

My STD stops with me!

Sexual partners can be informed anonymously about sexually transmitted infection via www.partneralert.be

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Dit is de omschrijving

Informing your sexual partners that you have contracted a Sexually Transmitted Infection (STI) is not the easiest thing to do. However, to prevent further spreading, warning them is very important. It is crucial that those who have been involved in sexual risk behaviour also get tested. A joint project of the Institute of Tropical Medicine (ITM) and Sensoa lowers the threshold. It allows people to anonymously and with the help of their doctor inform their sexual partners via the website Partneralert.

Partner notification is recommended by the World Health Organization and the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) as a prevention tool in the control of HIV and STIs. ITM is currently investigating whether more people will inform their sexual partners through this anonymous platform after contracting HIV or another STI.

ITM sexologist Tom Platteau coordinates the project: "Nobody wants to contract an STI, and those who have contracted one, obviously do not want to pass it on. Treating an STI and informing sexual partners are important to reduce the number of new infections. Our experience in the outpatient clinic has taught us that telling someone face to face about your predicament is not always easy. Through Partneralert you can anonymously inform your sexual partners and help prevent the spread of STI."

Sensoa, the Flemish expertise centre for sexual health, participates in Partneralert because they realise that there is a need and a demand for anonymously notifying sexual partners.

"Partner notification is a key component of HIV and STI prevention. We know from previous STI reports that too many patients and doctors take the initiative to do so. A tool designed to help boost this information process was therefore much needed," according to Sandra den Eynde of Sensoa.

In a first phase, anonymous partner notification for HIV and STI happens exclusively via the Belgian AIDS Reference Centres. If the new tool turns out to indeed meet an important need, other healthcare providers can join in. Patients diagnosed with an STI receive a code that allows them to inform their sexual partners via www.partneralert.be. No personal information that can reveal the identity of the sender or the receiver is collected. A

Besides Sensoa, this new project has the support from LGBT-movement *Åsavaria* and BREACH (the Belgian AIDS and HIV Research Consortium) and is funded by Gilead, ViiV Healthcare, Janssen Pharmaceutica and Antwerp Diner.