

PROTOCOLS FOR MANDATORY REPORTING OF SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED DISEASES IN  
CHILDREN

3251. Hon Nigel Hallett to the parliamentary secretary representing the Minister for Health

Can you please table the 2004 protocols relating to the so-called mandatory reporting of children under 14 with a sexually transmitted disease?

Hon SUE ELLERY replied:

- The Gordon Inquiry highlighted that Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs) are one indicator of sexual abuse in young children.
- Under the Health Act 1911 (WA), gonorrhoea, chlamydia (genital infection), syphilis, chancroid and donovanosis must be notified to the Communicable Disease Control Directorate (CDCD) by medical practitioners and nurses.
- In response to recommendations of the Gordon Inquiry, an interagency protocol was developed to effectively address the on-reporting of such cases to the Department for Community Development (DCD) and WA Police Service (WAPS).
- Considering sexual activity and STIs in those aged under 16 years, there are two primary stratifications:
  - Those aged under 14 years who are in a vulnerable age group and in whom identification of an STI has been demonstrated to be a marker of sexual abuse.
  - Those aged 14 to 16 years where sexual activity is often of their own volition and in whom identification of an STI is rarely an indicator of current sexual abuse.
- Therefore, this protocol is primarily for children aged under 14 years. However, where there is any indication that an STI in a teenager aged 14 to 16 is related to sexual abuse then it will be on-reported to DCD and WAPS immediately for investigation.
- The interagency protocols are enclosed. (Attachments A & B).

[See paper 1384.]