

Partner Number and Outcomes of Partner Notification among Gay, Bisexual, and other Men who have Sex with Men with Infectious Syphilis in British Columbia, Canada

Jason Wong,^{1,2} Melanie Achen,¹ Natalie Holgerson,¹ Gina Ogilvie,^{1,2} and Mark Gilbert^{1,2,3}

1. BC Centre for Disease Control, Vancouver, BC, Canada
2. School of Population and Public Health, University of British Columbia, Vancouver, BC, Canada
3. Ontario HIV Treatment Network, Toronto, ON, Canada

BACKGROUND:

- Infectious syphilis (IS) cases have increased 4-fold among gay, bisexual, and other men who have sex with men (MSM) in British Columbia (BC) from 2010 to 2013.
- Key questions related to this dramatic increase include whether there have been changes to the number of sexual partners or the ability to notify partners.
- In BC, all syphilis cases and partner notification (PN) are managed centrally which provide an opportunity to evaluate the outcomes of PN.

OBJECTIVE:

- To describe trends outcomes of PN from 2010-2013.
- To describe trends in number and types of partners from 2010-2013

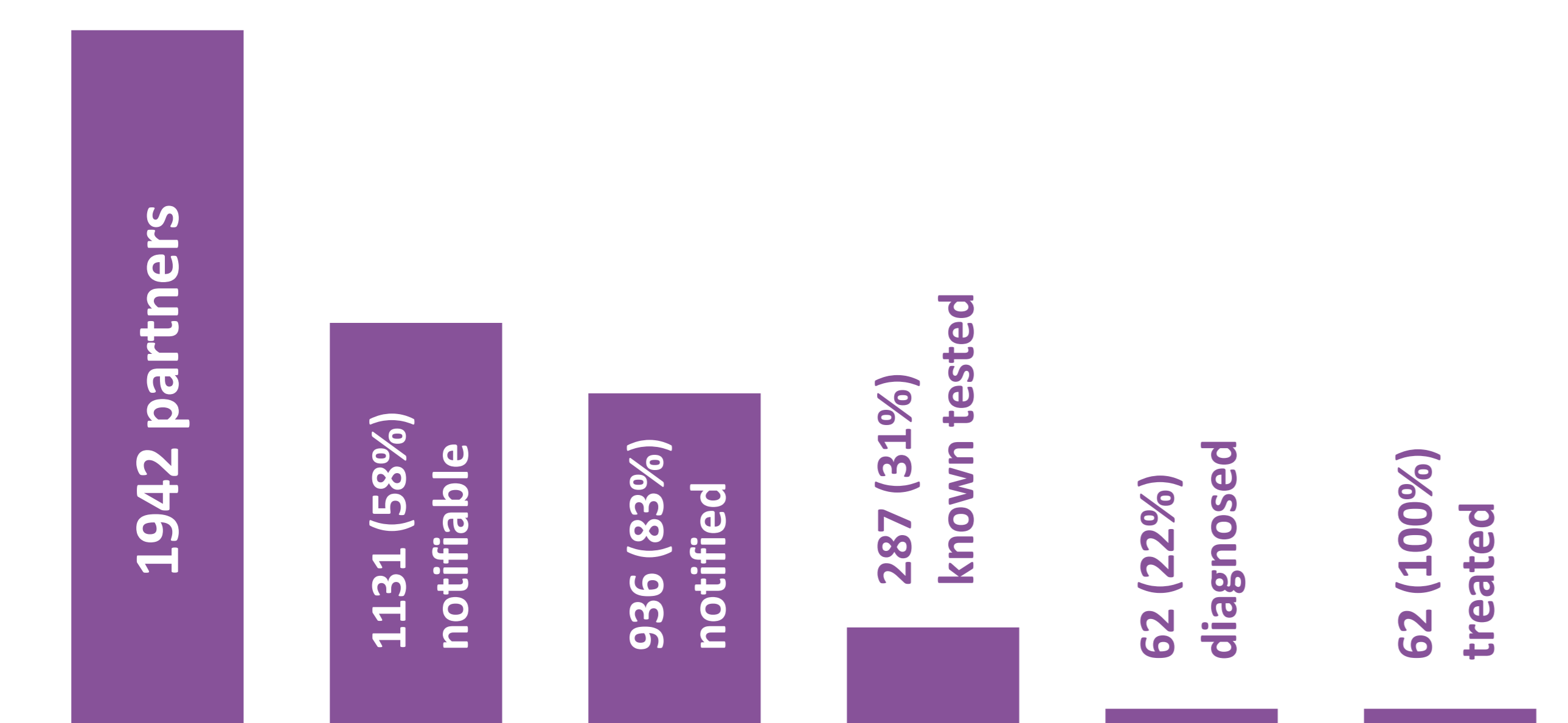
METHODS:

- A random sample of 350 MSM was selected, which represents a third (350/1054) of all IS cases among MSM in BC from 2010-2013.
- Charts of the selected clients were reviewed to collect information on the number of anonymous and notifiable partners, proportions notified and tested, test outcomes, and treatment received.

RESULTS:

- The 350 cases (44% primary/secondary, 56% early latent) reported 1942 partners; 1131 (58%, range 46-67%) partners were notifiable.
- From 2010-2013, the number of partners per case increased (mean 5 to 8). The number of cases reporting ≥ 10 partners increased from 6 to 14%.
- Of the 1131 notifiable partners, 936 (83%) were notified: 638 (56%) by the case, 252 (22%) by a healthcare provider (HCP), and 46 (4%) by other means (e.g., referred to another jurisdiction).
- From 2010-2013, the proportion of case-notified partners has increased (50 to 58%) while the proportion of HCP-notified partners decreased (43% to 19%).
- Of the 936 partners notified, 287 (31%) were known to be tested (21% [133/638] of case-notified, 54% [135/252] of HCP-notified partners, and 41% [19/46] of cases notified by other means). Of these, 62 (22%) partners tested positive and were treated.
- From 2010-2013, the proportion of partners known to be tested decreased, primarily due to a decrease among case-notified partners (46% to 15%).

Figure 1: Summary of Partner Notification Outcomes



CONCLUSIONS:

- Overall, 83% of notifiable partners were notified.
- Challenges include anonymous partners, the increasing number of partners to be notified, and documentation of outcomes for case-notified partners.
- Self-notification appears to be preferred by many MSM, although partner testing may be lower in this group.
- Strategies to encourage partner testing (whether case or HCP-notified) are needed and may be best focused on MSM with more partners.

Table 1: Notifiable and Anonymous Partner, 2010 to 2013

	2010	2011	2012	2013	Total
Cases	35	54	98	163	350
Number of partners reported	175	224	493	1050	1942
Mean partners per case (Median)	5 (4)	5 (3)	6 (3)	8 (3)	6 (3)
Notifiable partners (n, % of partners)	117 (67)	134 (60)	225 (46)	655 (62)	1131 (58)
Anonymous partners (n, % of partners)	58 (33)	90 (40)	268 (54)	395 (38)	811 (42)
Cases reporting ≥ 1 notifiable partner (n, %)	28 (80)	44 (81)	79 (81)	122 (75)	273 (78)
Cases reporting ≥ 1 anonymous partner (n, %)	12 (34)	16 (30)	29 (30)	48 (29)	105 (30)
Cases reporting ≥ 10 partners (n, %)	2 (6)	3 (6)	7 (7)	23 (14)	35 (10)

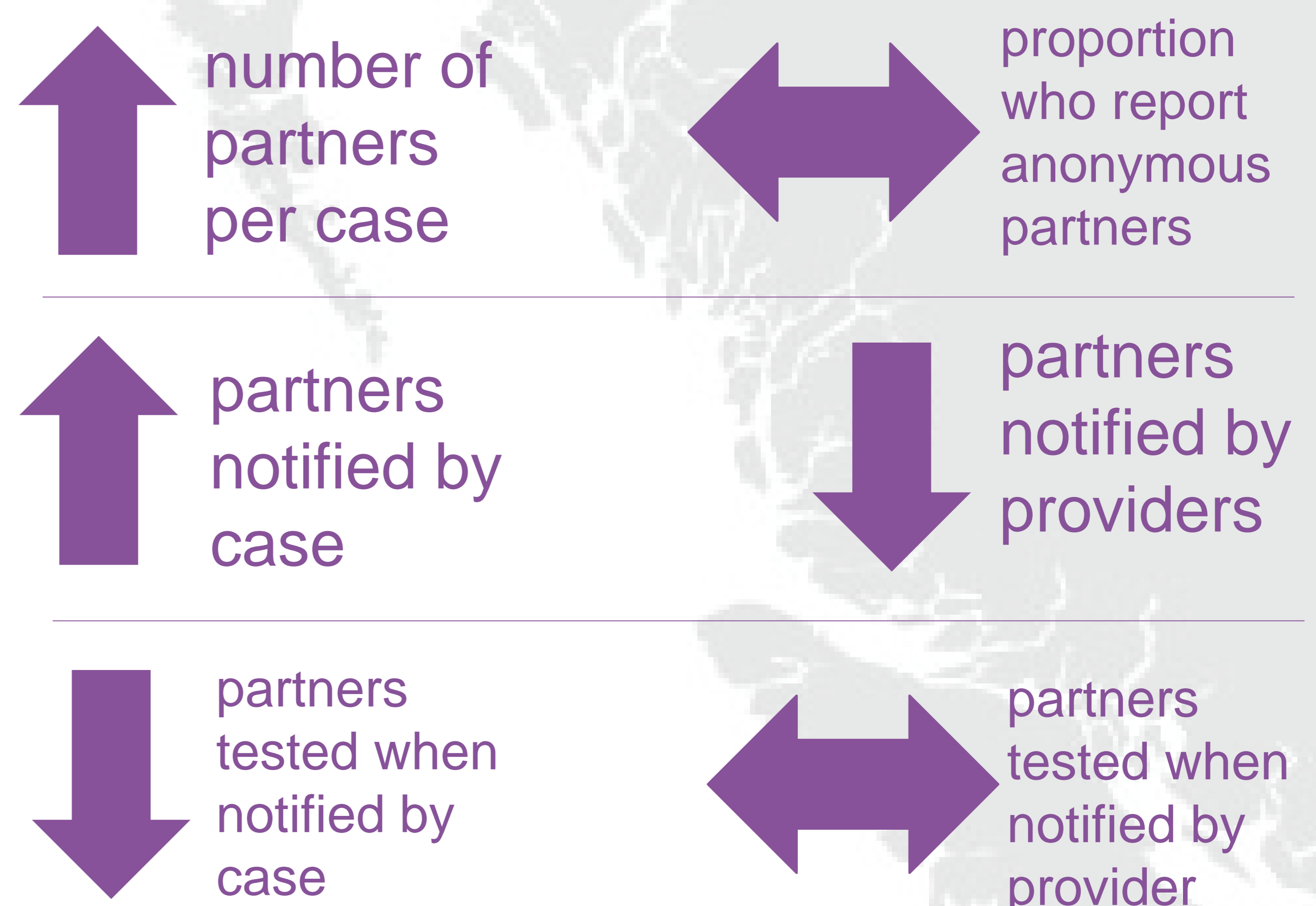
Table 2: Method of Notification, 2010 to 2013

	2010	2011	2012	2013	Total
Partners notified by case, n (%)	59 (50%)	67 (50%)	133 (59%)	379 (58%)	638 (56%)
Partners notified by healthcare provider, n (%)	50 (43%)	42 (31%)	38 (17%)	122 (19%)	252 (22%)
Partners notified by other means, n (%)	8 (7%)	10 (7%)	13 (6%)	15 (2%)	46 (4%)
Partners unknown if notified, n (%)	0 (0%)	15 (11%)	41 (18%)	139 (21%)	195 (17%)

Table 3: Testing and Treatment by Method of Notification, 2010 to 2013

	2010	2011	2012	2013	Total
Of partners notified by case,	59	67	133	379	638
Number tested (%)	27 (46)	26 (39)	23 (17)	57 (15)	133 (21)
Number diagnosed with syphilis (%)	9 (33)	3 (12)	5 (22)	12 (21)	29 (22)
Number treated (%)	9 (100)	3 (100)	5 (100)	12 (100)	29 (100)
Of partners notified by a healthcare provider,	50	42	38	122	252
Number tested (%)	27 (54)	29 (69)	20 (53)	59 (48)	135 (54)
Number diagnosed with syphilis (%)	7 (26)	2 (7)	4 (20)	3 (5)	16 (12)
Number treated (%)	7 (100)	2 (100)	4 (100)	3 (100)	16 (100)

Figure 2: Summary of Partner Trends



all partners treated adequately regardless of notification method

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FOR MORE INFORMATION:

To talk during/after the conference please email jason.wong@bccdc.ca. To find out more about our work, please visit www.bccdc.ca or www.smartsexresource.ca.