ROLE OF A DIS

Introduction

• The goal of the STD control program is to intervene in the spread of STDs and reduce the complications of these diseases. An effective DIS is essential to the success of disease control activities.

Meet the Disease Intervention Specialist (DIS)

A DIS is a trained health professional who practices STD intervention with
• Patients
• Sex partners
• Others suspected of having STDs.
Also Known As

The DIS has had various formal titles within CDC as well as in state and local governments.

- Interviewer
- Investigator
- Counselor
- Field worker
- Epidemiologist “EPI”
- Public Health Advisor (PHA)

EXTREMELY CHALLENGING

REWARDING
SOMETIMES FRUSTRATING

TWO MAJOR RESPONSIBILITIES

• To interview patients infected with STDs.

• To perform investigative activities to locate and refer for examination and/or treatment of people who are suspected of having STDs.

MAIN OBJECTIVE

Is to prevent disease transmission by ensuring that all people who have or have been exposed to a treatable STD are promptly examined and adequately treated.
Priority patients

• People who are untreated or unaware of their infection have the potential to spread disease. They receive the highest priority to receive disease intervention services.

HIV/AIDS

• This disease is not curable, the primary objective becomes prevention of disease transmission through education and changes in behavior.
• This means talking with patients about safer sex activities and how they can change their behaviors to decrease the chances of spreading the disease and developing AIDS.

INTERVIEW

• Disease Intervention starts with the interview

*CONFIDENTIALITY IS EMPHASIZED THROUGHOUT INTERVIEW*
FIVE DISEASE INTERVENTION BEHAVIORS

Assuring examination of all sex partners

- This is the most complex and significant disease intervention behavior.
  This section begins the partner notification services

Reduce risk

- Encouraging patient to adopt behaviors that will reduce their risk of transmitting a STD.
Respond to future disease suspicion

- Patients are educated on signs and symptoms of STDs to ensure prompt response of a future STD.

Taking medication and when to return for follow-up test

- Both these messages are to cure infection and prevent the patient from infecting others.

Skills of a DIS

- Professionalism
- Persistence
- A nonjudgmental attitude
- Effective listener
- Assertiveness
- Ability to speak at the patient’s level of understanding
Disease surveillance includes data collection and analysis. Through case reporting, health department personnel can monitor morbidity levels and identify disease problems in a given community.

Surveillance is the backbone of communicable disease control. Without it, we could not track morbidity patterns and trends accurately.

In STD control programs, certain diseases are legally reportable. All states have laws and health department regulations that require physicians to report cases of gonorrhea or syphilis. Several states also require reporting of other STDs or complications such as PID, Chlamydia, and herpes.

In many states, laboratories report reactive serologic (Blood) or positive bacteriologic (culture) tests for STDs to local authorities.