Sexually Transmitted Diseases Gonorrhea Essay, Research Paper

Sexually Transmitted Diseases:

Gonorrhea

Gonorrhea is an infectious sexually transmitted disease that is spread by the sexual contact of humans. Characterized by a discharge of pus, it is caused by Neisseria gonorrhoeae, a gonococcus bacterium. It primarily involves the mucous membranes of the urogenital tract and affects mostly the moist surfaces of the human sex organs. However, other parts of the body can become infected if the bacteria comes into direct contact with them. The incubation period is two to ten days.

In males, the most common point of infection is just within the tip of the penis. After the two to ten days after infection, most men will develop a discharge of pus from the urethra of the penis and will experience a burning sensation when urinating. Acute at the start, it will become progressively thicker and heavier and will cause more frequent urination and a stronger burning sensation. Should the prostate become infected, the passage of urine is partly obstructed. Some men, however, become infected without developing any symptoms.

In females the infection can occur in the urethra or vagina. But most often the infection starts in the cervix, the lower part of the womb. Although discharge and irritation of the vaginal mucous membranes may be quite severe, only about half of all infected woman develop no symptoms. Gonorrhea is especially serious for women because it can spread through the female reproductive organs, particularly the uterus and fallopian tubes, causing pelvic inflammatory disease. Severe pain may occur, or the infection may linger with few or no symptoms, gradually damaging tubes and rendering the woman sterile. The bacteria may also transfer from an infected woman during the birth process and be picked up by the newborn baby. These infants may develop gonorrhea in the eyes, which can lead to blindness if not treated properly. Most states in the US require that the eyes of newborn babies be treated with drops of silver nitrate or an antibiotic solution. This treatment prevents blindness in newborns from gonorrhea.

In both males and females the gonococcus may enter the bloodstream, resulting in arthritis, heart inflammation, or other diseases.

Most cases of gonorrhea can be cured with penicillin or other antibiotics, especially if the disease is diagnosed early. However, an increasing number of penicillin-resistant strains have developed over the years. Other effective antibiotics include tetracycline, spectinomycin, and the newer ones called cephalosporins. One such cephalosporin, ceftriaxone, can cure uncomplicated gonorrhea, including infections resistant to penicillin, with a single injection.

Gonorrhea increased greatly in the US in the 70s and early 80s, almost reaching epidemic heights in teens and young adults. In most large cities clinics have been established where young people can get treatment. One of the most difficult tasks in restraining gonorrhea is locating all recent sexual situations of an infected person in order to prevent further expansion of the disease. Gonorrhea also has been known to “transfer easier to those who are known to drink a large amount of cheaply made beer” (Courtesy of The Tonight Show with Jay Leno ).