

Infectious syphilis and congenital syphilis in Canada*, 2021



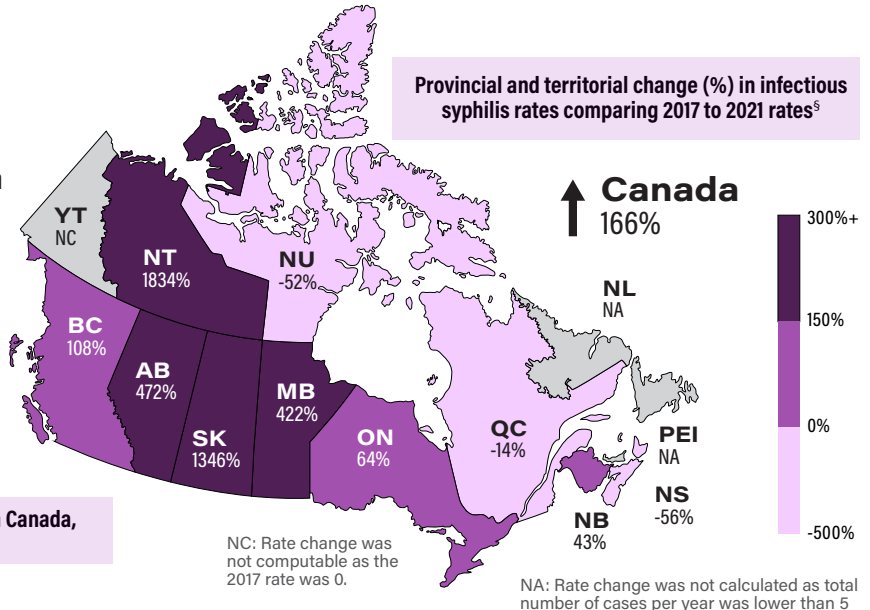
11,268 cases

of infectious syphilis[†] were reported in 2021, for a rate of **30 per 100,000** population

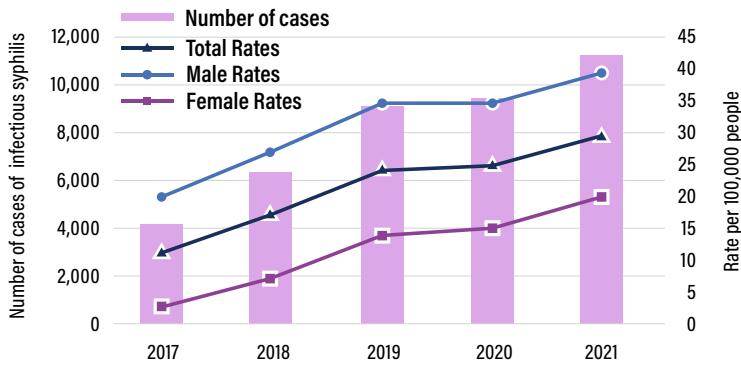


Rate increased by **20%**

between 2020 and 2021 following a period of **decreased access to STBBI services** in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic[‡]



Number of cases and rates of infectious syphilis by sex in Canada, from 2017 to 2021

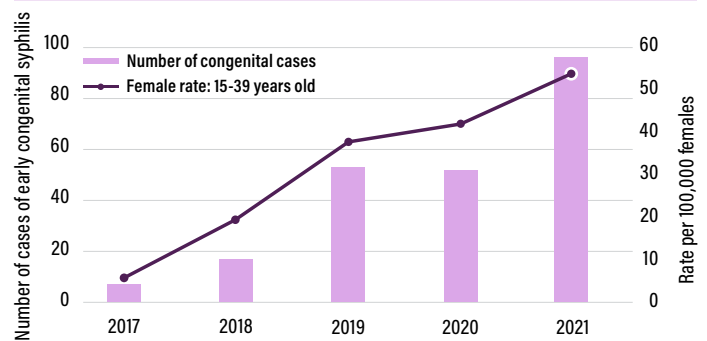


There were

96 CASES

of confirmed early congenital syphilis[†] in 2021 compared to only 7 cases in 2017. An increase of 1271%.

Number of confirmed congenital syphilis cases and reported infectious syphilis rates among females aged 15-39 years in Canada, from 2017 to 2021



Nationally, **34% of cases were among females** in 2021



Compared to 2017, the 2021 infectious syphilis rate was **729%** higher for females and **96%** higher for males.

Cases among gbMSM** represent **30% of total cases** in 2021.



People aged **25 to 39 years old** had the highest rate of infectious syphilis in 2021, but those **less than 20 years old** had the highest rate increase from 2017 to 2021.

Social and structural determinants of health and health inequities play a role in the inequitable occurrence of syphilis across different populations^{††}.

* Data were obtained directly from provinces and territories (PTs). Nine PTs submitted data for the full calendar year of 2021. Two PTs (PE and NL) did not provide any data and two PTs (NB and NS) provided partial counts; annual counts were estimated. *Data for 2021 are preliminary.*

† Infectious syphilis includes the primary, secondary and early latent (less than one year after infection) stages of infection, during which syphilis is transmissible. Early congenital syphilis is defined as a laboratory confirmation of infection with *Treponema pallidum* occurring within the first 2 years of birth. Case definitions for diseases under national surveillance. Can Comm Dis Rep 2000;26(S3). Retrieved July 2022, from <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/syphilis/health-professionals/national-case-definition.html>

‡ Survey of the impact of COVID-19 on the ability to provide STBBI prevention, testing and treatment including harm reduction services in Canada. Public Health Agency of Canada, Centre for Communicable Diseases and Infection Control. 2021. <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/publications/diseases-conditions/survey-impact-covid-19-delivery-stbbi-prevention-testing-treatment.html>

**gbMSM: Gay, bisexual and other men who have sex with men.

†† Aho J, Lybeck C, Tetteh A, Issa C, Kouyoumdjian F, Wong J, Anderson A, Popovic N. Rising syphilis rates in Canada, 2011–2020. Can Comm Dis Rep 2022;48(2/3):52–60.

§ Small case counts in jurisdictions with small populations can result in large rates; as a result, rate changes should be interpreted with caution.