

## **Northern Territory AIDS/STD Program Surveillance Update**

**Department of Health and Community Services, Vol. 4 No 1,  
Jan-Mar 2003 & Apr-Jun 2003**

This report presents quarterly statistics for all sexually transmissible infections (STIs) and blood borne viruses (BBVs) in the Northern Territory (NT) during the periods January to March and April to June 2003. Data for this report is sourced from the Northern Territory Notifiable Diseases Surveillance System (NTNDSS), the centralised database of NT wide notifications and the AIDS/STD Program's HIV and AIDS databases.

### **1. Aims of the report**

The aim of the report is to provide up to date information that can be used by service providers to assess the current level of infection within their district. Regular reports seek to raise the awareness of all service providers about the high rates of preventable and largely, readily curable infections and assist clinicians to plan targeted interventions.

### **2. Format**

The report is divided into bacterial sexually transmissible infections (gonorrhoea, chlamydia, syphilis and trichomonas) and blood borne viruses (hepatitis C and human immunodeficiency virus). Donovanosis is presented separately due to the small numbers of cases.

### **3. Limitations to the report**

This update does not provide data on complications of sexually transmitted infections such as pelvic inflammatory disease, epididymo-orchitis or infertility which are not notifiable. The data must be interpreted with some caution as the number of cases will be a function of the amount of testing done. It is known that the amount of testing, particularly for screening of asymptomatic persons, varies enormously between regions and different population groups. Data is not routinely available on the total numbers of tests done which would allow a better understanding of the observed patterns of disease.

### **4. Quarterly Notifications**

The comments below relate specifically to the cases and rates of infections for the quarters covered by this report in comparison to the same time period in the previous years, or the preceding six months of the last surveillance report.

#### *4.1 Genital Chlamydia*

There were 843 cases of genital chlamydia diagnosed in the NT in the 6 months to June 2003. This represents a 21% increase over the same time period in 2002 and a 10% increase compared to Jun-Dec 2002.

As has been the consistent trend to date, females (61%) and Aboriginal people (64%) made up a greater proportion of cases than did males or non-Aboriginal people. Rates of chlamydia were highest in the 15-19 and 20-24 year age groups which together, accounted for over 61% of all genital chlamydia cases reported in the first half of 2003. This compares to a proportion of 56% for this age group for the Jan - June period in both 2001 and 2002.

There has been a rise in the number of chlamydia cases detected in both Alice Springs urban and rural areas since the commencement of urban / rural reporting in the Jun-Dec 2002 surveillance update.

#### *4.2 Gonorrhoea*

A total of 779 notifications of gonorrhoea were made in the first 2 quarters of 2003. This compares with 660 and 821 respectively for the same period in the years 2001 and 2002. As for chlamydia infections, the majority of gonorrhoea cases were diagnosed in females (57%) and Aboriginal people (81%).

Over half (51%) of all gonorrhoea cases diagnosed in the NT to June 2003 were notified from the Alice Springs District. This is a slight increase on the 49% for the same period in 2002. The 15-19 year age group makes up 7.5% of the NT population but contributed over 1/3 of all gonorrhoea notifications. This represents an 8% increase from the same time in 2002.

#### *4.3 Syphilis*

There were 172 cases of syphilis notified in this reporting period, compared to 111 and 228 in the same time period of 2001 and 2002 respectively. Gender distribution of cases remains relatively even with only slightly more cases notified in males (54%) than females (45%). Eighty six percent of syphilis cases occurred in Aboriginal people.

#### *4.4 Trichomonas*

Trichomonas notifications have remained stable at just under 300 in 6 months. Over 97% of cases are diagnosed in females and 95% in Aboriginal people. However, anecdotal reports suggest that there is much more testing for Trichomonas in Aboriginal people especially in remote communities.

#### *4.5 Donovanosis*

There were 4 cases of donovanosis reported between January and June 2003 and all were diagnosed in Aboriginal people. The very small number of donovanosis cases diagnosed annually makes quarter-to-quarter fluctuations difficult to interpret.

#### *4.6 Hepatitis C*

New HCV diagnoses totalled 100 for this reporting period. Notifications for the same time in 2001 and 2002 were 105 and 87 respectively. It is likely that only a minority of HCV diagnoses represent newly acquired cases with most people being diagnosed some years after they were infected.

The majority of HCV diagnoses (61%) continue to occur in non-Aboriginal people with ethnicity being unknown in 28%. However, the proportion of Aboriginal HCV cases has risen from 7% in the first six months of 2001 and 2002, to 11% this year. As has been the trend in the NT, a greater proportion of males were diagnosed with HCV than females. Females accounted for 24% of HCV notifications in this reporting period down from 33% in 2001 and 37% in 2002.

The largest number of cases and highest population rate were seen in the 30-34 year age group in this reporting period, whereas in previous years this occurred in the 40-44 year age group in 2002 and in 35-39 year olds in 2001. In the Alice Springs district, twice as many cases of HCV were diagnosed in the first half of 2003 compared to the same period in 2002.

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

There were three cases of HIV diagnosed in NT residents in the first two quarters of 2003. All cases were associated with male-to-male sexual exposure, and one with injecting drug use.

#### *4.8 Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (AIDS)*

One case of AIDS was diagnosed in an Aboriginal male whose AIDS defining illnesses were oesophageal candidiasis and HIV wasting.

### **5. Consumer response**

The NT AIDS/STD Program is very interested in readers' responses to this report. Please forward any comments or suggestions to:

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**All data in this report are provisional and subject to future revision.**

**This report is downloadable in PDF format from the Department of Health and Community Services website: <http://www.health.nt.gov.au/>**

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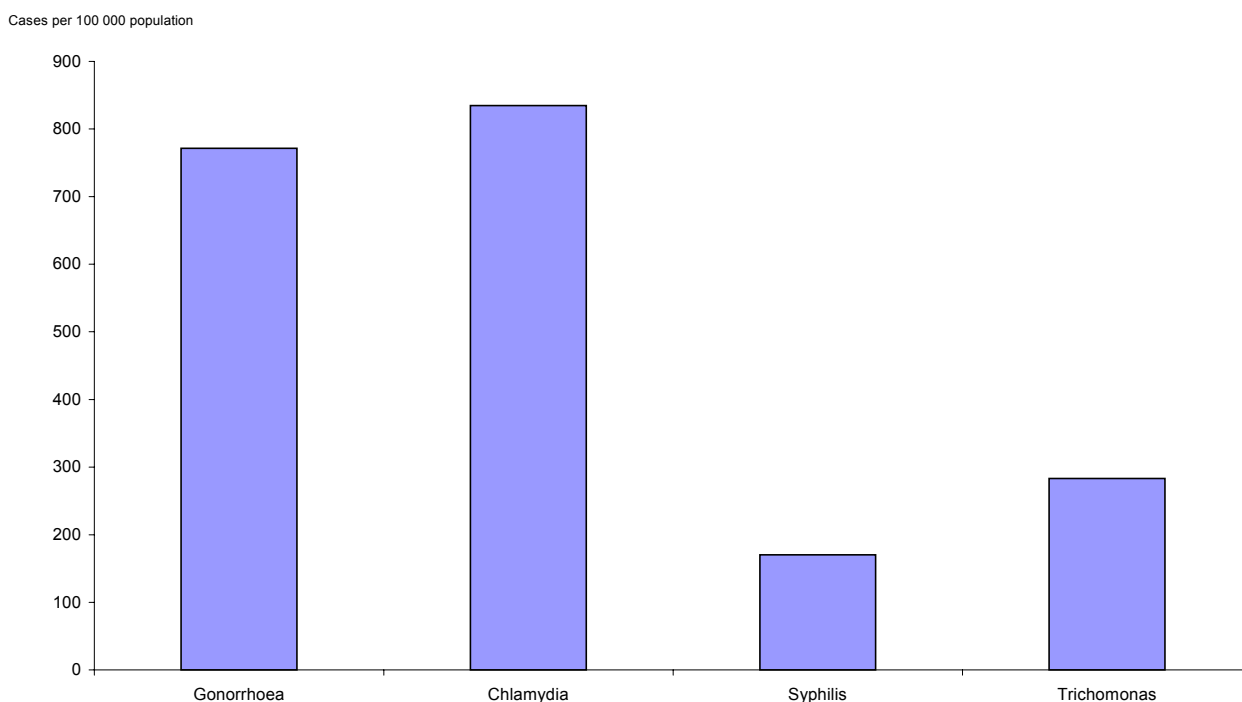
# 1. Sexually transmissible infections (STIs)

**Table 1.1 Gonorrhoea, chlamydia, syphilis and trichomonas rates in the Northern Territory, January-March and April-June 2003**

NT Total	Gonorrhoea		Chlamydia		Syphilis		Trichomonas	
	Cases	Rate <sup>1</sup>	Cases	Rate <sup>1</sup>	Cases	Rate <sup>1</sup>	Cases	Rate <sup>1</sup>
<i>Quarter</i>								
<b>Jan-Mar 2003</b>	377	746.6	431	853.5	76	150.5	165	326.8
<b>Apr-Jun 2003</b>	402	796.1	412	815.9	96	190.1	121	239.6
<b>Jan-Jun 2003</b>	<b>779</b>	<b>771.3</b>	<b>843</b>	<b>834.7</b>	<b>172</b>	<b>170.3</b>	<b>286</b>	<b>283.2</b>

<sup>1</sup> Cases per 100,000 population

**Figure 1.1 Gonorrhoea, chlamydia, syphilis and trichomonas rates in the Northern Territory, January-June 2003**

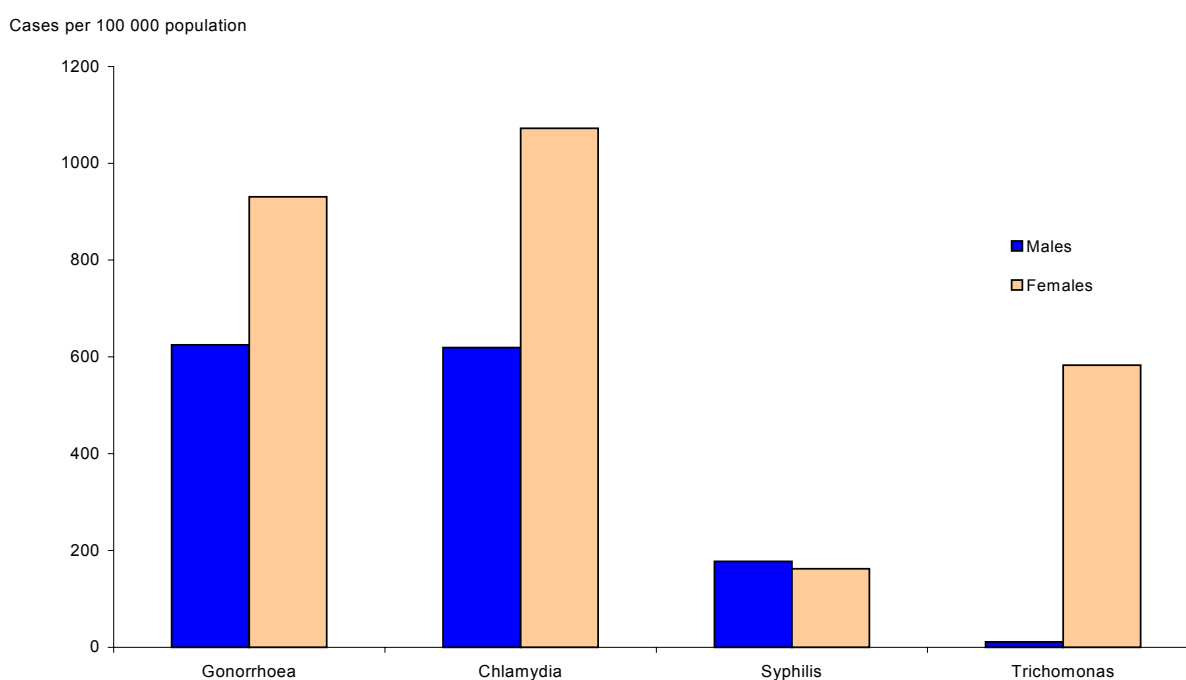


**Table 1.2 Gonorrhoea, chlamydia, syphilis and trichomonas rates in the Northern Territory by gender, January-March and April-June 2003**

Gender	Gonorrhoea		Chlamydia		Syphilis		Trichomonas	
	Cases	Rate <sup>1</sup>	Cases	Rate <sup>1</sup>	Cases	Rate <sup>1</sup>	Cases	Rate <sup>1</sup>
<b>Males</b>								
Jan-Mar 2003	171	645.8	175	660.9	39	147.3	4	15.1
Apr-Jun 2003	160	604.3	153	577.8	55	207.7	2	7.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>331</b>	<b>625.0</b>	<b>328</b>	<b>619.4</b>	<b>94</b>	<b>177.5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>11.3</b>
<b>Females</b>								
Jan-Mar 2003	206	857.7	256	1065.8	37	154.0	161	670.3
Apr-Jun 2003	241	1003.4	259	1078.3	41	170.7	119	495.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>447</b>	<b>930.5</b>	<b>515</b>	<b>1072.1</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>162.4</b>	<b>280</b>	<b>582.9</b>
<b>Not stated</b>								
Jan-Mar 2003								
Apr-Jun 2003	1							
<b>Total</b>	<b>1</b>							

<sup>1</sup> Cases per 100,000 population

**Figure 1.2 Gonorrhoea, chlamydia, syphilis and trichomonas rates in the Northern Territory by gender, January-June 2003**

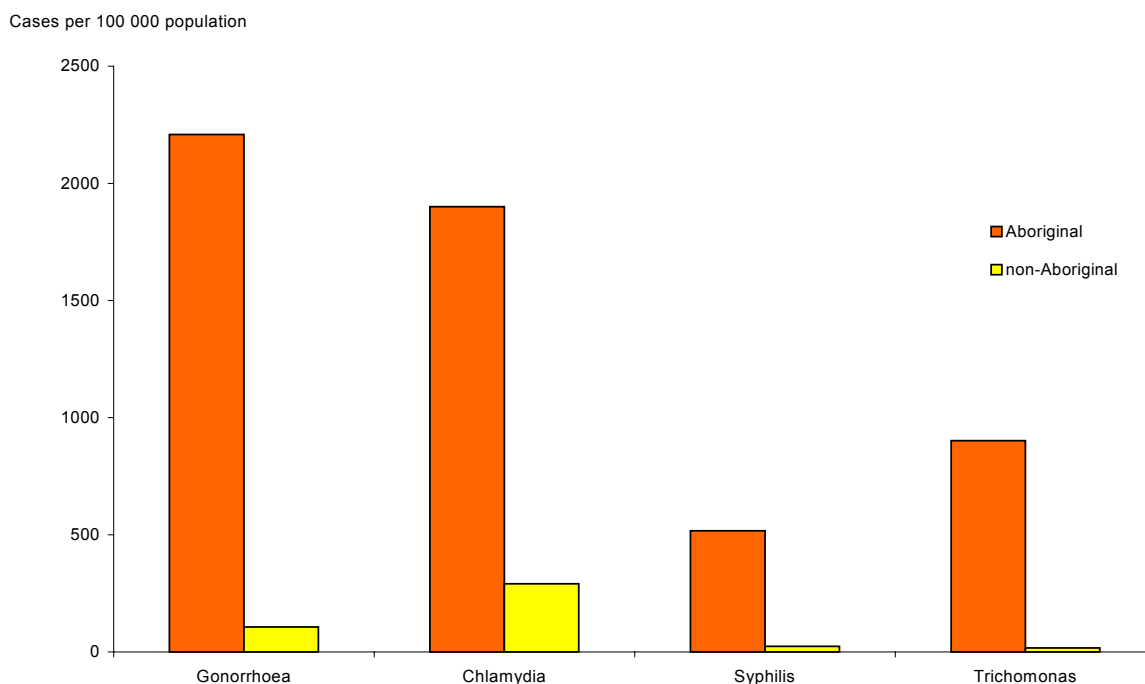


**Table 1.3 Gonorrhoea, chlamydia, syphilis and trichomonas rates in the Northern Territory by Indigenous status, January-March and April-June 2003**

Indigenous Status	Gonorrhoea		Chlamydia		Syphilis		Trichomonas	
	Cases	Rate <sup>1</sup>	Cases	Rate <sup>1</sup>	Cases	Rate <sup>1</sup>	Cases	Rate <sup>1</sup>
<i>Aboriginal</i>								
Jan-Mar 2003	307	2145.5	278	1942.8	62	433.3	152	1062.3
Apr-Jun 2003	325	2271.3	266	1859.0	86	601.0	106	740.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>632</b>	<b>2208.4</b>	<b>544</b>	<b>1900.9</b>	<b>148</b>	<b>517.2</b>	<b>258</b>	<b>901.5</b>
<i>non-Aboriginal</i>								
Jan-Mar 2003	37	102.2	107	295.7	11	30.4	4	11.1
Apr-Jun 2003	40	110.5	104	287.4	6	16.6	8	22.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>106.4</b>	<b>211</b>	<b>291.5</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>23.5</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>16.6</b>
<i>Unknown I/S</i>								
Jan-Mar 2003	33		46		3		9	
Apr-Jun 2003	37		42		4		7	
<b>Total</b>	<b>70</b>		<b>88</b>		<b>7</b>		<b>16</b>	

1 Cases per 100,000 population

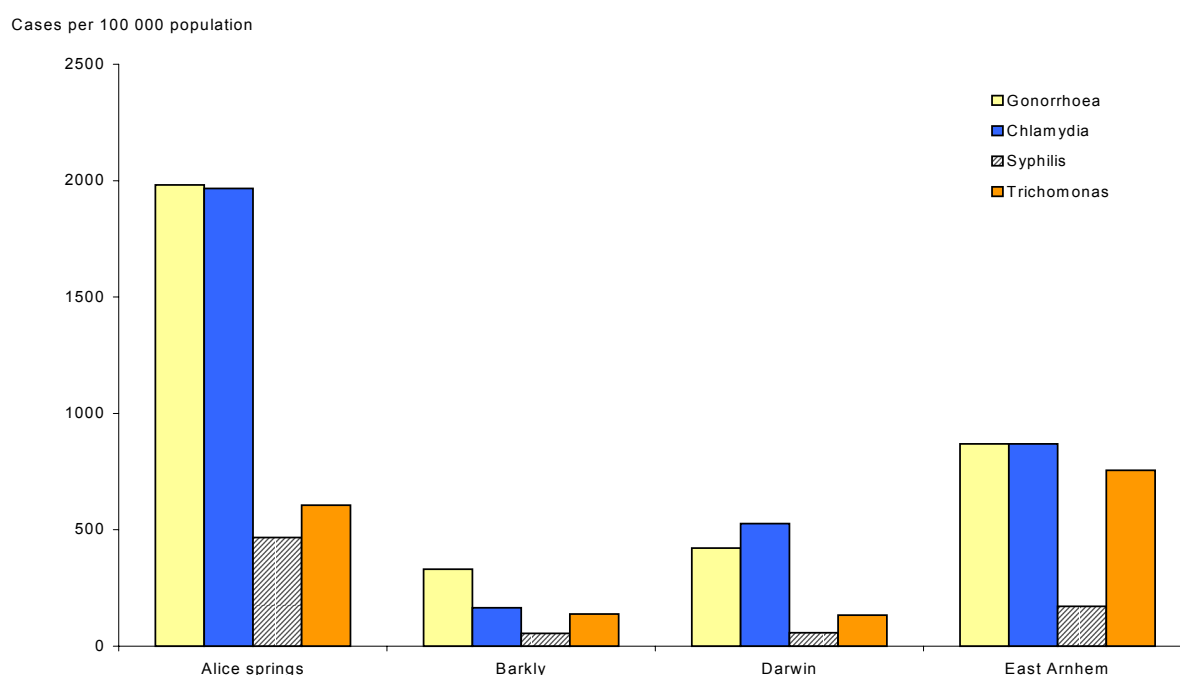
**Figure 1.3 Gonorrhoea, chlamydia, syphilis and trichomonas rates in the Northern Territory by Indigenous status, January-June 2003**



**Table 1.4 Gonorrhoea, chlamydia, syphilis and trichomonas rates in the Northern Territory by district, January-March and April-June 2003**

District	Gonorrhoea		Chlamydia		Syphilis		Trichomonas	
	Cases	Rate <sup>1</sup>	Cases	Rate <sup>1</sup>	Cases	Rate <sup>1</sup>	Cases	Rate <sup>1</sup>
<i>Darwin</i>								
Jan-Mar 2003	134	440.9	160	526.5	22	72.4	49	161.2
Apr-Jun 2003	122	401.4	160	526.5	13	42.8	32	105.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>256</b>	<b>421.2</b>	<b>320</b>	<b>526.5</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>57.6</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>133.3</b>
<i>Katherine</i>								
Jan-Mar 2003	16	339.4	35	742.5	13	275.8	16	339.4
Apr-Jun 2003	35	742.5	25	530.3	16	339.4	9	190.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>540.9</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>636.4</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>307.6</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>265.2</b>
<i>East Arnhem</i>								
Jan-Mar 2003	43	1225.8	38	1083.2	5	142.5	37	1054.7
Apr-Jun 2003	18	513.1	23	655.6	7	199.5	16	456.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>869.4</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>869.4</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>171.0</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>755.4</b>
<i>Barkly</i>								
Jan-Mar 2003	8	440.8	4	220.4	1	55.1	3	165.3
Apr-Jun 2003	4	220.4	2	110.2	1	55.1	2	110.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>330.6</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>165.3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>55.1</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>137.7</b>
<i>Alice Springs</i>								
Jan-Mar 2003	176	1748.1	194	1926.9	35	347.6	60	595.9
Apr-Jun 2003	223	2214.9	202	2006.4	59	586.0	62	615.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>399</b>	<b>1981.5</b>	<b>396</b>	<b>1966.6</b>	<b>94</b>	<b>466.8</b>	<b>122</b>	<b>605.9</b>

**Figure 1.4 Gonorrhoea, chlamydia, syphilis and trichomonas rates in the Northern Territory by district, January-June 2003**

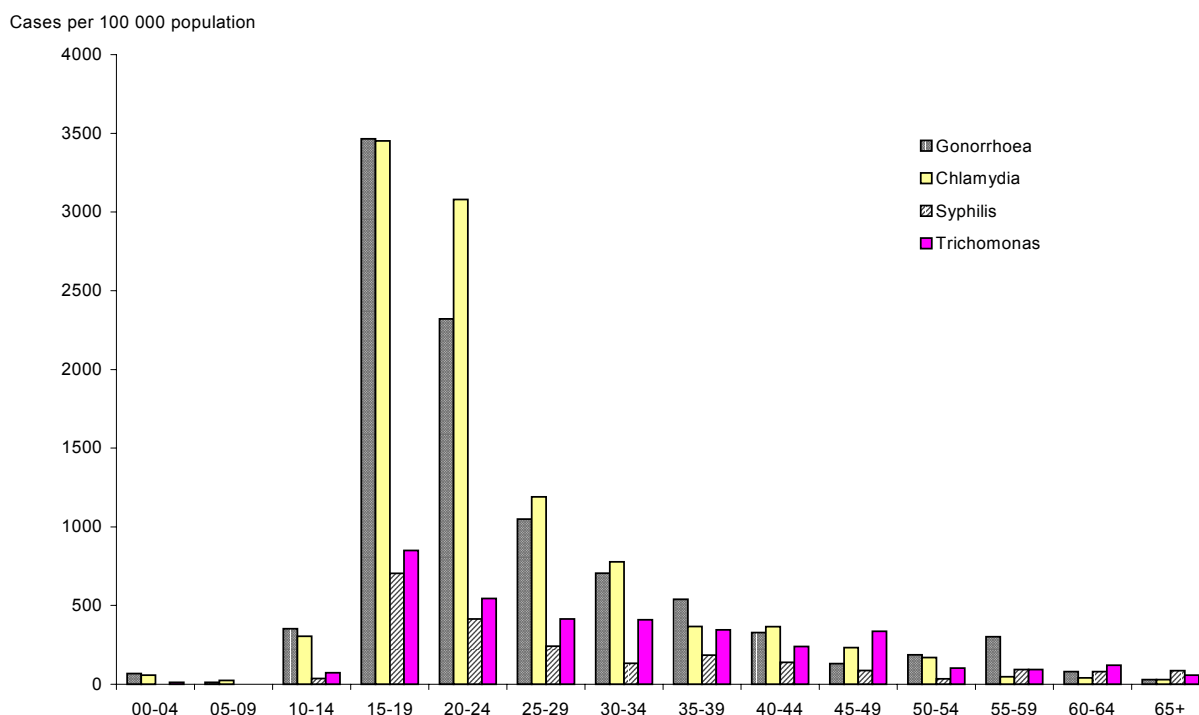


**Table 1.5 Gonorrhoea, chlamydia, syphilis and trichomonas rates in the Northern Territory by five-year age group, January-June 2003**

Age group	Gonorrhoea		Chlamydia		Syphilis		Trichomonas	
	Cases	Rate <sup>1</sup>	Cases	Rate <sup>1</sup>	Cases	Rate <sup>1</sup>	Cases	Rate <sup>1</sup>
<i>Jan-Jun 2003</i>								
00-04	6	68.5	5	57.1	0	0.0	1	11.4
05-09	1	11.5	2	23.1	0	0.0	0	0.0
10-14	29	353.4	25	304.6	3	36.6	6	73.1
15-19	261	3466.1	260	3452.9	53	703.9	64	849.9
20-24	196	2321.4	260	3079.5	35	414.5	46	544.8
25-29	104	1049.7	118	1191.0	24	242.2	41	413.8
30-34	69	706.0	76	777.7	13	133.0	40	409.3
35-39	47	539.8	32	367.5	16	183.8	30	344.6
40-44	26	327.6	29	365.4	11	138.6	19	239.4
45-49	9	131.2	16	233.2	6	87.5	23	335.2
50-54	11	186.5	10	169.6	2	33.9	6	101.7
55-59	13	301.6	2	46.4	4	92.8	4	92.8
60-64	2	80.2	1	40.1	2	80.2	3	120.3
65+	1	28.6	1	28.6	3	85.8	2	57.2
Unknown	4		6				1	
<b>Total</b>	<b>779</b>	<b>771.3</b>	<b>843</b>	<b>834.7</b>	<b>172</b>	<b>170.3</b>	<b>286</b>	<b>283.2</b>

<sup>1</sup> Cases per 100,000 population

**Figure 1.5 Gonorrhoea, chlamydia, syphilis and trichomonas rates in the Northern Territory by five-year age group, January-June 2003**



## 2. Urban and Rural Burden of Disease

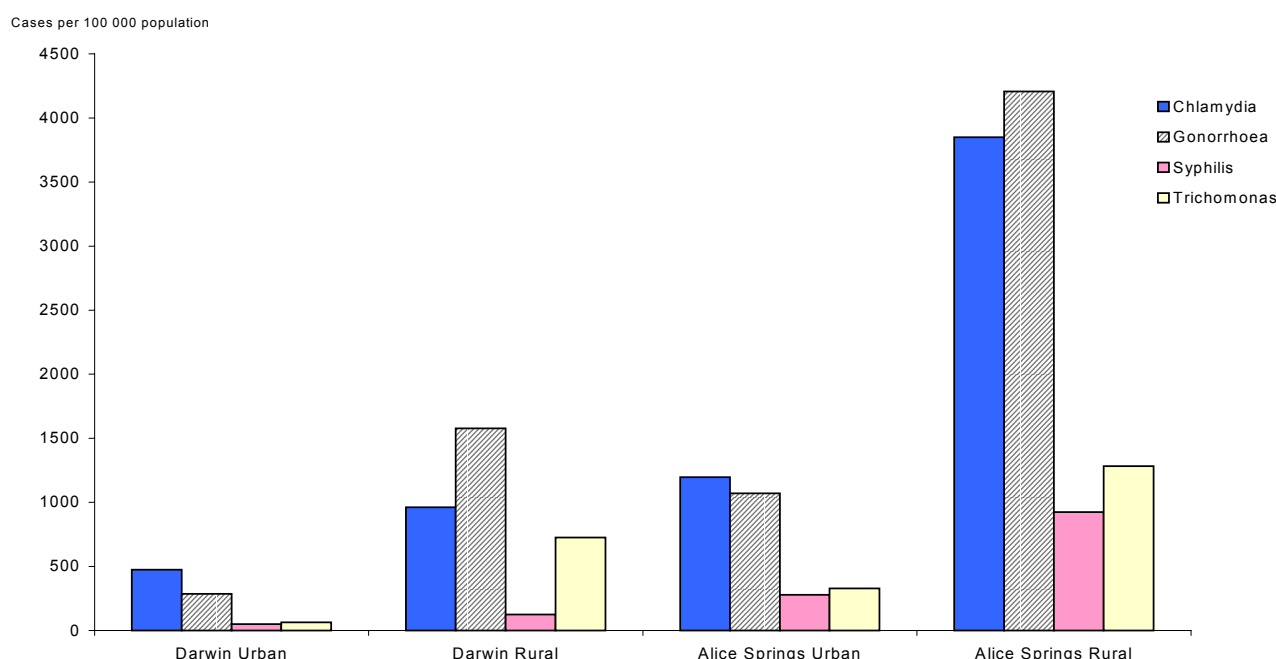
Figure 2.1 Gonorrhoea, chlamydia syphilis and trichomonas rates in the Northern Territory by urban and rural split by district, January-March and April-June 2003

District	Chlamydia		Gonorrhoea		Syphilis		Trichomonas	
	Cases	Rate <sup>1</sup>	Cases	Rate <sup>1</sup>	Cases	Rate <sup>1</sup>	Cases	Rate <sup>1</sup>
<b>Darwin Urban</b>								
Jan-Mar 2003	129	473.9	78	286.5	11	40.4	16	58.8
Apr-Jun 2003	130	477.6	78	286.5	16	58.8	19	69.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>259</b>	<b>475.7</b>	<b>156</b>	<b>286.5</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>49.6</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>64.3</b>
<b>Darwin Rural</b>								
Jan-Mar 2003	31	978.2	44	1388.5	2	63.1	16	504.9
Apr-Jun 2003	30	946.7	56	1767.1	6	189.3	30	946.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>962.3</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>1577.5</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>126.2</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>725.7</b>
<b>Alice Springs Urban</b>								
Jan-Mar 2003	102	1427.6	78	1091.7	20	279.9	22	307.9
Apr-Jun 2003	69	965.7	75	1049.7	20	279.9	25	349.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>171</b>	<b>1196.6</b>	<b>153</b>	<b>1070.7</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>279.9</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>328.9</b>
<b>Alice Springs Rural<sup>#</sup></b>								
Jan-Mar 2003	92	3147.5	98	3352.7	15	513.2	38	1300.0
Apr-Jun 2003	133	4550.1	148	5063.3	39	1334.2	37	1265.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>225</b>	<b>3848.8</b>	<b>246</b>	<b>4208.0</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>923.7</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>1282.9</b>

<sup>1</sup> Cases per 100,000 population

<sup>#</sup>Excludes SA communities which may be notified under Alice Springs District

Figure 2.2 Gonorrhoea, chlamydia syphilis and trichomonas rates in the Northern Territory by Urban and Rural split by district, January-June 2003

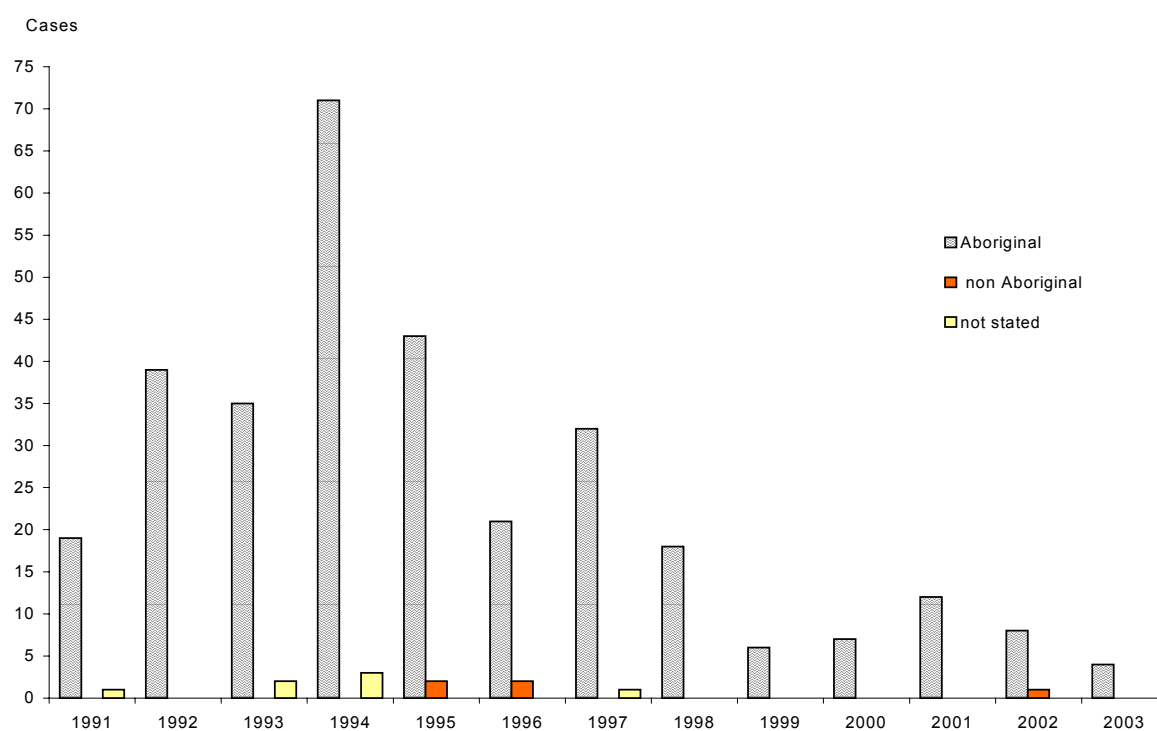


### 3. Donovanosis

**Table 3.1** Number of cases of donovanosis diagnosed during the first two quarters of 2003 by gender, indigenous status, age and district.

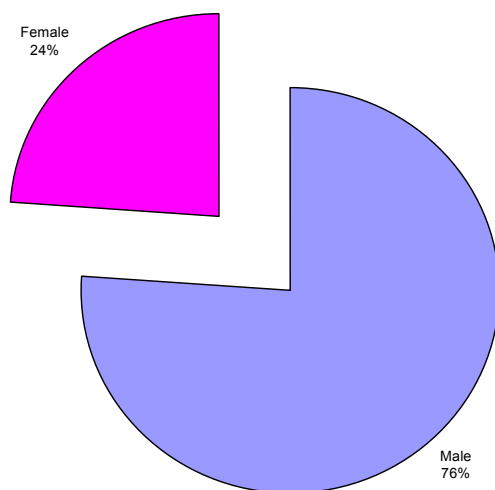
Quarter	Gender	Indigenous status	Age group	District notified
<i>Jan-Mar</i>	Female	Indigenous	15-19	Alice Springs
	Female	Indigenous	20-24	Alice Springs
	Female	Indigenous	40-44	Darwin
	Male	Indigenous	30-34	Darwin
<b>Jan-Jun 2003</b>	<b>Total = 4 cases</b>			

**Figure 3.1** Donovanosis cases in the NT by year and indigenous status

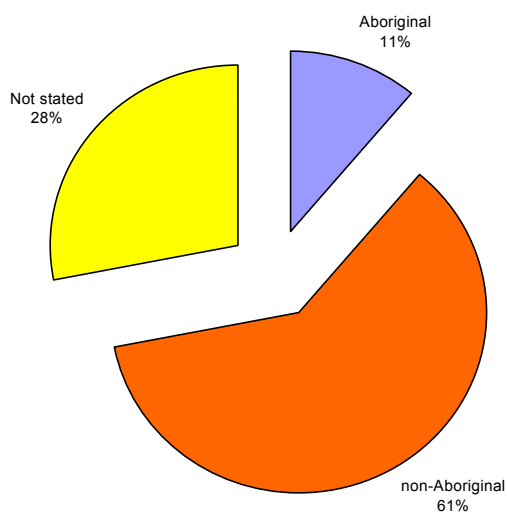


## 4. Hepatitis C

**Figure 4.1 Proportions of hepatitis C cases in the Northern Territory by gender, January-June 2003**



**Figure 4.2 Proportions of hepatitis C cases in the Northern Territory by indigenous status, January-June 2003**

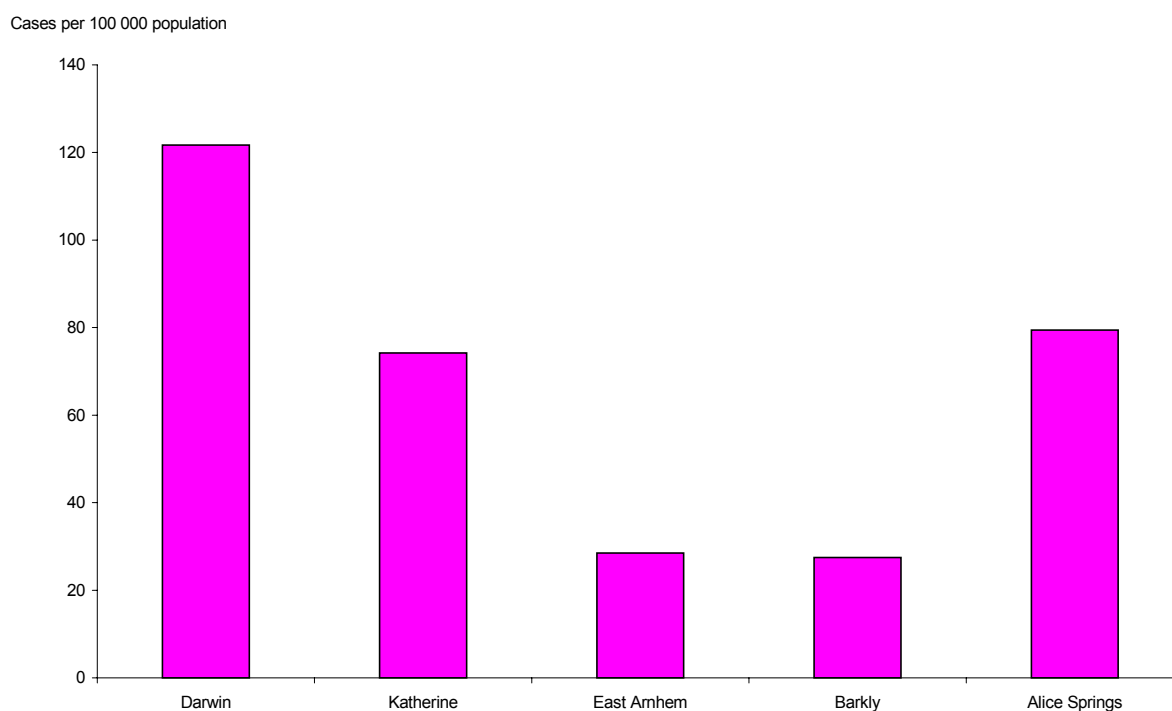


**Table 4.1 Hepatitis C in the Northern Territory by district and gender, January-March and April-June 2003**

Gender	Darwin		Katherine		East Arnhem		Barkly		Alice Springs	
	Cases	Rate <sup>1</sup>	Cases	Rate <sup>1</sup>	Cases	Rate <sup>1</sup>	Cases	Rate <sup>1</sup>	Cases	Rate <sup>1</sup>
<i>Jan-Mar 2003</i>										
Male	25	156.0	2	77.9	1	54.4	0	0.0	0	0.0
Female	7	48.6	1	46.5	0	0.0	0	0.0	4	80.9
<i>Apr-Jun 2003</i>										
Male	34	212.6	3	116.9	1	54.4	1	103.8	9	175.6
Female	8	55.5	1	46.5	0	0.0	0	0.0	3	60.7
<b>Jan-Jun 2003</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>121.7</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>74.2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>28.5</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>27.5</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>79.4</b>

<sup>1</sup> Cases per 100,000 population

**Figure 4.3 Hepatitis C in the Northern Territory by district, January-June 2003**

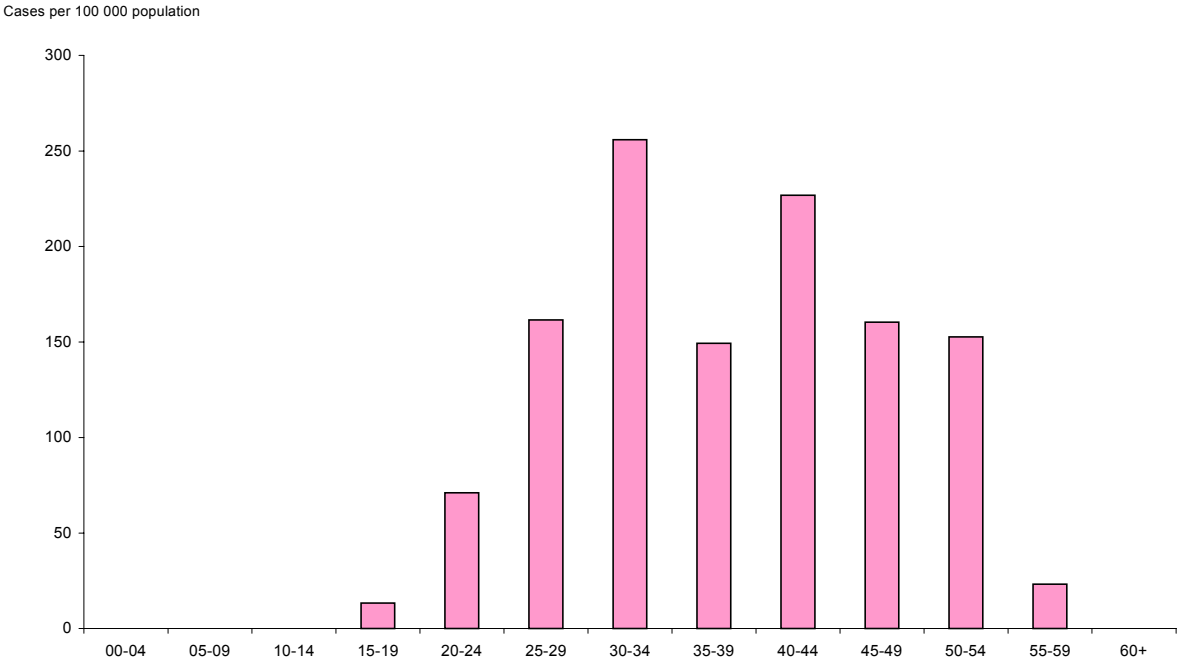


**Table 4.2 Hepatitis C rates in the Northern Territory by five-year age group, January-June 2003**

Hepatitis C		
Age Group	Cases	Rate <sup>1</sup>
<i>Jan-Jun 2003</i>		
00-04	0	0.0
05-09	0	0.0
10-14	0	0.0
15-19	1	13.3
20-24	6	71.1
25-29	16	161.5
30-34	25	255.8
35-39	13	149.3
40-44	18	226.8
45-49	11	160.3
50-54	9	152.6
55-59	1	23.2
60+	0	0.0
Unknown	0	0.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>99.0</b>

<sup>1</sup> Cases per 100,000 population

**Figure 4.4 Hepatitis C rates in the Northern Territory by five-year age group, January-June 2003**



## 5. Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV)

**Table 5.1 Number of cases of HIV in NT residents\* during the first two quarters of 2003 by gender, indigenous status, age group and mode of transmission**

Quarter	Gender	Indigenous status	Age group	Mode of transmission
<i>Jan-Mar 2003</i>	Male	non Aboriginal	44-49	MSM/ Bisexual
<i>Apr-Jun 2003</i>	Male	Aboriginal	40-44	MSM/ IDU
	Male	non Aboriginal	30-34	MSM/ Bisexual
<b><i>Jan-Jun 2003 Total = 3 cases</i></b>				

\* Cases must have resided in the NT for >3months to be considered residents

**Table 5.2 Annual number of cases of HIV by age group and gender, 1991–2003**

Age Group	Female	Male	Total
<i>00-12</i>	0	1	<b>1</b>
<i>13-19</i>	0	0	<b>0</b>
<i>20-29</i>	6	10	<b>16</b>
<i>30-39</i>	2	29	<b>31</b>
<i>40-49</i>	3	17	<b>20</b>
<i>50-59</i>	1	9	<b>10</b>
<i>60+</i>	0	2	<b>2</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>80</b>

**Table 5.3 Number of AIDS cases in NT residents\* during the first two quarters of 2003 by gender, indigenous status, age group and AIDS defining illness**

Quarter	Gender	Indigenous status	Age group	AIDS defining illness
<i>Apr-Jun 2003</i>	Male	Aboriginal	40-44	Oesophageal candidiasis, HIV wasting
<b><i>Jan-Jun 2003 Total = 1 case</i></b>				

\* Cases must have resided in the NT for >3months to be considered residents