Online Questionnaire Promotes STD Screening

BY BRUCE JANCIN

ESTES PARK, COLO — The STD Wizard is a patient-friendly Internet tool for determining individual STD screening needs that is a particularly good fit for busy primary care medical practices.

"I would recommend this site to your patients," Dr. L. Chesney Thompson said at a conference on internal medicine sponsored by the University of Colorado.

The STD Wizard (www.stdwizard.org) involves a 5-minute online questionnaire in which patients answer simple multiple-choice questions about their demographics, history, location, and previous STD screening.

The Wizard is not a diagnostic tool; instead it analyzes an individual's answers and produces customized recommendations for STD screening. Patients are encouraged to print out the summary and bring it to their physician for action, explained Dr. Thompson, chief of the section of general ob.gyn. at the university.

The Wizard's recommendations are based on the 2006 STD Treatment Guidelines of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

The Wizard was developed and funded by the Medical Institute for Sexual Health and the CDC. The goal is to help rein in the nation's STD epidemic by reaching out to the public in a novel way to encourage greater use of guideline-recommended screening.

"Half of the population—that is, males—aren't screened at all for [human papillomavirus]. Herpes simplex virus isn't screened for or reported, either. And those are probably the two most common STDs; 80% of women in this country will have been exposed to HPV by age 50," Dr. Thompson noted. ■