

High prevalence of rectal gonorrhoea among men reporting contact with men with gonorrhoea: Implications for epidemiological treatment

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AIMS

This study aimed to determine the prevalence of gonorrhoea and factors associated with rectal gonorrhoea among men reporting sexual contact with men with gonorrhoea.

METHODS

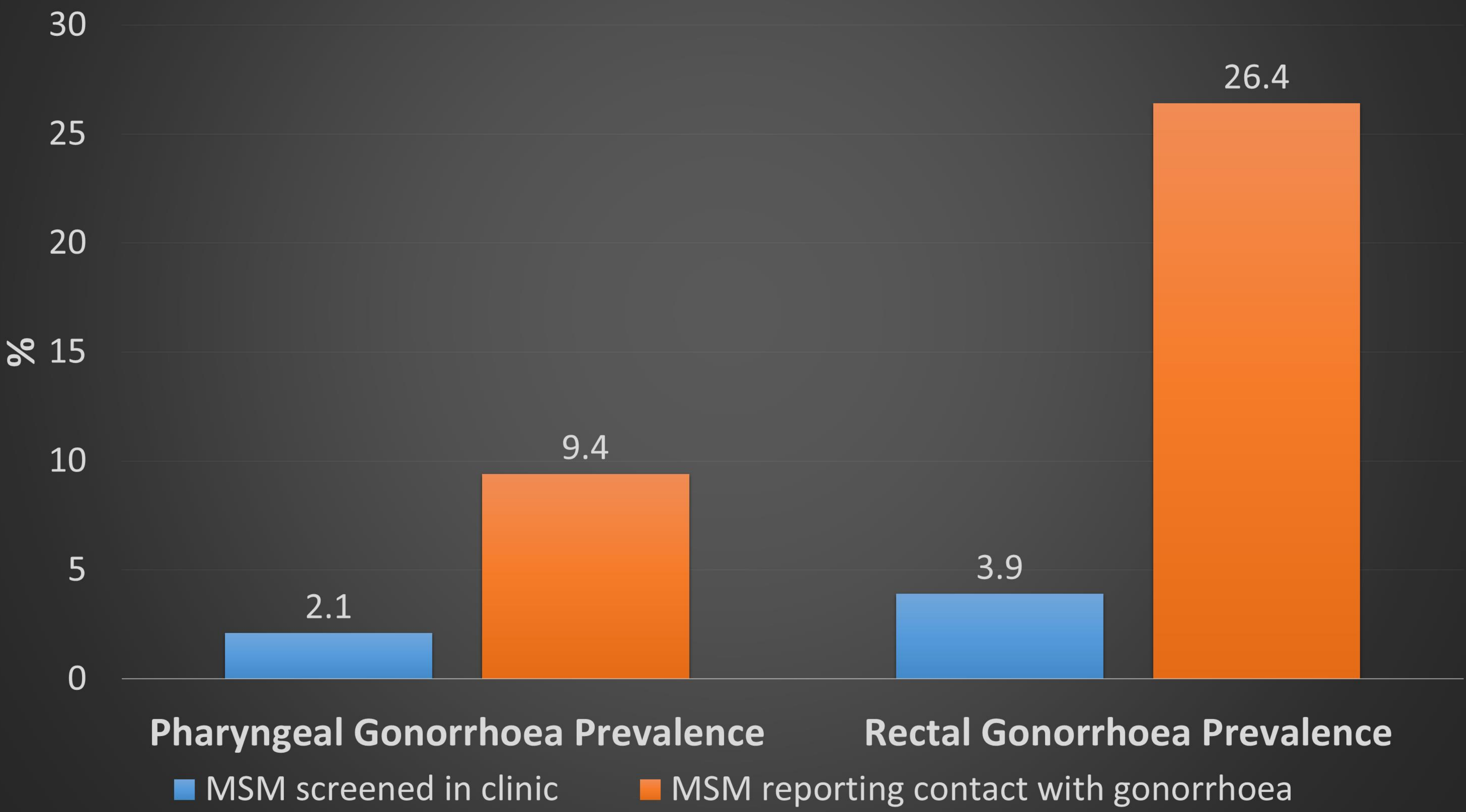
- Men who presented to Melbourne Sexual Health Centre reporting sexual contact with a male with gonorrhoea were prospectively identified between March 2011 and December 2013.
- These men were screened for pharyngeal and rectal gonorrhoea using culture.
- The prevalence of gonorrhoea among contacts was compared to that among all men who have sex with men (MSM) screened at the clinic over the same period.

| Table 1 – Sexual relationships and behaviours reported by MSM reporting sexual contact with gonorrhoea | |
|--|-------------|
| Sexual relationships and behaviours | n (%) |
| Sexual relationships | |
| No. of men who reported insertive and/or receptive anal sex with a male partner | 325 |
| Men who had regular and casual male sex partners | 100 (30.7%) |
| Men who had a regular sex partner only | 71 (21.8%) |
| Men who had casual sex partners only | 154 (47.4%) |
| Condom use with regular sex partners | |
| No. of men reporting insertive anal sex with a regular sex partner | 151 |
| Men who reported <u>not always using condoms</u> during insertive anal sex with a regular partner | 118 (78.1%) |
| No. of men who reported receptive anal sex with a regular sex partner | 159 |
| Men who reported <u>not always using condoms</u> during receptive anal sex with a regular partner | 124 (78.0) |
| Condom use with casual sex partners | |
| No. of men who reported insertive anal sex with a casual sex partner | 225 |
| Men who reported <u>not always using condoms</u> during insertive sex with casual partners | 116 (51.6%) |
| No. of men who reported receptive anal sex with a casual sex partner | 227 |
| Men who reported <u>not always using condoms</u> during receptive anal sex with casual partners | 119 (52.4%) |

RESULTS

- Among 363 contacts of gonorrhoea the prevalence of rectal gonorrhoea was 26.4% (95 % CI: 21.8%-31.0%) compared to 3.9% (95% CI: 3.7%-4.2%) among clinic attendees (p < 0.001).
- The prevalence of pharyngeal gonorrhoea among contacts was 9.4% (95% CI: 6.4%-12.4%) compared to 2.1% (95% CI: 1.9%-2.4%) among clinic attendees (p < 0.001).
- Among contacts who reported not always using condoms during receptive anal sex with casual partners, rectal gonorrhoea was cultured in 42.4% compared with 12.7% among contacts reporting no receptive anal sex (p < 0.001) and 20.2% among those reporting always using condoms (p < 0.001).
- On multivariate analysis rectal gonorrhoea was associated with inconsistent condom use during receptive anal sex with casual partners (adjusted odds ratio (AOR): 4.16; 95% CI: 1.87-9.26) and a reported past history of gonorrhoea (AOR: 1.77; 95% CI: 1.01-3.14).

Figure 1 - Comparison between MSM reporting contact with gonorrhoea and MSM screened over the same period



CONCLUSIONS

- The high proportion of positive cases of gonorrhoea among contact in this study supports epidemiological treatment of MSM presenting as contacts of gonorrhoea.
- Not using condoms for receptive anal sex significantly increases the risk of acquiring rectal gonorrhoea. Given the high proportion of men not using condoms in this study with both regular and casual partners further signifies the importance of safe sex practices in preventing spread of gonorrhoea.

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