

Scientists reveal new contact tracing method for sex partners of people with chlamydia

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Research involving Strathclyde has shown the effectiveness of a world-first contact tracing method to identify, test and treat sex partners of people with chlamydia—a sexually transmitted infection (STI) that affects 250,000 people in the UK each year.

Accelerated Partner Therapy (APT) is a contact tracing method, in which health care professionals assess sex partners of people with chlamydia by phone before giving the patient a package of antibiotics and STI self-sampling kits to deliver to their partner.

The study, led by, Glasgow Caledonian University (GCU) has been published in *The Lancet Public Health* journal.

The research also involved experts from University College London, the Universities of Brighton, Birmingham, Bern in Switzerland, along with UKHSA Health Protection Services, Health Promotion and Digital Services, University Hospitals Sussex NHS Foundation Trust, All East Sexual Health, Barts Health NHS Trust, The Royal London Hospital, Central & North West London NHS Foundation Trust.

Patient need

Professor Paul Flowers from Strathclyde's School of Psychological Sciences and Health, said, "APT is a straightforward intervention that directly meets both patient and professional need. It gets people tested and treated safely and quickly. We need to evaluate more pragmatic interventions like this to build better health and care futures and improve the NHS."

GCU sexual health expert and NHS consultant, Professor Claudia Estcourt, who led the development of APT and the large-scale trial said, "In this world-first, large-scale trial of APT we show that it is safe, effective and likely to be cost-saving to the NHS.

"In these days of ever-increasing cost pressures, this is a real step forward in how we approach infectious diseases and sexually transmitted infections, and finding ways to help people notify and get their partners tested and treated.

"This new method could be adapted within the NHS for other STIs and [infectious diseases](#), such as Monkey Pox and COVID-19."

She added, "This study been a shining example of multi-disciplinary

working across [clinical practice](#), academia, epidemiology, [public health](#), mathematical modeling, [health economics](#), health psychology and commissioning and health planning.

"Without that very strong multi-disciplinary working we wouldn't have got here. I am so grateful to have led this research and to all of the authors and their institutions because the strength of this is in the team and the disciplines it draws in and the joint working."

More information: Claudia S Estcourt et al, Accelerated partner therapy contact tracing for people with chlamydia (LUSTRUM): a crossover cluster-randomised controlled trial, *The Lancet Public Health* (2022). [DOI: 10.1016/S2468-2667\(22\)00204-3](https://doi.org/10.1016/S2468-2667(22)00204-3)

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