

Retesting Rates After a Positive *Chlamydia trachomatis* Test Result: Experience from a Large Clinical Reference Laboratory

Background

- Sexually transmitted *Chlamydia trachomatis* infection (CT) is the most frequently reported infectious disease in the United States. The greatest burden of infection is observed among younger women (<25 years of age).¹
- Treatments for CT have a high cure rate, but nearly 20% of recently infected individuals develop reinfection after treatment.²
- To avoid CT transmission and improve reproductive health, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommend retesting for CT infection approximately 3 months after an infected person receives treatment.
- **Objective:** In this Quest Diagnostics Health Trends™ study, the investigators assessed the frequency of retesting after presumed treatment (a positive CT test result) by examining data from a large clinical reference laboratory.

Methods

- Quest Diagnostics maintains a database of anonymized results from patients who received CT testing performed via nucleic acid amplification.
- Test results from 1,596,857 unique patients were analyzed.
- Among patients with positive results, those with a repeat test within 6 months of a positive CT result were counted.
 - Only patients with their first repeat test during the first 5 months of the calendar year were examined, to minimize loss of follow-up data resulting from insurance disenrollment or changes.

Results

- Among patients with testing results for CT, 4.6% (n=72,993) had positive results.
 - 4.1% of women (49,805 of 1,220,977)
 - 6.2% of men (22,843 of 369,877)
 - 5.8% of individuals with unspecified sex (345 of 6,003)
- Of the patients with positive initial CT test results, 39% (n=28,681) were retested, but only 27% (n=19,680) were retested within a time period consistent with testing for reinfection (ie, between 8 weeks and 6 months after a positive CT result, as defined for this study).
- A higher proportion of women (45%) than men (27%) were retested.
- Of the patients who were retested, 17% had positive results (16% of women, 19% of men).

Conclusions

- Less than half of patients with an initial positive CT test result were retested for CT within 6 months.
- This low frequency of retesting for CT and the relatively high positive rate among patients with repeat testing highlight an opportunity for improved management.

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