



Health Protection Surveillance Centre

Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs) in Ireland: Trends to the end of 2021

September 2022

Acknowledgements

The Health Protection Surveillance Centre (HPSC) would like to thank all those who provided the data for this slide set, particularly staff in the STI clinics, General Practice; laboratories and the Departments of Public Health.

STIs in Ireland, 2021



These slides present data on STIs notified to HPSC and trends to the end of 2021.

<https://www.hpsc.ie/a-z/sexuallytransmittedinfections/>

HIV, hepatitis B and sexually transmitted enteric infections (STEI), such as shigellosis, are notified via CIDR and are **reported separately**.

<https://www.hpsc.ie/abouthpsc/annualreports/>

Weekly reports on HIV and STIs in Ireland are available on the HPSC website.

<https://www.hpsc.ie/a-z/sexuallytransmittedinfections/publications/stireports/stiweeklyreports/>

Technical notes



Data are based on statutory notifications and were extracted from Computerised Infectious Disease Reporting (CIDR) system in September 2022. Data are provisional and subject to ongoing review, validation and update. As a result, figures in this report may differ from previously published figures.

STI data are presented based on date of notification to the Health Protection Surveillance Centre (HPSC). Notifications for some STIs in 2021 are underestimated due to batch uploads of notifications in 2022.

Incidence rates were based on population data taken from Census 2016

These slides may be copied and reproduced, provided HPSC is acknowledged. Suggested citation: HSE-Health Protection Surveillance Centre. STI slideset 2021. Dublin: HPSC; 2022.

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on STI data in Ireland, 2021



These slides present provisional data on STIs notified to HPSC in 2021, via the Computerised Infectious Disease Reporting system (CIDR).

Notifications of STIs in 2021 are increased compared with 2020. This is likely to reflect changes in the impact of COVID-19 on healthcare services and social interaction. Prior to 2020 the annual number of STI infections was increasing. In 2020 there was a reduction in the number of notifications of STIs compared to 2019 due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, likely due to a number of factors including long periods of national lockdown, social and physical distancing measures, reduced sexual health and GP services and reduced testing opportunities.

The COVID-19 pandemic also affected the collection and reporting of enhanced data variables, such as mode of transmission, for STI notifications during 2020 and 2021. Initiatives to improve data quality are underway but all enhanced data for this time period should be interpreted with caution.

Summary of STIs in Ireland, 2021



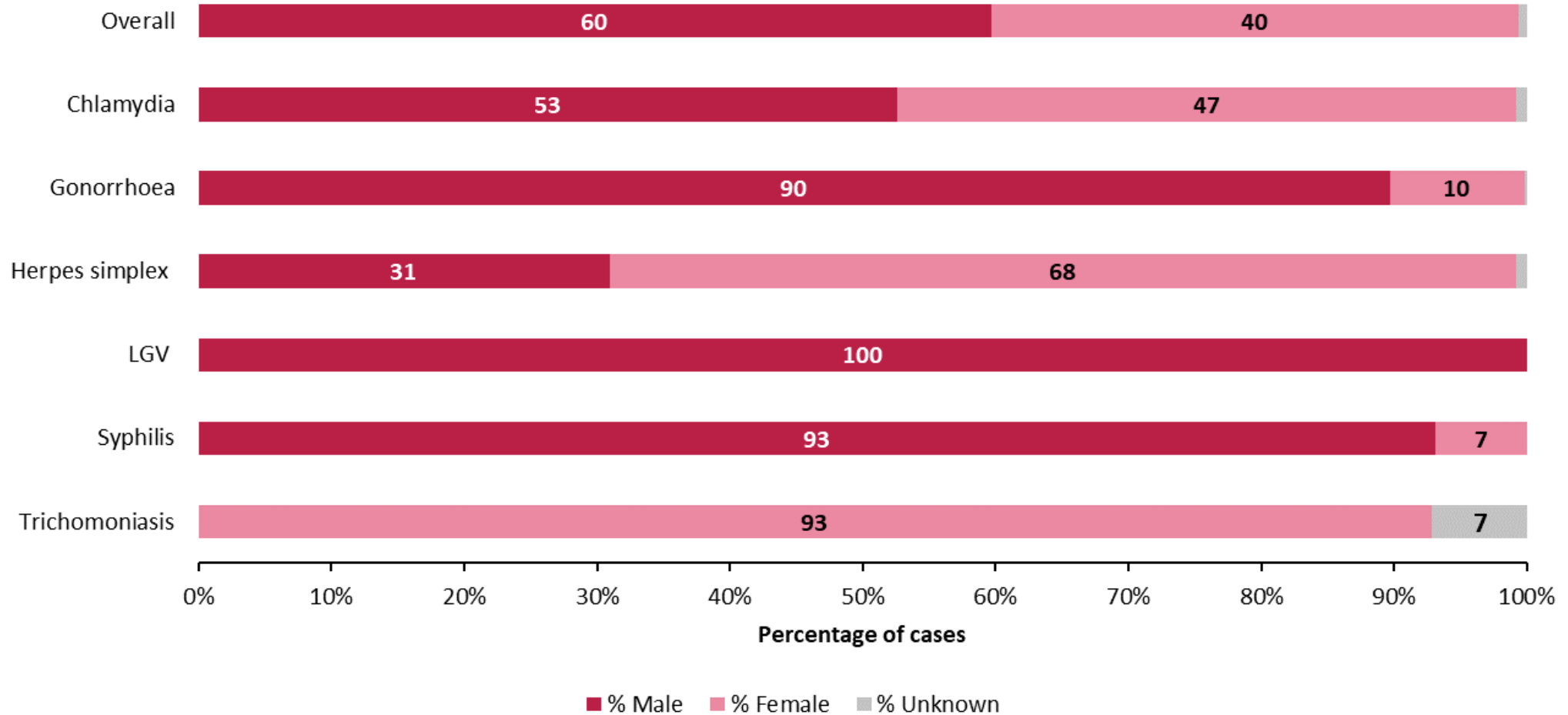
STI	2021 n	2020 n	% change 2021 vs. 2020	Notification rate/100,000 population	Highest age- specific rate
Chlamydia	7,237	6,937	+4.3	152.0/100,000	20-24 years
Gonorrhoea	2,117	2,070	+2.3	44.4/100,000	25-29 years
Herpes simplex (genital)	1,308	1,133	+15.4	27.4/100,000	20-24 years
Lymphogranuloma venereum (LGV)	14	12	+16.7	0.3/100,000	30-34 years
Syphilis (early infectious)	766	611	+25.4	16.1/100,000	30-34 years
Trichomoniasis	28	39	-28.2	0.6/100,000	18-56 years
Total	11,470	10,802	+6.2	240.9/100,000	20-24 years

* There were no notifications of chancroid or granuloma inguinale in 2021

** Total STI data are underestimated as data on AGW and NSU were not available for 2021 (please see slide 34 for further information)

Sex distribution, 2021

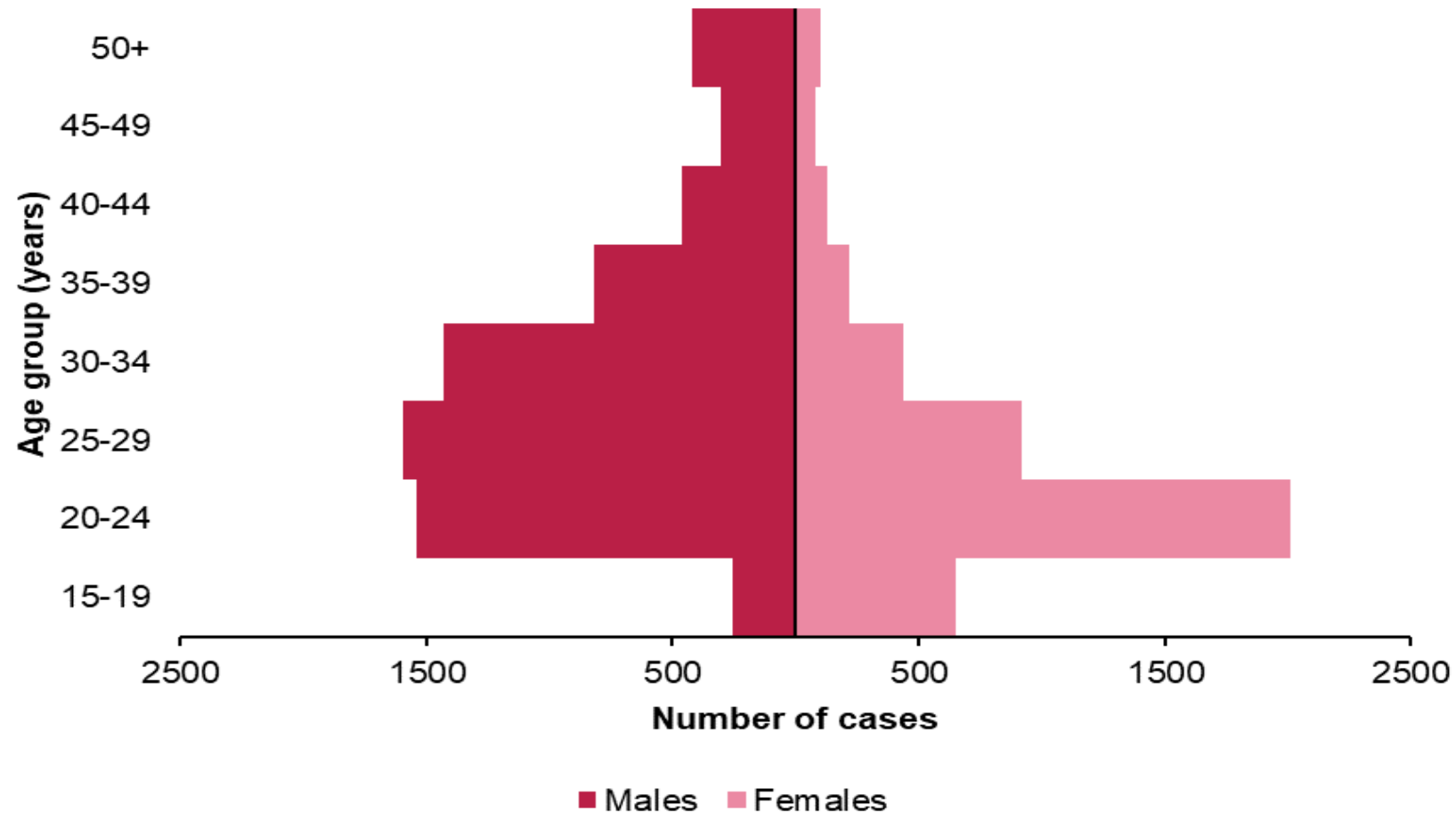
More men than women



Please note that data on sex in this report refers to a person’s assigned sex at birth and may not reflect their gender identity, or internal sense of themselves, as being male, female, transgender or otherwise.

Age distribution, 2021

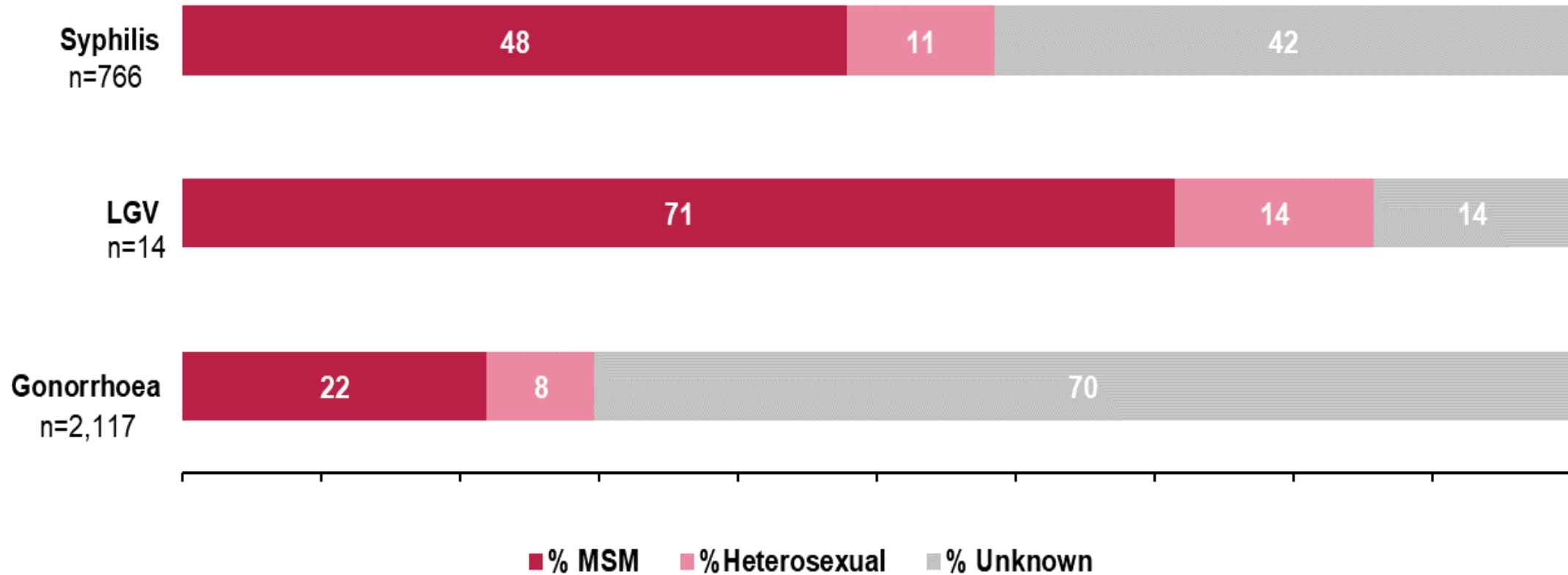
Younger people are more affected



This graph excludes individuals whose age was less than 15 years and cases where age/sex was unknown

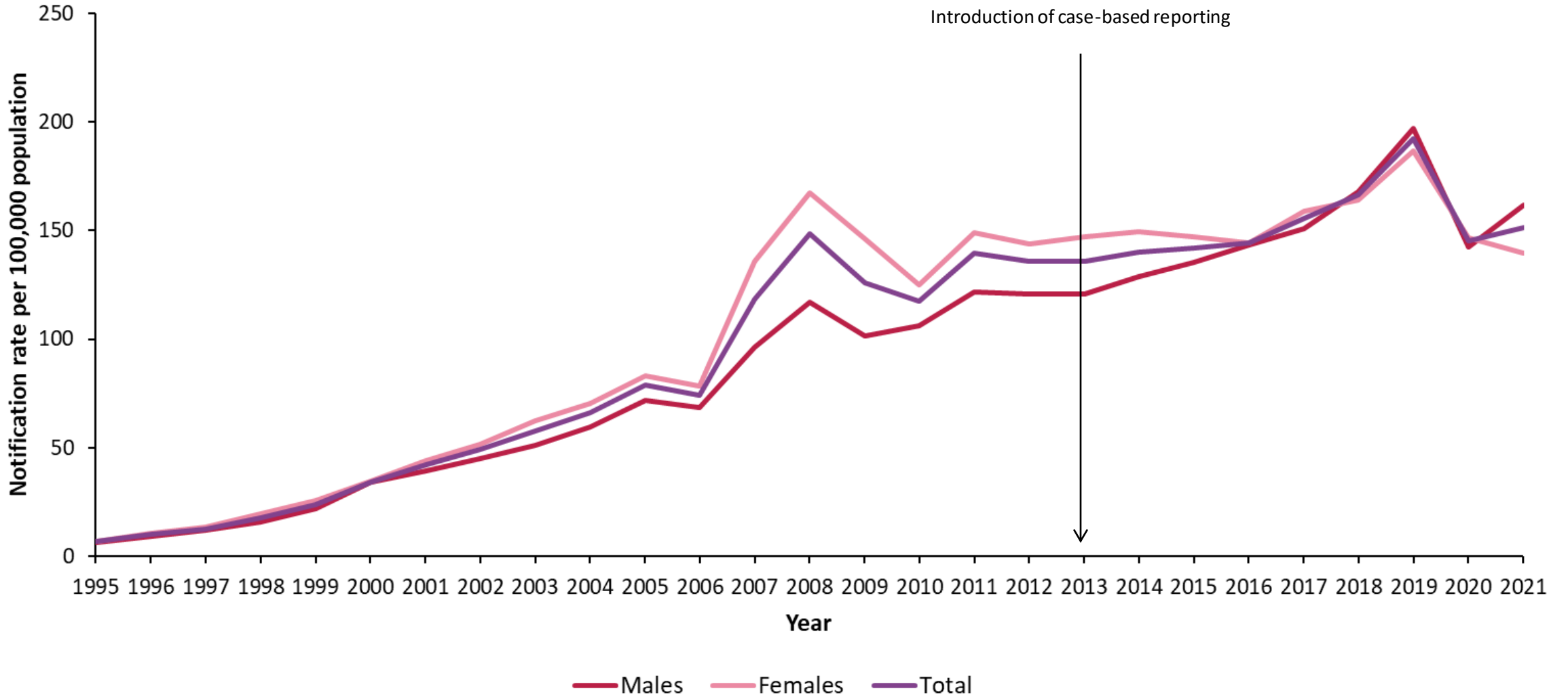
This graph shows the age/sex breakdown for cases of chlamydia, gonorrhoea, syphilis, herpes simplex (genital), LGV and trichomoniasis in 2021

Mode of transmission, 2021



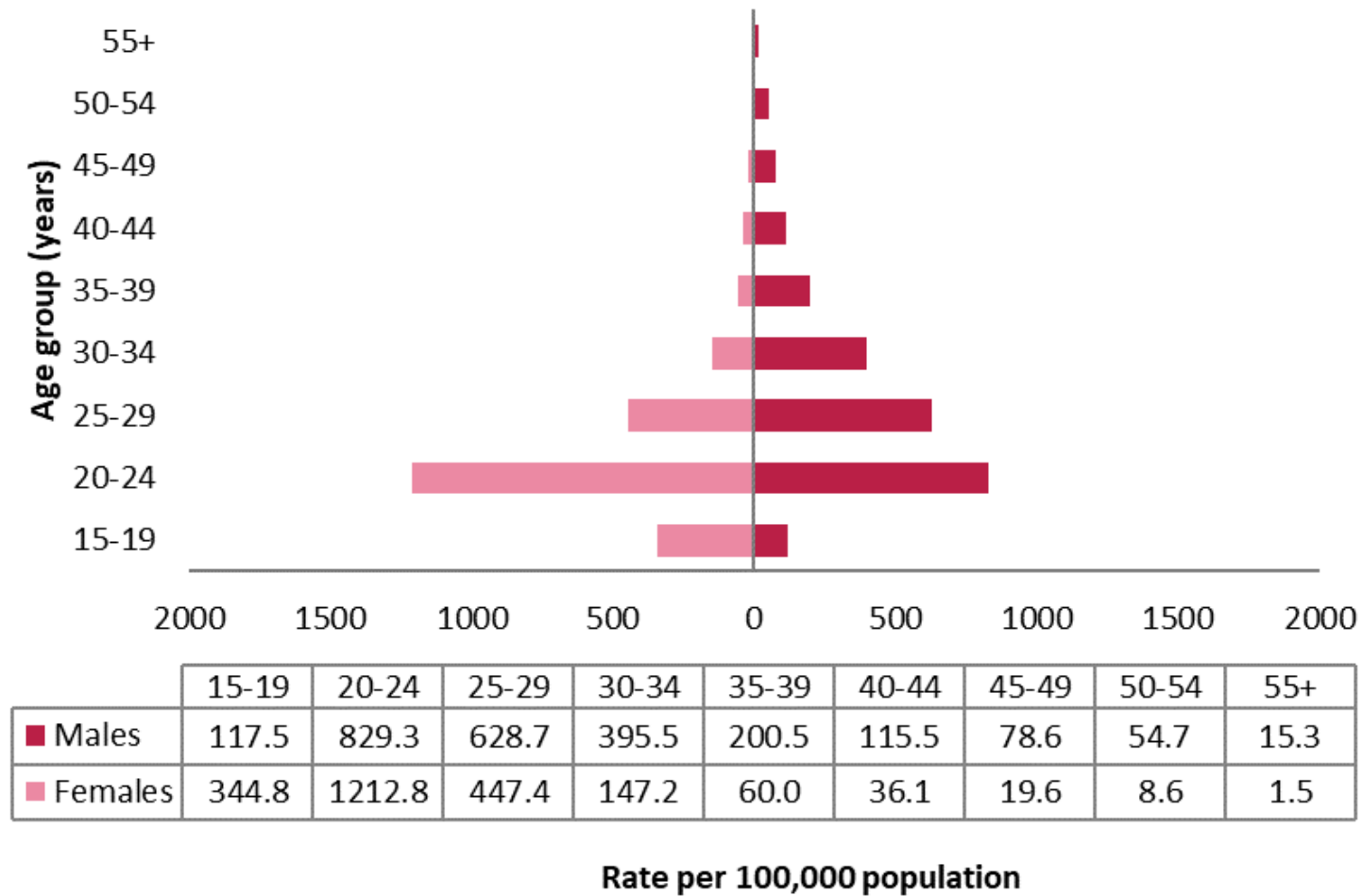
Chlamydia in Ireland, 2021

Trend in notification rate of chlamydia by sex, 1995-2021



Chlamydia in Ireland, 2021

Notification rate of chlamydia by sex and age group, 2021



These graphs exclude individuals whose age was less than 15 years and cases where age/sex was unknown

Chlamydia in Ireland, 2021

Summary

- 7,237 cases of chlamydia notified in 2021 (152.0 per 100,000 population)
 - 4% increase on 2020
- Rate in males (161.8/100,000) exceeded the rate in females (139.9/100,000)
 - Rate was highest among those aged 20-24 years for both males and females
- 49% of cases were young people aged 15-24 years

LGV in Ireland, 2021

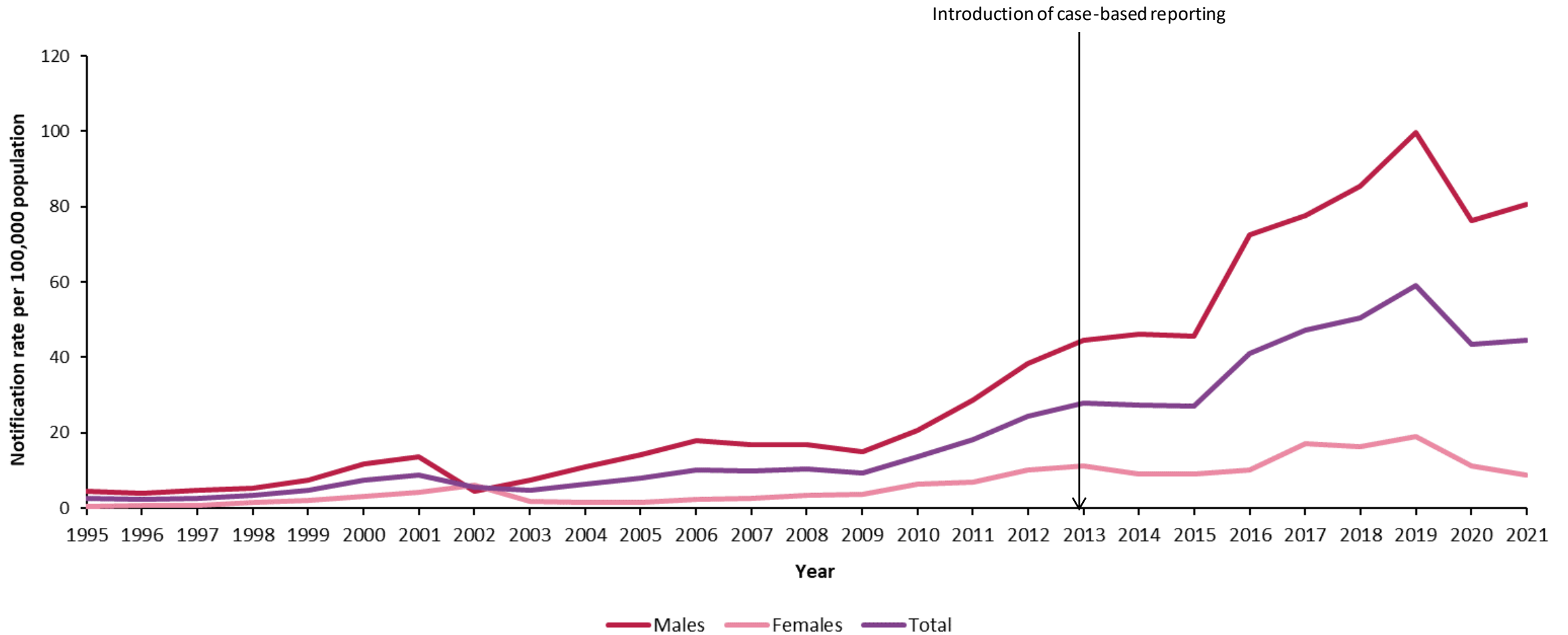
Summary

- 14 cases of Lymphogranuloma venereum (LGV) notified in 2021 (0.3 per 100,000 population)
- Median age: 34 years
- 71% of cases were aged 25-34 years
- All cases were male and where known, 83% were gbMSM (gay, bisexual or other men who have sex with men)

Gonorrhoea in Ireland, 2021

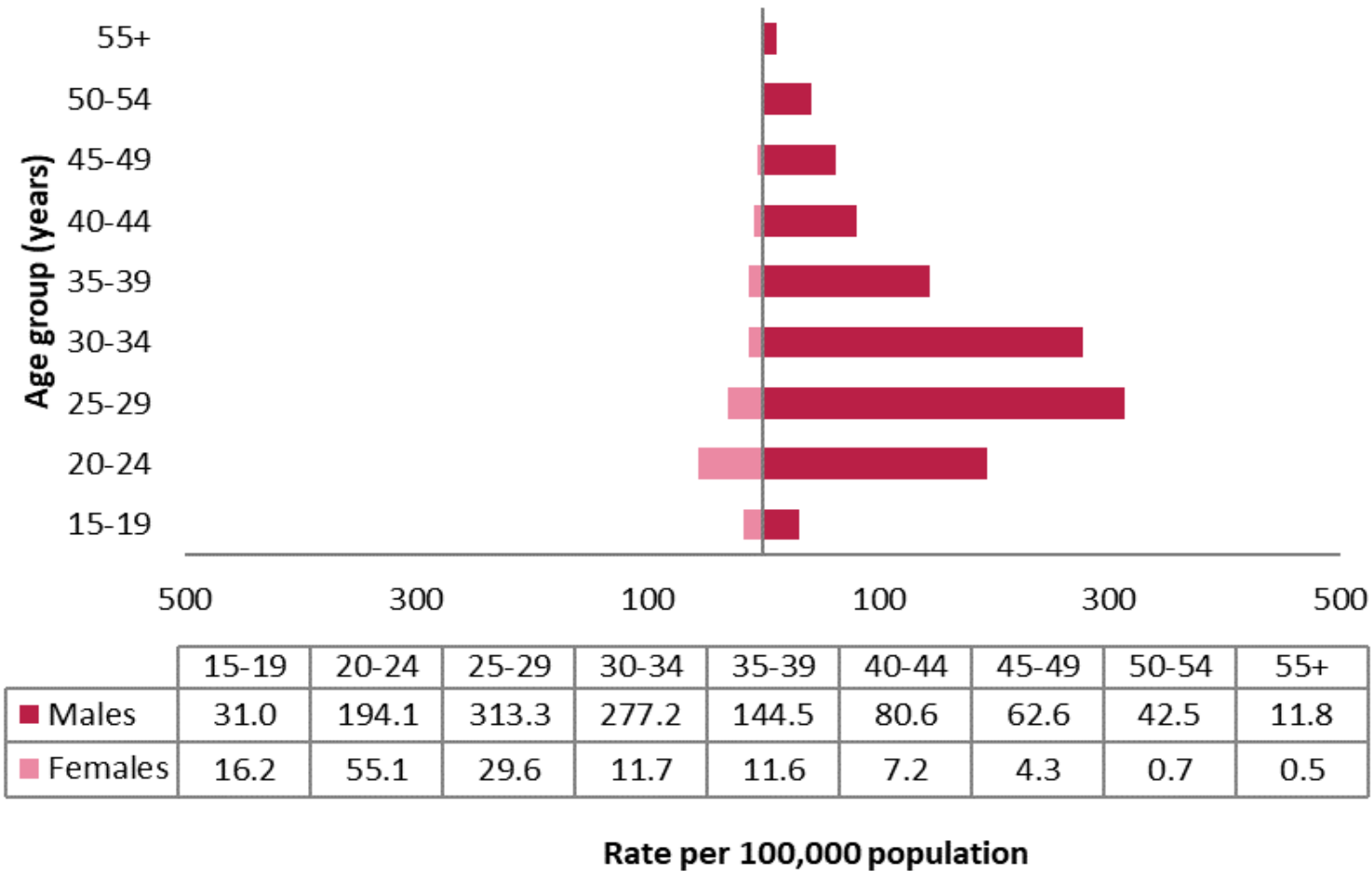


Trend in notification rate of gonorrhoea by sex, 1995-2021



Gonorrhoea in Ireland, 2021

Notification rate of gonorrhoea by sex and age group, 2021



These graphs exclude individuals whose age was less than 15 years and cases where age/sex was unknown

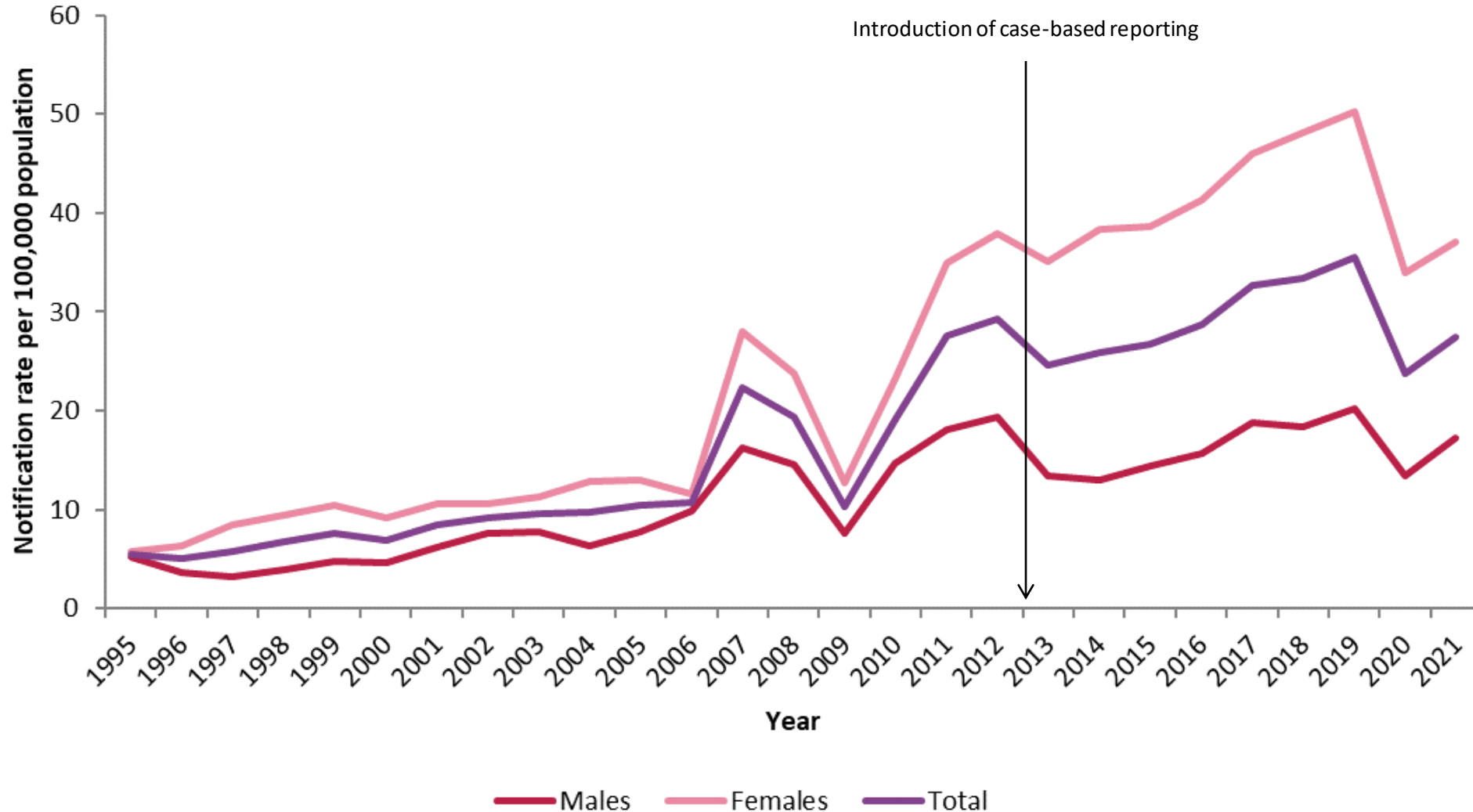
Gonorrhoea in Ireland, 2021

Summary

- 2,117 cases of gonorrhoea notified in 2021
- Notification rate increased by 2% to 44.4/100,000 in 2021. This is still lower than a high of 59.1/100,000 in 2019.
- 90% males
- Median age: 30 years
- Highest rate among males: 25-29 year age group (313.3/100,000)
- Highest rate among females: 20-24 year age group (55.1/100,000)
- Young people aged 15-24 years account for 19% of cases in 2021
- 25-34 year olds account for 47% of cases in 2021
- Where mode of transmission was known 78.3% of cases were among gbMSM, 17% among heterosexuals and 4% were reported as "Other".
 - Mode of transmission was known for 30% of cases in 2021

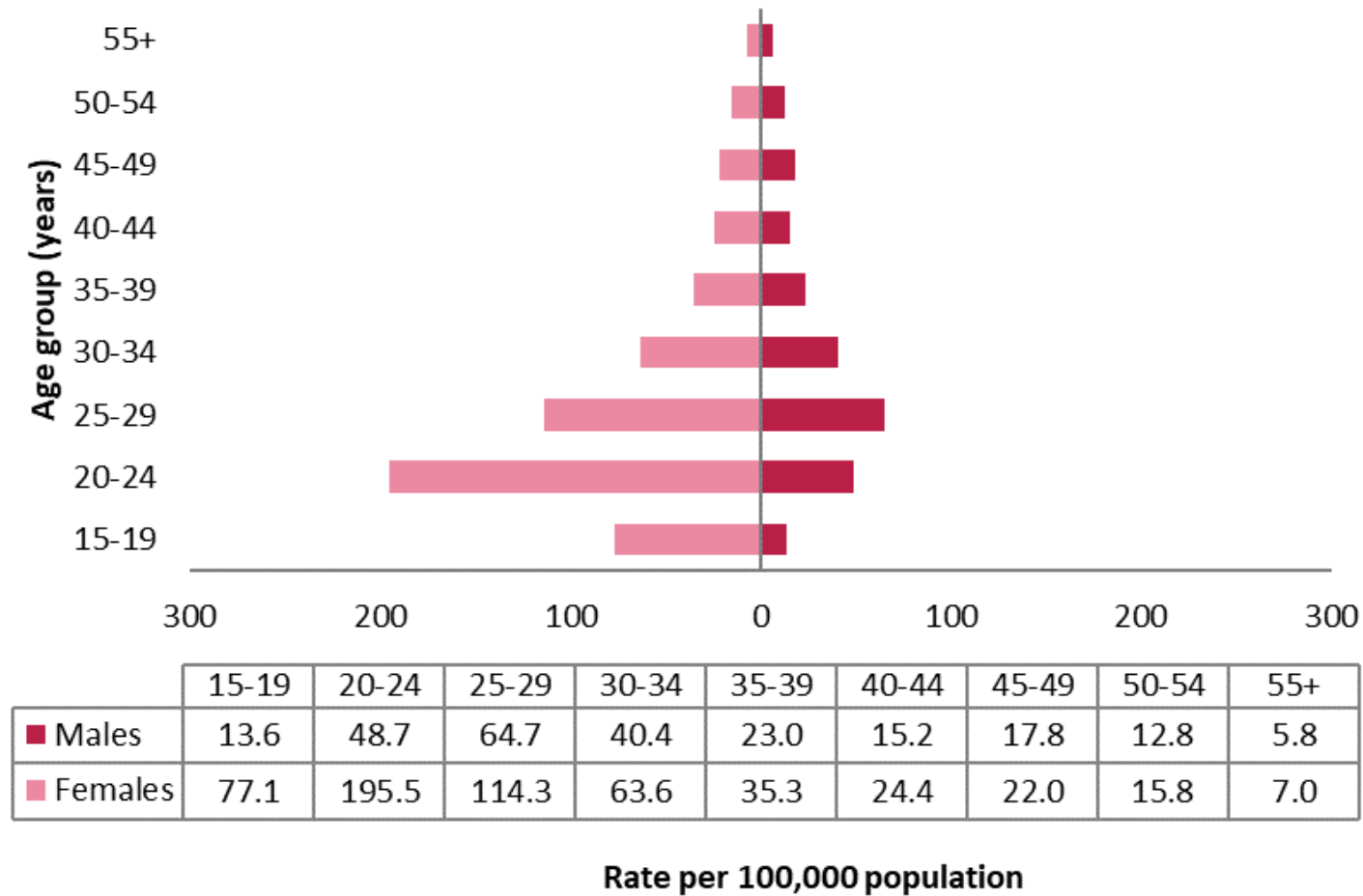
Herpes simplex (genital) in Ireland, 2021

Trend in notification rate of herpes simplex (genital) by sex, 1995-2021



Herpes simplex (genital) in Ireland, 2021

Notification rate of Herpes simplex (genital) by sex and age group, 2021



These graphs exclude individuals whose age was less than 15 years and cases where age/sex was unknown

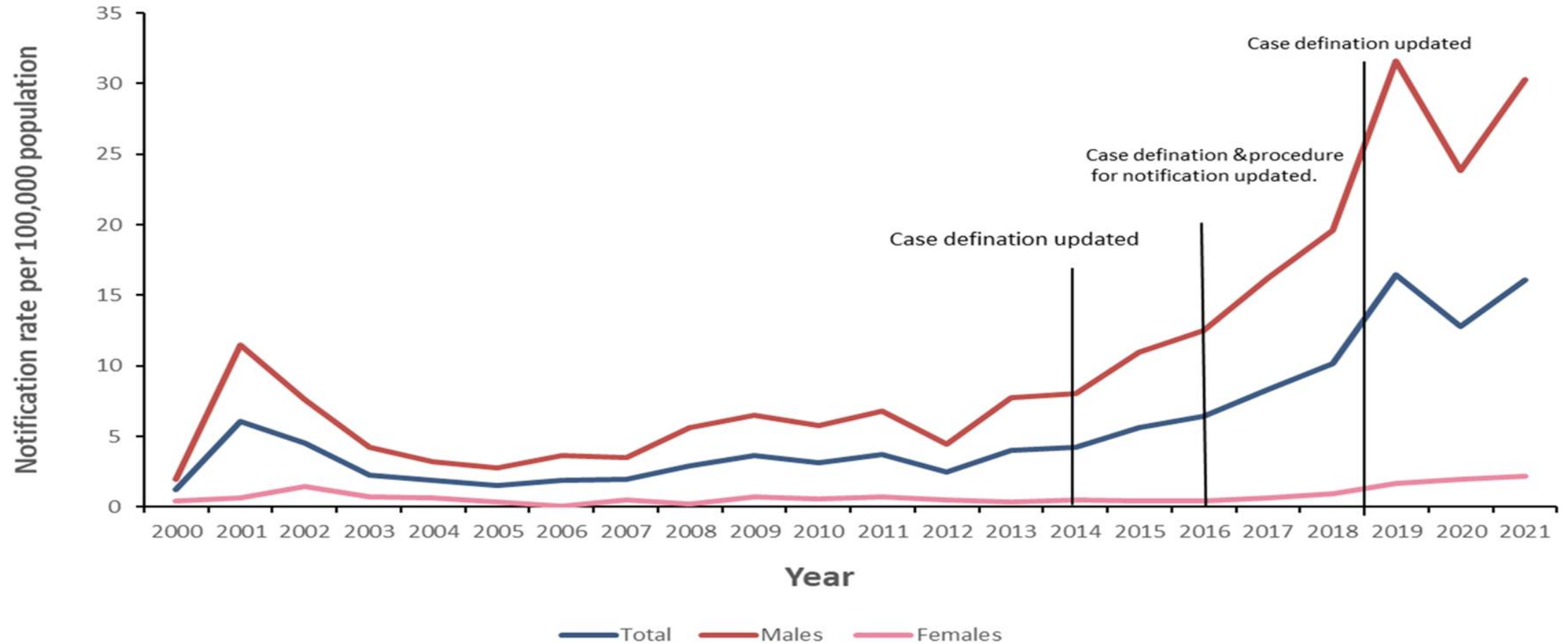
Herpes simplex (genital) in Ireland, 2021

Summary

- 1,306 cases of herpes simplex (genital) notified in 2021
- Notification rate was 27.4 per 100,000 population in 2021; a 15% increase since 2020 (23.8/100,000)
- 68% of cases among females
- The highest age-specific rate was among females aged 20-24 years (195.5/100,000)
- Median age: 27 years
- 53% of cases were laboratory confirmed as herpes simplex virus type 1 and 30% as herpes simplex virus type 2; virus type was unknown 17%

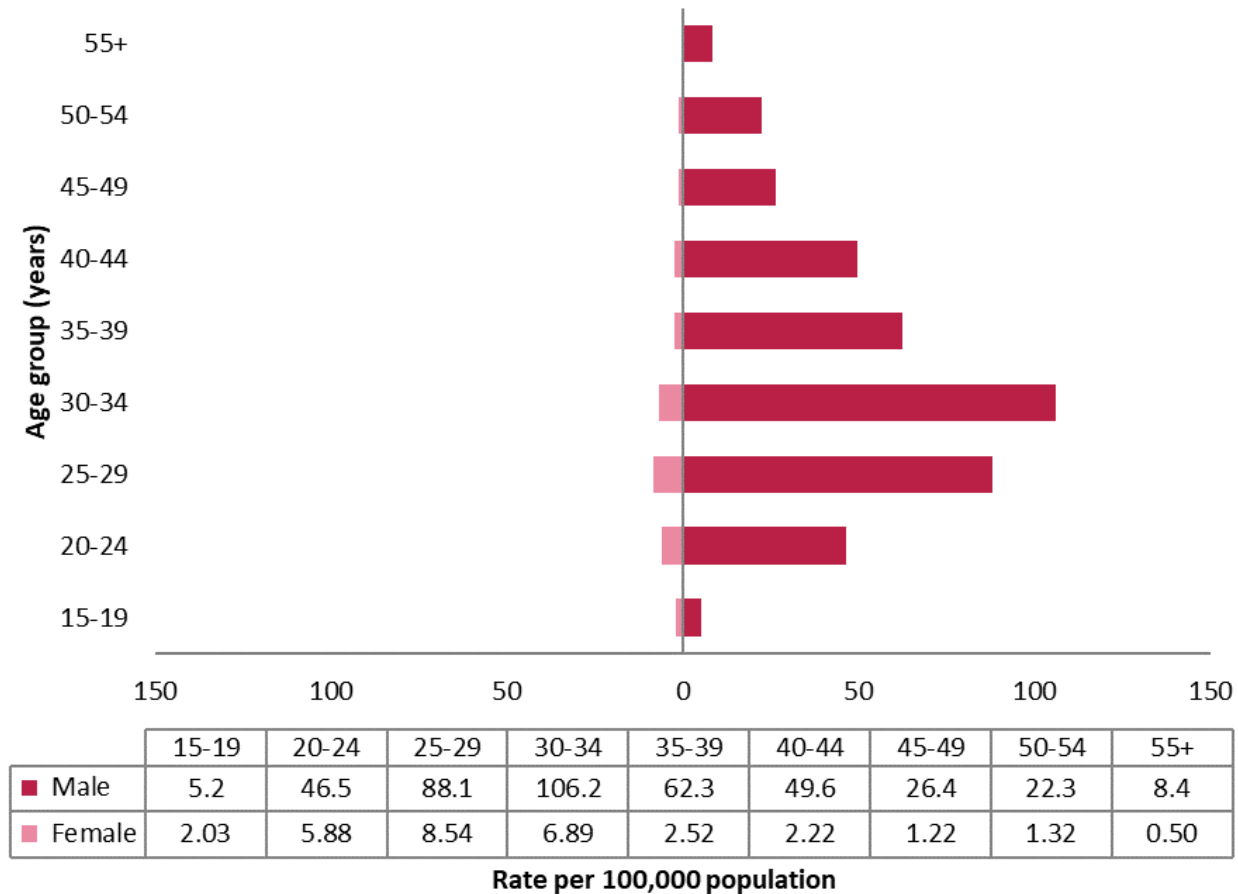
Early infectious syphilis in Ireland, 2021

Trend in notification rate of early infectious syphilis by sex, 2000-2021



Early Infectious Syphilis in Ireland, 2021

Notification rate of Early Infectious Syphilis by sex and age group, 2021



These graphs exclude individuals whose age was less than 15 years and cases where age/sex was unknown

Early infectious syphilis in Ireland, 2021

Summary

- 766 cases of confirmed early infectious syphilis (EIS) were notified in 2021
- Notification rate increased to 16.1 per 100,000 population; up 25.8% from 2020 (12.8/100,000)
- 93% of cases among males
- Median age: 33 years
- Highest rate in males was in 30-34 year olds (106.0 per 100,000 population) and in females was in 25-29 year olds (8.5 per 100,000 population)
- Majority (80%) of cases were reported by HSE East
- Where mode of transmission was recorded, 82% of cases were in gbMSM
 - Mode of transmission was available for 58% of cases
- Where HIV status was recorded, 33% of EIS cases were HIV positive
 - HIV status was available for 56% of cases
- 14% of cases were consistent with syphilis reinfection

Trichomoniasis in Ireland, 2021

Trend in notification rate of trichomoniasis, by sex 1995-2021



Trichomoniasis in Ireland, 2021

Summary

- 28 cases of trichomoniasis notified in 2021 (0.6 per 100,000 population)
- 93% female
- Median age: 28 years
- 54% of cases were under 30 years

Other notifiable STIs in Ireland, 2021

Summary: chancroid, granuloma inguinale, anogenital warts and non-specific urethritis

- There were no notifications of chancroid or granuloma inguinale reported in Ireland in 2021.
- Notifications of anogenital warts and non-specific urethritis from STI clinics and primary care are usually collated by Departments of Public Health and notified to HPSC in aggregate format on a bi-annual basis. Due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, these data were not collated for the during 2021.

Preventing STIs

Safer sex and STI testing

- **Use condoms for vaginal, oral and anal sex**
- **Reduce the number of partners and overlapping partners**
- **Get tested for STIs if:**
 - You have symptoms of an STI;
 - Change your sexual partner;
 - Have multiple or overlapping partners;
 - Your partner has an STI.
- Further information on STIs and **free sexual health services** is available at
 - <https://www.sexualwellbeing.ie/>
 - www.man2man.ie (resource for gay and bisexual men and other men who have sex with men in Ireland)