



RISK or NO RISK?

The STI Challenge Papua New Guinea Edition



This interactive workshop game is designed to engage participants in learning about sexually transmitted infections (STIs), local risk behaviours, and cultural influences specific to Papua New Guinea (PNG). It encourages active participation, discussion, and myth-busting while reinforcing evidence-based prevention and testing messages.

Papua New Guinea Context

Papua New Guinea has one of the highest rates of sexually transmitted infections in the world. The national HIV prevalence is 1.5% in adults aged 15 – 49 years of age (UNAIDS 2024). High rates of syphilis, gonorrhoea, and chlamydia are reported, particularly among young people, sex workers, men who have sex with men and transgender people.

Cultural practices such as initiation, tattooing, and very low condom use in most areas increase risk. Social stigma, gender norms, and limited access to testing services also contribute to the spread of infections.

Learning Objectives

- Differentiate between high-risk, moderate-risk, and no-risk sexual behaviours.
- Recognise how STIs are transmitted and prevented.
- Understand the cultural and social factors influencing STI transmission in PNG.
- Promote communication and testing as part of sexual health.

Game Setup

1. a. ACTIVE Label three areas in the room: ■ RISK, ■ MODERATE RISK, ■ NO RISK.

b. AT the TABLE everyone has 3 cards/sticky notes - Red, Yellow and GREEN – hold up the colour they think is correct
2. Read scenarios aloud and ask participants to move to the zone that matches their opinion.
3. Reveal the correct answer and discuss briefly.
4. Award points for correct responses and thoughtful explanations.

MOVE or hold up the right colour

Scenario	Correct Zone	Explanation
Kissing someone on the lips	 No Risk	Casual kissing doesn't spread HIV, chlamydia, or gonorrhoea, but watch out for contact with Herpes sores
Unprotected vaginal sex	 Risk	Can transmit HIV, gonorrhoea, chlamydia, and syphilis.
Sharing a toilet seat	 No Risk	STIs cannot survive on toilet seats.
Oral sex without a condom	 Moderate Risk	Possible transmission of gonorrhoea, syphilis, HPV, or HSV.
Using a shared razor	 Risk	Possible bloodborne transmission of Hepatitis B, C, or HIV.
Sex with a condom	 Moderate Risk	Greatly reduced risk but not zero due to possible breakage or skin contact STIs.
Unprotected anal sex	 Risk	High risk for HIV and other STIs.
Traditional tattooing with shared blades	 Risk	Potential for bloodborne transmission of HIV, Hepatitis B/C.
Mosquito bites	 No Risk	STIs are not spread by mosquitoes.
Using herbs for STI symptoms instead of clinic visit	 Risk	Delays proper diagnosis and treatment.
Sharing the same lime pot/kambang	 No Risk	Chewing is associated with mouth cancer & spread disease when spitting
Sharing a cigarette	 No Risk	But smoking causes cancers
Self-circumcision	 Risk	HIGH if blades are shared, HIGH risk of wound infection & penile damage
Unprotected sex during menstruation	 Risk	Can transmit HIV, gonorrhoea, chlamydia, and syphilis, increased risk of all BBVs
Breastfeeding		It depends on viral load and ART
Sharing towels	 Risk	For public lice and scabies love damp towels

Cultural and Social Notes

- In some rural communities, traditional tattooing or scarification is performed using shared tools, increasing the risk of bloodborne infections.
- Male circumcision practices and fashions vary widely; traditional methods may not always be sterile.
- For many Condom use is normal healthy behaviour, it is NOT always stigmatised or seen as 'unfaithful behaviour'.
- Peer and community health workers are effective at promoting STI testing and condom use.
- Any work group, youth groups and community gatherings provide excellent venues for games like RISK or NO RISK.

Debrief Questions

- What behaviours surprised you as risky or not risky?
- How do fads, fashion, tik tok or cultural beliefs in PNG affect people's sexual health decisions?
- What are the barriers to HIV or STI testing in your community?
- What can we do to reduce stigma and increase testing?