Preface

The synergistic relationship between sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) has been appreciated since early in the HIV epidemic. Transmitted through many of the same behaviors, the co-infection rate of STIs and HIV are significant, particularly in this age when STIs are on the rise again. As of the time of this writing, the most recent CDC STD surveillance (2015) report detailed an all-time high of cases of the three reportable STIs—chlamydia, gonorrhea, and syphilis. While the reasons for these increases are multi-factorial, the promise of HIV Treatment as Prevention (TasP) and the availability of HIV Pre-exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP) likely play a significant role in rising STI rates, particularly amongst men-who-have-sex-with-men (MSM).

New tools and multi-pronged approaches are needed to combat these (often) curable, but frustratingly persistent, pathogens. One important strategy in the fight against STIs and HIV relies on the ability (and willingness) of the physician or Advanced Practice Provider (APP) to include sexual health as part of comprehensive HIV care. This includes taking a competent, nonjudgmental sexual history, performing a physical examination, applying appropriate diagnostic testing and screening strategies and, depending on the situation, sometimes treating the patient empirically. In addition, understanding the nuances of STIs and their interaction with HIV on the molecular, microscopic, and macroscopic level is critical to providing excellent care in the HIV primary care setting. This is not always straightforward. The significant stigma that sexual behavior, and by association STIs and HIV, elicits often presents a significant barrier for both the provider and the patient, compromising care.

While this book does not pretend to have all of the answers, the hope is that this text will aid HIV providers by providing practical information to aid in taking a sexual history and managing the major STI syndromes (as well as the specific STIs) in HIV-infected individuals in an office setting and will serve as a guide for working with special populations around the topics of sexual health. Therefore, the reader will find a mix of practical advice and brief state-of-the-art topic reviews relevant to the HIV provider within these pages.

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I would like to thank each of the outstanding clinicians and scientists who wrote chapters for their generous contribution to this project. This book would not have been possible without their tireless effort—an effort that can only properly be described as a labor of love for their patients and the STI/HIV field. I would also like to thank my family for their patience with this project and their boundless support of me and my work.

I hope that you find this book useful for your practice.

Winston-Salem, NC, USA  
Laura Hinkle Bachmann
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