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Young men's discourses of health service utilization for Chlamydia infection testing in Stockholm

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Background:

Chlamydia Trachomatis (CT) infection is the most commonly reported sexually transmitted bacterial disease in Sweden, other European countries, as well as globally. CT is often asymptomatic and if it goes untreated it can cause severe reproductive health issues. In Sweden, men test for CT in a much lesser extent than women. The aim of this study is to identify factors influencing Swedish young men to use Health care for CT detection.

Methods:

Qualitative study based on 18 semi-structured interviews with young men (18-30 years old) in Stockholm during 2018. A Situational Analysis was conducted (a development of Constructivist Grounded Theory) of the interviews' transcriptions, using Open Code as the software for qualitative analysis in order to code and organize the information obtained. We constructed a situational map to illustrate the positions taken by Swedish young men according to their discourses.

Results:

Three ideal types of Swedish young men with different discourses and behaviors towards CT testing were identified: unconcerned men are indifferent about CT and other sexual transmitted infections (STI) and therefore not testing; ambivalent men only test when suspect suffering from an STI and/or are influenced by their social network; Whereas, proactive men test regularly as a way to know they are healthy. The differences between the ideal types are explained by their risk perception, the role of health services, and the positive or negative influence of their social network.

Conclusions:

The ideal types of young men identified in this study show a range of discourses linked to their risk perception, the role of health services, and the influence of their social network, which in practice is translated into different behaviours adopted for CT testing. Testing should be encouraged as an important part of CT prevention by educating groups of unconcerned young men about both the consequences of untreated CT and the free testing options available in Sweden.

Key messages:

- Swedish young men have different discourses towards CT testing depending on their risk perception, the strategies adopted to test and the positive or negative role of their social network.
- The role of health services and the social support emerged as key factors to promoting testing among Swedish Young men.