Syphilis rates among HIV-positive gay, bisexual and other men who have sex with men

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What did we find?

In 2006, 2 out of every 100 MSM in the study had a new diagnosis of syphilis. By 2010, 4 out of every 100 MSM in the study had a new diagnosis of syphilis.

Additional facts:

These rates are 300 times higher than rates reported in the general male population in Ontario over the same time period.

Men in the study with a previous syphilis diagnosis were 3.5 times more likely to have a new syphilis diagnosis.

Key take-away messages:

Syphilis may go undetected for quite some time. It’s important for HIV-positive men who have sex with men to test for syphilis more often.

Study authors are now investigating whether including syphilis testing as part of routine HIV blood work improves early detection and treatment.

Who did we look at?

2,775 HIV-positive gay, bisexual and other men who have sex with men (MSM) enrolled in the OCS between 2006 and 2010.


The Ontario HIV Treatment Network Cohort Study is an ongoing research study that collects clinical, social and behavioural information from close to 4,000 people living with HIV in Ontario.

For more information, please contact ocsinfo@ohtn.on.ca.