

THE RAPID SYPHILIS TEST TOOLKIT INTRODUCTION

The Rapid Syphilis
Test Toolkit: A Guide to
Planning, Management
and Implementation



ELIZABETH GLASER
PEDIATRIC AIDS
FOUNDATION



UNIVERSIDAD PERUANA
CAYETANO HEREDIA



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External Collaborators

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This toolkit is available for download at:
<http://www.lshtm.ac.uk/itd/crd/research/rapid-syphilis-toolkit/index.html>

Preface

This Toolkit provides a framework and series of tools for the introduction of rapid syphilis tests into country programmes. It was developed at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine for a project funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, to determine the feasibility and cost-effectiveness of different strategies for the introduction of rapid syphilis tests in seven countries.

The tools were adapted, piloted and refined by the seven country partners: Fundação Alfredo da Matta in Manaus, Brazil, The National Center for Sexually Transmitted Diseases & Center for Disease Control, Nanjing, China, Le Groupe Haïtien d'Etude du Sarcome de Kaposi et des Infections Opportunistes in Port au Prince, Haiti, The Universidad Peruana Cayetano Heredia in Lima, Peru, The National Institute for Medical Research, Mwanza, Tanzania, the Elizabeth Glaser Pediatric AIDS Foundation in Kampala, Uganda and in Lusaka, Zambia, with The Centre for Infectious Disease Research in Lusaka, Zambia.

Although simple, reliable and affordable rapid screening tests for syphilis are now available, and screening pregnant women for syphilis is both one of the most cost-effective health interventions, and recommended policy in most countries, many pregnant women are not screened. As a result, syphilis remains a major cause of stillbirth and neonatal death in many developing countries.

As calls for the elimination of Mother to Child Transmission of HIV and syphilis gather momentum, more funds are being made available for countries to scale up syphilis and HIV screening in antenatal clinics so that they can attain the Millennium Development Goals of reducing mortality among under-fives (Goal 4), improving maternal health (Goal 5), and lowering the burden of HIV (Goal 6).

Our project has shown that rapid tests can increase access to syphilis screening in areas not served by laboratories; strengthen health systems by providing more rapid client-friendly services, and enable women to prevent adverse outcomes of pregnancy.

We hope that the extensive experience on which this Rapid Syphilis Test Toolkit is based will provide useful guidance to countries on the planning, management and implementation of programmes for screening prenatal and high risk populations for syphilis with the new rapid tests.

A Framework for Test Introduction

Developing a framework is critical to the success of rapid test introduction programmes, as syphilis screening often falls between the cracks of antenatal care and STI control programmes, with each programme perceiving syphilis screening as the other's responsibility. The framework delineates the key players, the road map and programmes, how the communications should flow, and whose responsibility it is to monitor effectiveness and impact.

Since this toolkit was first developed in 2008, the number of countries showing strong interest in introducing rapid syphilis tests to improve access to syphilis screening has grown from the seven project countries to more than 27 countries in Africa, Asia and the Americas.

This toolkit can also serve as a guide for the introduction of rapid diagnostic tests for many other STIs and infectious diseases, as many of the issues and tools are the same.

What is a Toolkit?

The best way to understand the purpose of a toolkit is to think about a real box of tools. When you first open it, you may look through the whole box to find out what is inside. But after that, you seldom need all the tools at once: you use them as you need them. Here we provide a collection of documents, guides and manuals with associated templates, Standard Operating Procedures, and examples of record forms, built upon the experiences of seven countries involved in a three year study of rapid syphilis testing. We invite you to select and combine elements that suit your own work, in your own context.

What does this toolkit do?

The toolkit has been developed as a practical resource for those seeking to introduce rapid syphilis tests in their country. The toolkit has three parts, **PLANNING**, **MANAGEMENT**, and **IMPLEMENTATION**, addressing all aspects of test introduction from developing an advocacy and communications strategy through to monitoring and evaluating progress and effectiveness. It is intended to provide relevant information, based on real-life challenges and successes in the field. The seven study teams shared their experiences of introducing rapid syphilis testing in antenatal, high risk and remote settings for the benefit of future programmes, to highlight potential problem areas and the solutions, unique to each setting, that were developed by the study teams.



Who will find this resource useful?

The toolkit has been designed for:

- People involved in the introduction of rapid tests for the first time.
- People who have already introduced rapid tests and would like to strengthen the programme or further increase coverage.
- People who make decisions about policy for the introduction or roll-out of diagnostic tests.
- People who wish to influence those who make funding or policy decisions about the introduction or roll-out of rapid tests.
- People who make decisions about funding the introduction or roll-out of diagnostic tests and those who wish to estimate costs of a rapid syphilis test programme.
- People who manage or train the health teams that will be involved in the roll-out of rapid tests.
- People who are involved in establishing a quality management system for point-of-care diagnostic testing.

By using this resource, we hope you will:

- Gain a clear overview of how to introduce and roll out rapid syphilis tests in your country or district setting.
- Learn from the experiences of other countries that have introduced rapid syphilis tests in various settings.
- Introduce you to key terms and methods for the roll out of the tests.
- Allow you to strengthen your system by applying a quality management systems approach, a monitoring and evaluation system, an effective communications strategy and more.

What is in this Toolkit?

PLANNING

1. Advocacy & Communications Strategy
2. Advocacy & Communications Activities

MANAGEMENT

1. Model for Integration of Rapid Syphilis Tests within Maternal and Child Health and/or Prevention of Mother to Child Transmission Programmes at Primary Healthcare Settings
2. Supply and Stock Management for Healthcare Workers and Health Care Facility Staff
3. Developing Syphilis Testing and Treatment Algorithms Using Rapid Tests
4. Management and Implementation of Rapid Syphilis Test Introduction: A Programme Manager's Guide

IMPLEMENTATION

1. Guidelines for Cost Effectiveness Analysis of Syphilis Screening Strategies
2. Quality Management System Guide for Rapid Syphilis Testing
3. Training Package for Rapid Syphilis Testing
4. Monitoring and Evaluation Tool for a Rapid Syphilis Test Programme