

ESSTI_ALERT: LGV Cases Reported in Denmark and Portugal

Since the beginning of 2007 when ESSTI_ALERT, the Unexpected and Adverse Events Reporting System for STI in Europe became operational again, two countries have reported cases of lymphogranuloma venereum (LGV). Portugal detected its first cases of LGV in February and Denmark diagnosed its first cases of LGV in at least the last 6 years.

The five Portuguese cases were reported to ESSTI_ALERT by the Instituto Nacional de Saude, Dr. Ricardo Jorge. *Chlamydia trachomatis* was isolated from urogenital samples and the L2 serovar identified. The five cases were all diagnosed during February by clinics in Lisbon although there are no known links between the cases. The cases ranged in age from 20-42 years old with four of the cases aged 30 or over. Three of the five cases were female. The two male cases were both MSM one of whom was HIV positive. This patient also had a previous history of syphilis infection and reported more than 10 partners in the previous six months. One of the female cases, a 34 year old pregnant woman, also had a history of previous syphilis infection and was co-infected with gonorrhoea. The history of two of the female cases is unknown. No clinical signs of LGV were reported.

Denmark reported three confirmed and one possible case of LGV during the first four months of 2007. All four cases were in the Copenhagen area. In the first case (January), a 41-year old male was found to be infected with *C. trachomatis* sequence type L2 by a PCR test

performed on a urine sample. In the second case (January), a 32-year old HIV-positive male was found to be infected with *C. trachomatis* sequence type L2 by a NAAT performed on a biopsy taken from an inguinal lymph node. In the third case (April), a 28-year old male had gonococci as well as *C. trachomatis* sequence type L2 detected in specimens taken from the rectum. The possible case was a 50-year old male who presented in March with bilateral inguinal lymphadenopathy. A high positive serology result was obtained from a serum sample (IgM>1:8000), while an earlier urine sample taken in February was PCR negative for *C. trachomatis*.

An outbreak of LGV among MSM was first reported in January 2004 in the Netherlands¹ and an alert was issued through ESSTI. Since then several other Western European countries have reported cases and in response a number of countries, UK, Netherlands, France, Germany and Sweden initiated enhanced surveillance during 2004². The cases reported to ESSTI_ALERT by Portugal and Denmark are the first LGV cases to be reported in these countries since the outbreak in western Europe was identified, although LGV is not a mandatory reportable disease in either country. In all but one of the cases described above *C. trachomatis* strains were isolated from either urogenital specimens or a biopsy from an inguinal lymph node; this is in contrast to the rectal presentations of LGV that has most commonly been seen since the emergence of LGV in Western Europe³.

For more information on these and other events reported to ESSTI_ALERT, please contact ESSTI at essti@hpa.org.uk. ESSTI would like to thank everyone who has so far contributed to ESSTI_ALERT.

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Reference List

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2. van de Laar M, Fenton K, Ison C, European Surveillance of Sexually Transmitted Infections (ESSTI). Update on the European lymphogranuloma venereum epidemic among men who have sex with men. *Euro Surveill 2005;10(6):E050602.1*. Available from: <http://www.eurosurveillance.org/ew/2005/050602.asp#1>
3. Van de Laar M. The emergence of LGV in Western Europe: what do we know, what can we do? *Euro Surveill 2006;11(9):146-8*. Available from: <http://www.eurosurveillance.org/em/v11n09/1109-221.asp>

ESSTI Steering Group Meeting

In early May the ESSTI steering group met in London for the third time during the current phase of the project. A variety of issues related to the taking forward of ESSTI were discussed and progress was made in a number of areas. The group welcomed a

new member to the ESSTI steering group - Irena Klavs from Slovenia. Marita van der Laar from ECDC and Ulrich Laukamm-Josten from WHO Euro also attended the meeting. The minutes of the meeting will be available on the ESSTI website shortly.

ESSTI Newsletter

If you have an article or a short news piece that you would like included in future editions of this newsletter please contact Edmund Donovan at essti@hpa.org.uk.

ESSTI Laboratory Training Course on Bacterial STI Diagnostics

The first of two ESSTI laboratory training courses was held in London during April. The week-long course was attended by 11 participants from ESSTI-collaborating countries and the time was divided between lectures and laboratory sessions. The course was a great opportunity for everyone involved to discuss STI diagnostic methods from a range of European perspectives. It was also a chance for participants to meet the ESSTI project team and to get to know their colleagues from other ESSTI-collaborating laboratories. Feedback from participants has been very positive and there are plans to run a second laboratory course in 2008.



QA Panel

Thank you to those laboratories who have returned their results from the ESSTI quality assurance (QA) panel. The intra-laboratory results have been returned to the participating laboratories and the inter-laboratory analysis is currently underway. The results will allow us to offer a comparison between laboratories and identify the different methods used for antimicrobial susceptibility testing of *Neisseria gonorrhoeae*.

Erratum

In the 4th issue of the ESSTI newsletter it was incorrectly stated that the new variant of *Chlamydia trachomatis* had been reported in Finland. In fact only Sweden and Norway had reported the variant at the time of publication.

Upcoming Events and Activities

Scientific Symposium at ISSTD **29-30 July**

ESSTI is co-chairing with ECDC a scientific symposium at the 17th meeting of ISSTD in Seattle, USA on 30th July. The ECDC sponsored symposium aims to explore new challenges and threats for HIV/STI control in the European Union. Anthony Nardone will start the symposium with a lecture on the epidemiology of HIV. Anders Blaxhult will then present the results of the ESSTI/ECDC survey on the spread of new variant chlamydia and Nicola Low will give a lecture on chlamydia control activities in Europe. The symposium will conclude with Emma Savage's talk on the resurgence of syphilis in Europe. In a breakfast time symposium entitled 'Global trends in antimicrobial resistance in *Neisseria gonorrhoeae*', Cathy Ison will

also talk on Resistance trends in Europe. Michelle Cole and Cathy Ison will also present on behalf of ESSTI at the meeting of the International Collaboration on Gonococci (ICG) on the morning of Sunday 29th July.

ESSTI Collaborative Group Meeting 2007 **26-27 November**

ESSTI is pleased to announce that the next ESSTI collaborative group meeting will be held on 26th and 27th of November. The meeting will be hosted by the Federal Ministry for Health, Family and Youth in Vienna, Austria. All ESSTI surveillance and microbiology collaborators are invited to attend this meeting. Information on travel and accommodation will be sent via email shortly.

Contact details of the ESSTI Team at HPA

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