

Utilisation of community walk-in sexual health services over Christmas and New Year 2011

In London many community-based sexual and reproductive health (SRH) services offer walk-in or appointment clinics on Saturdays. Some hospital-based SRH services may be moving towards providing access over weekends as well. Traditionally, Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve, especially when they fall on a weekend, are seen as not very productive. The belief is that it may be difficult to get such clinics staffed but more importantly that women and men who use community services are unlikely to seek SRH care on Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve.

The Streatham Hill Sexual Health Clinic is a modern, fully integrated SRH service open 6 days a week including Saturdays. We decided in 2011 to offer a walk-in service on both Saturday 24 December and Saturday 31 December and monitored attendances.

In total 41 patients attended the walk-in service, 15 on Christmas Eve and 26 on New Year's Eve. We looked at the type of client attending and the activities undertaken and these are shown in Table 1.

Our experience suggests that walk-in SRH services offered on Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve are well utilised by patients and deliver an important public health function. The profile of patients attending was very similar to our normal clinic profile with 32% of attendees being men, 78% of attendees being local and 20% of attendees being aged <24 years. Some 51% of those attending were new to the service, suggesting that even on those days, when the assumption is that people are busy making arrangements for the festive period, sexual health needs still arise. It was interesting that 51% of attendees were seeking testing or treatment for sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and 49% were attending for contraception or gynaecological reasons. We treated eight patients for an STI and the full range of contraceptive methods was requested and provided during these two clinics.

Table 1 Patients seen at the Streatham Hill Sexual Health Clinic in London, UK on 24 and 31 December 2011

Patients	Percentage of total (%)
Men	32
Lambeth and Southwark residents	78
Out of South London residents	5
Patients <24 years old	20
New patients	51
Contraception intervention	42
Reproductive health/gynaecology	7
STI management/treatment	51

STI, sexually transmitted infection.

Ali Kubba, FRCOG, FFSRH

Lead Consultant, Community Reproductive and Sexual Health, Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust, London, UK; ali.kubba@lambethpct.nhs.uk

Competing interests None.

J Fam Plann Reprod Health Care 2012;**38**:205.
doi:10.1136/jfprhc-2012-100352