

The back side: Lymphogranuloma venereum in PrEP-users and PLWH



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Background:

The introduction of reimbursed HIV-PrEP in Germany, improved treatment options for PLWH and mobile dating apps have significant impact on the sexual behavior of MSM.

Berlin, the German capital with a population of 3.72 Mio has an estimated number of 300.000 MSM of which 14.900 are estimated to be PLWH.

Recently there has been quite some debate around the increasing incidence of STD among MSM. The impact of increased testing versus decreased use of condoms remains unclear. Clinically of even higher impact is a qualitative change of STD. Bacterial cystitis in men as well as the increase of Lymphogranuloma venereum is of particular scientific interest and clinical relevance.

Chlamydia trachomatis has various serotypes of which serotypes L1-L3 cause Lymphogranuloma venereum, a condition that beyond the typical genital manifestations of STD causes a complex of severe symptoms with lymphadenitis, fever and disintegration of lymphatic tissue leading to bleedings, cramps and severe manifestations of proctitis. While in the past LGV has been referred to as a tropical disease various outbreaks of LGV as an STD have been described in the past.

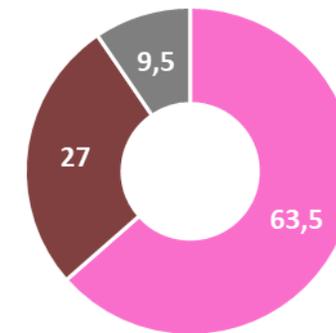
Methodology:

Our clinic, based in urban Berlin is specialized on the treatment of STD, predominately in sexually highly active MSM. We analyzed the incidence of *C. trachomatis* infections in rectal PCR swabs and performed a further analysis of serotypes in positive samples. An additional analysis of risk-factors was performed to identify potential groups at risk.

Results:

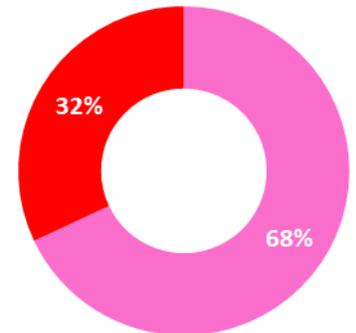
Out of the 1250 samples we tested from January 2018 until September 2019, 10.2 % (n=127) were positive for *C. trachomatis*. In 27 % (n=34) Serotypes L1-L3 were identified, in 9.5% of cases a further differentiation wasn't feasible. While incidence rates of around 10 % are slightly higher compared with other urban samples, the incidence of serotypes L1-L3 is surprisingly high. All patients tested positive for LGV were either using PrEP (68 %) or were PLWH (32 %).

C.trachomatis serotypes



■ No LGV ■ LGV ■ no differentiation

Groups at risk



■ PrEP ■ PLWH

Discussion:

Lymphogranuloma venereum is a severe subtype of *C. trachomatis* infection that requires a prolonged treatment. Regular differentiation of serotypes is uncommon in most settings. High incidence rates in our samples demonstrate a need for regular testing, subdifferentiation of serotypes and change of treatment patterns which also should be considered for future PrEP and HIV-treatment guidelines.

