

How Well Are People Following Social-Distancing Guidelines? Based on the Number of New Syphilis Cases, Not That Well

DALLAS, TX, USA, January 12, 2021 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The COVID-19 pandemic has caused massive changes in how we live our lives, with mask mandates, shelter-in-place regulations, and social-distancing guidelines. Over 10 months into the pandemic, it would be a fair assumption that these changes have been incorporated into the fabric of our daily lives. However, a new



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Hailey D. Heibel, MD

study published in SKIN, the Journal of Cutaneous Medicine has found that the number of cases of sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), like syphilis and molluscum contagiosum, are on the rise. This might spell bad news not only for COVID-19 infection rates, but also for those who are diagnosed with STDs and potentially unable to receive care.

Hailey D. Heibel, MD, and colleagues found that they were diagnosing increasing numbers of syphilis cases—a disease spread through sexually contact that can wreak

havoc on the body—and molluscum contagiosum—a relatively benign viral infection that is spread by skin-to-skin (and sexual) contact. According to Dr. Heibel, “Months into the COVID-19 pandemic, we unexpectedly found STDs, like syphilis, have increased. This likely means people are taking the importance of social distancing for granted.” Given the need for close contact to spread these diseases, one would assume that social-distancing guidelines would decrease the number of diagnoses made. Digging deeper, the authors found that the number of cases of syphilis and molluscum were the same if not higher than they were during the same time points in 2019.

Not only does this have serious consequences given COVID-19 cases are on the rise around the US, but also for the health of the patients who may contract sexually transmitted diseases. With many public health resources being shifted towards combatting COVID-19, services, such as contact-tracing (to determine who may have been exposed to sexually transmitted diseases) and even treatment options may be limited, especially in remote or underfunded areas.

The authors concluded that now more than ever it is important that everyone take all appropriate precautions with all of their social interactions to not only limit the spread of COVID-

19, but also avoid further overwhelming an already taxed healthcare system.

SKIN: The Journal of Cutaneous Medicine® is a peer-reviewed online medical journal that is the official journal of The National Society for Cutaneous Medicine. The mission of SKIN is to provide an enhanced and accelerated route to disseminate new dermatologic knowledge for all aspects of cutaneous disease.

For more details please visit www.jofskin.org or contact jofskin@gmail.com.

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