

SITUATION CONCERNING SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED DISEASES IN THE PADUA AREA

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ABSTRACT

According to the reorganization of Health Services in 1978, the responsibility for sexually transmitted diseases (STD) rests with of the Public Health Authorities. Only syphilis and gonorrhoea have been reported. The system of reporting is not functioning as it should, for this reason only cases observed at the University Department of Dermatology in Padua as well as data from the Laboratory of microbiology are included. During the years from 1992 through 1994 approximately 25 thousand patients were treated, 2.3 to 2.7% of them were diagnosed as STD. Out of these the most frequently observed conditions were scabies (25.5 to 39.5%) and balanoposthitis (21.3 to 32.2%), while syphilis amounted to 5.8 to 8.4% and genital herpes to 21.3 to 32.2%.

KEY WORDS

sexually transmitted diseases, data, Padua

INTRODUCTION

It has been proved difficult to accurately evaluate the real epidemiological situation concerning sexually transmitted diseases (STD) in Padua area, because it was not possible to establish the number of patients with STDs scattered throughout the area. According to the competent authorities cases of STDs are not always reported, as they should be according to law. Actually, syphilis and gonorrhoea present a lower incidence than "modern STDs" (infections from *Chlamydia trachomatis*, herpes genitalis, HPV etc.) (1). On the basis of data collected from patients referred to our Dermatology Institute and information provided by the Microbiology laboratory a gradual increase over the last years in

the incidence of infections with Gram-negative and Gram-positive bacteria, group B Streptococci and *Haemophilus parainfluenzae* were observed. The number of cases of early syphilis and gonorrhoea are on the decline. A considerable number of cases of scabies were noted.

RESULTS

In 1992 we observed 9075 patients; 249 (2.7%) were affected by STDs. In the year 1993 out of 8330 patients investigated, 230 (2.7%) suffered from STD, and in 1994 190 (2.3%) out of 8118 patients were diagnosed as having STD. The incidence of individual cases of diseases were presented in table 1.

Table 1. STDs presented in years 1992-1994

Diagnosis	1992 Number (%)	1993 Number (%)	1994 Number (%)
Balanoposthitis	80 (32,2)	49 (21,3)	44 (23,2)
Scabies	63 (25,3)	87 (37,8)	75 (39,5)
Condylomata			
acuminata	33 (13,2)	28 (12,2)	24 (12,6)
Urethritis	31 (12,5)	19 (8,3)	15 (7,9)
Syphilis	21 (8,4)	19 (8,3)	11 (5,8)
Herpes genitalis	12 (4,8)	11 (4,8)	9 (4,7)
Mollusca contag.	7 (2,8)	10 (4,3)	7 (3,7)
Phthyriasis	2 (0,8)	7 (3,0)	5 (2,6)
Total	249 (2,7)	230 (2,7)	190 (2,3)

On the basis of data provided by the Microbiology Lab, in 1992 the most frequent microorganism isolated from urethral tract was *Ureaplasma urealyticum*.

DISCUSSION

Since 1978, according to the Health Reformation performed in our country, the diagnosis, treatment and health education about STDs were delegated to Public Health structures unfortunately without a specific competence. Therefore, the patients affected by STDs are scattered through public and private ambulatories, clinics etc. Moreover, an unspecified number of patients affected by STDs prefer to treat their disease by themselves.

Since 1991 only cases of syphilis and gonorrhoea

are to be reported compulsory. But according to the competent authorities this does not always happen. For all these reasons the evaluation of the real epidemiological situation of STDs in the Padua area is very difficult. Only data collected on patients referred to our Institute and data provided by the Microbiology Laboratory are included. In the last 3 years, STDs comprised almost 2,5% of the pathologies observed at our Institute. Scabies and balanoposthitis presented high incidence: particularly, in the last 2 years a considerable increase in the number of scabies cases was observed. We have also detected a gradual increase over the last 3 years in the incidence of infections caused by Gram-positive and Gram-negative bacteria, β haemolytic streptococci, and *Haemophilus parainfluenzae* whereas reports of early syphilis and gonorrhoea are on the decline.

REFERENCE

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