

ABSTRACT

Sexually transmitted infections (STIs) are a major public health problem. Gonorrhoea is the second most common STI and if untreated can lead to serious complications. Early detection and treatment is commonly recommended as an important means of HIV prevention. The Czech Republic (CR) has had a long-established STI surveillance program since 1959. Although the Institute of Health Information and Statistics provides important data for STI surveillance, it contains no further characterisation of patients, particularly with regard to risky sexual behaviour. At the same time there are very few such data from the CR in the literature.

This work presents view of STIs, especially of gonorrhoea, syphilis, chlamydia and HIV infection; examines their correlations and influences of their transmission in different groups of venereological patients, informs about incidence and epidemiological factors.

The objective of this study was to evaluate clinical, epidemiological and behavioural characteristics of patients with diagnosed gonorrhoea with respect to risky sexual behaviour, and to compare these parameters by gender and sexual orientation. Patients with gonorrhoea who agreed to complete an anonymous questionnaire were included in the study. During the 3.5 year period, 508 questionnaires were collected and analyzed.

Observed data are compared between a group of 392 men (M; 77.2%) and 116 women (W; 22.8%); among 221 men who have sex with women (MSW; 55.4%) and 171 men who have sex with men (MSM; 43.6%).

Most patients (39.1%) were aged 30 and over, 51.4% had completed secondary school, and 20.9% had completed higher education (27.1% of MSM; $p=0,007$). Of all patients, 78.2% were single, in a group of married people women prevalent significantly over men (20.2% vs 8.2 %; $p<0,001$). The reasons for examination included discharge in 73.7% M vs 26.7% W ($p<0,001$); a partner's sexual disease was reported by 40.5% W vs 10.7% of M; ($p<0,001$). Previous contact with known gonorrhoea was reported by 19.1% (43.1% W vs 11.8% M; $p<0,001$ and 20.1% MSM vs 5.2% MSW; ($p<0,001$). Of all patients, 22.8% had had gonorrhoea previously (27.0 % M vs 8.6 % W; $p<0,001$ and 37.4% MSM vs 19.0 % MSW; $p<0,001$). First intercourse was reported as random by 47.7% M and 15.5% W ($p<0,001$). No condom use ever was reported by 9.3% patients (more frequently by W vs M; $p=0,022$), only 12.1% reported consistent use (more frequently by M vs W; $p=0,003$ and MSM vs MSW; $p=0,007$). Unprotected casual sex was experienced by 38.2% of patients, (46.9% M vs 9.5% W; $p<0,001$). Syphilis co-infection was diagnosed in 4.3% patients (7.6% MSM); HIV co-infection in 1.4% (2.4% MSM); Chlamydia trachomatis co-infection in 11.0% (18.1% W).

The data show a high prevalence of gonorrhoea among MSM. The overall use of condoms is insufficient; the amount of unprotected casual intercourse is high. There is a large proportion of infected women without obvious risk factors.

Comprehensive analysis among gonorrhoea patients according to demographic data and risky sexual behaviour would help in the development of targeted interventions and in the improvement of preventive measures against STIs, particularly in the most vulnerable populations.