

BACKGROUND

- Sexually transmitted infections (STIs) are a significant concern to public health.
- Preventable STIs are common, costly, and highly prevalent, with about 26 million STIs occurring yearly in the United States².
 - Prevalence may be a possible reflection of a gap in provider education, influenced by a lack of understanding and internal biases.
- While STIs are preventable through screening measures and educational awareness, there are an estimated 20 million new cases of STIs in the United States each year³.
- Rapid evolution of prevention, management, and treatment measures require providers to remain updated on guidelines and best practices².
- PICOT question:** "In sexually active adults who test positive for sexually transmitted infections (STIs), will the provision of education and prevention strategies to caregivers, as opposed to none, increase treatment compliance and screening rates?"

METHODS

The Rosswurm and Larrabee Model will be used to guide processes utilizing 6 key steps⁵:

- Assess the need for change in practice
- Link problem, interventions, and outcomes.
- Synthesize best evidence.
- Design a practice change.
- Implement and evaluate proposed change in practice.
- Integrate and maintain changes.

The review of literature reflected three themes:

- Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis Education (PrEP)
- Tackling Biases and Stigma
- Improving Provider Screening and Understanding

REFERENCES

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EVALUATION

Evaluation of this project will include chart audits to compare show rates comparing pre- and post-education implementation, assessment of provider understanding by utilizing a checkoff sheet to be implemented as part of current skills checkoffs, and quarterly/annual reviews to assess the improvement programs' effectiveness post-implementation.

- Week 1:** Implementation of checkoff sheet for observation of change in practice in addition to RNs introducing the change.
- 2 Weeks Post Implementation:** Completion of post-implementation review to assess smoothness of change and address barriers.
- Ongoing:** RNs will practice continuous quality improvement by assessing provider understanding, providing support, and implementing additional education as needed.

DISCUSSION

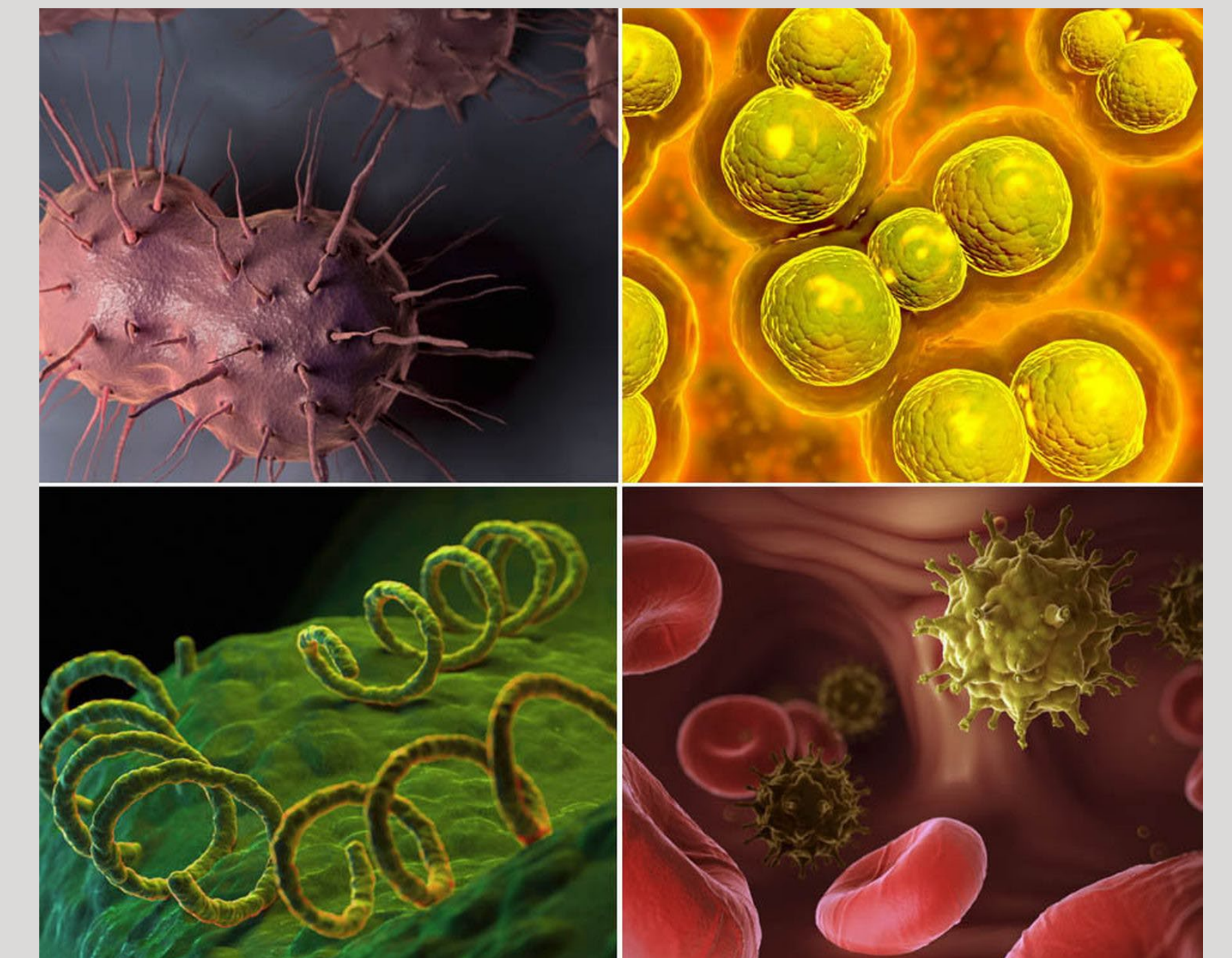
Research reflected a need for providers to address internal biases and stigmas associated with screenings and treatment of STIs¹⁴.

Research also supported the goal of implementing educational opportunities for providers regarding the importance of sexual history taking, open-ended communication, and training to reduce stigma and biases.

Resources available to foster understanding include:

- Sexual health training
- Sexual health conferences
- One-on-one consultations with sexual health and STI content experts

Common STDs Under the Microscope



Daily Star. (2019). *Common STDs under the microscope* [image: getty].
Daily Star. <https://www.dailystar.co.uk/pics/pictures/gallery/stds-under-the-microscope-18681189>

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2021). *Preliminary 2021 STD Surveillance Data* [Image]. CDC. <https://www.cdc.gov/std/statistics/2021/default.htm>



CONCLUSIONS

While research and statistics on the prevalence of STIs support increased provider education to decrease prevalence rates, incidence rates are still growing. Providers in the public health sector play a crucial role in preventing, managing, and treating STIs. To do so effectively and efficiently, they must tackle internal biases and stigma while being versed in current guidance to diagnose and treat STIs and incorporating this guidance into routine practice^{1,3,4}. Creating educational opportunities for providers to expand their knowledge and understanding of the importance of sexual history taking, open-ended communication, and reflective training is critical to successfully addressing STI morbidity and improving sexual health outcomes in communities.

