that when a man ejaculates he is unable to cause a pregnancy. A form of sterilization (contraception).

**VCT (Voluntary Counselling and Testing)**

A process where a patient is first counselled about the risks of a disease or infection. The client then agrees to have the test (informed consent). When the test result is given, the client is also counselled to help them cope with the test result.

**Vertical Transmission**

Transmission of an infection from an infected mother to her baby can occur during pregnancy, childbirth or breastfeeding. HIV, HBV, and some STIs such as Herpes, Chlamydia, Gonorrhoea and Syphilis can be transmitted this way.

**Viagra**

A drug that causes increased erections in a man. Can have serious side effects in some men.

**Viraemia**

The presence of virus in the blood

**Viral infections**

Infections caused by a virus, a type of microscopic organism.

**Viral load**

The amount of virus (e.g. HIV, HBV or HCV) present in the blood of an infected person. Used to assess the disease and to monitor treatment.

**Viral resistance**

Reduced susceptibility of a virus to one or more medications used for treatment, occurring through specific mutations.

**Virus**

A type of microorganism (microbe, germ). HIV, and the hepatitis viruses, HSV, and influenza are all examples of viruses.

# Glossary : W

**WBCs (white blood cells)**

A number of different types of cells in the blood and elsewhere in the body which are important for fighting infections.

**Window period**

The time between infection and having a positive test result for that infection (e.g. prior to seroconversion). Very variable for different infections.

**Withdrawal (drugs, alcohol)**

To come off or stop taking drugs. Can cause symptoms that are unwanted.

**Withdrawal (sex)**

To remove the penis from the vagina, anus or mouth before ejaculation of semen occurs.

