Syphilis is often called “the great imitator” because many of its symptoms are similar to those of other diseases.

Many historical figures had syphilis, including Ludwig van Beethoven and Al Capone, and it may have infected others, such as Henry VIII and Adolf Hitler. It has been around for at least 700 years, and possibly as long as 1,600 years. There was no effective treatment for syphilis until 1943, when penicillin came into regular use.

Every year, 12 million people worldwide are infected with syphilis, usually in the developing world but also in developed countries. From the early 1980s to the late ’90s, syphilis had been declining in Canada and was nearly eliminated. Since then, the rate of infection has steadily increased in men and women.

For more information about syphilis, visit www.bccdc.org or www.phac-aspc.gc.ca.

UVic researchers were awarded more than $71 million in external research grants and contracts in 2006/07, doubling the research support of the previous five-year period.

We're going places.
University of Victoria Research