

**AUSTRALIA: "Tripling in Chlamydia Rate Prompts Demand for National Testing"  
Sydney Morning Herald (01.13.10):: Kate Benson**

A tripling of the annual number of Australians diagnosed with chlamydia has health officials calling for a national screening program. In 2009, more than 61,000 people were diagnosed with the STD, compared with 17,000 in 2000.

"The fact that there has been no public outcry about this is absolutely astounding," said Anthony Smith, deputy director of the Australian Research Center in Sex, Health and Society.

In 1987, a hard-hitting health promotion campaign in Australia represented HIV as the grim reaper, mowing down people as they stood like pins in a bowling alley. The graphic commercial was credited with boosting awareness of STDs and increasing condom use.

"We have a whole generation now who never saw the grim reaper," Smith said, offering an explanation for what he considers complacency around the issue.

"If it hadn't been for HIV, which resulted in a massive increase in the use of condoms among young heterosexuals, we would have had this epidemic a decade ago, so it is not as if this wasn't expected," Smith said.

Other public health officials suggested that the increase in reported cases of chlamydia signals the effectiveness of Australia's health promotion efforts.

"Reports of infections always rise during safe-sex promotions, an indication that more people are getting the message and are being tested, and perhaps those they have had sex with are also getting tested," said Chris Bourne, senior staff specialist at the Sydney Sexual Health Center.