

Bulletin No. 16
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 Gonorrhea Update

Gonorrhea is the number one reported communicable disease in Alaska - 4,716 cases were reported during 1976. Other than the common cold, there probably isn't any other communicable disease that occurs more frequently in Alaska.

During 1976, there were 1,001,994 cases of gonorrhea reported nationally. National health authorities estimate that there are at least 2,700,000 cases occurring each year.

Alaska has the dubious distinction of having the highest rate of gonorrhea per 100,000 population (1,216.2) of all fifty states. This is almost three times the national average (470.5).

Since a high percentage of females infected with gonorrhea are asymptomatic, in July 1972, control emphasis was placed on screening females for gonorrhea. Recommendations at that time urged all health care providers to culture all females during pelvic examinations, no matter what the reason for the examination, if they were in the child-bearing age group of 15 to 45. This recommendation is still in effect in Alaska.

The following is Alaska's experience in this program during fiscal year 1977:

STATE OF ALASKA GONORRHEA CULTURE TEST RESULTS OF FEMALES			
SOURCE of TEST	NO. TESTED	NO. POSITIVE	% POSITIVE
Health Department (Non-VD)*	3,959	74	1.9
Public/Private Hospital (Out-Patient)*	10,429	523	5.0
Public/Private Hospital (In-Patient)*	1,752	75	4.3
Community/Neighborhood Health Centers*	3,000	83	2.8
Private Physicians	18,529	356	1.9
Student Health Center	259	11	4.2
Military Dependents	434	14	3.2
Corrections	9	0	0.0
Total Non-VD Clinics	38,371	1,136	3.0
Venereal Disease Clinics	4,018	703	17.5
GRAND TOTAL	42,389	1,839	4.3
Number of females with Positive Culture - Received Treatment for Gonorrhea - 1,822			
* Reason for visit includes: Family Planning, Pre-Natal, OB-GYN, Cancer Detection and others.			

Pelvic Inflammatory Disease (P.I.D.)

Pelvic inflammatory disease (P.I.D.) occurs in 17% of all women known to have gonorrhea.

Damage to the fallopian tubes from a single episode of adequately treated P.I.D. results in sterility in 15 to 40% of cases.

Gonococcal P.I.D. is an important cause of ectopic pregnancies.

Gonococcal P.I.D. accounts for approximately 175,000 hospital admissions totaling 1,200,000 hospital days annually. It is

estimated that 102,500 surgical procedures are performed annually for complications of past or present gonococcal infections.

Some 918,000 school days are lost each year by young women in the United States because of gonorrhea and its complications.

Partial economic costs of gonococcal P.I.D.: \$212,000,000 annually.

(VD Fact Sheet 1976, CDC, PHS, DHEW)