Figure 4.11. Incidence of chlamydia in selected South Texas locations, 2001-2005.
Source: HIV/STD Epidemiology and Surveillance Branch, Texas Department of State Health Services

References


Gonorrhea

Gonorrhea is a sexually transmitted disease caused by the Neisseria gonorrhoeae bacterium. This bacterium grows easily in many parts of the reproductive tract, including the cervix, uterus, and fallopian tubes in women and the urethra in both women and men. Gonorrhea can also grow in the throat, mouth, eyes, and anus. Gonorrhea bacteria can be transmitted by contact with the penis, mouth, vagina, or anus of an infected individual; ejaculation is not necessary for the disease to be spread. Gonorrhea can also be transmitted from an infected mother to her baby during childbirth. If left untreated,
gonorrhea can cause permanent health problems, including infertility, in both sexes. Gonorrhea infection also can spread to the blood or joints, which can be life-threatening.\textsuperscript{1} Gonorrhea can usually be successfully treated and cured with antibiotics; however, drug-resistant gonorrhea infections are becoming more common in the U.S., complicating treatment.\textsuperscript{1}

Gonorrhea is the second-most frequently reported notifiable disease in America, with 339,593 reported cases in the U.S. in 2005. However, because many people with gonorrhea are asymptomatic and thus do not get tested, this disease is often under-reported. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates that more than 700,000 new gonorrhea infections occur each year.\textsuperscript{1,2} In 2005, the Southern region of the U.S., which includes Texas, had a higher incidence of gonorrhea than the other regions. Nationwide, the incidence of gonorrhea is currently slightly higher among women than men and higher among 20-24 year-olds than among any other age group.\textsuperscript{2} The incidence of gonorrhea is 18 times higher among African-Americans, more than three times higher among Native Americans, and two times higher among Hispanics than among non-Hispanic whites.\textsuperscript{2} Like most sexually transmitted diseases, the major risk factors for gonorrhea include having unprotected sex and having sex with multiple partners.\textsuperscript{1,3}

**Gonorrhea in South Texas**

Overall, the average annual incidence of gonorrhea in South Texas (81.5/100,000) was much lower than the incidence of gonorrhea in the rest of Texas (127.4/100,000). This geographic differential was not seen among either Hispanics or non-Hispanic whites. Non-Hispanic whites in South Texas had a slightly lower incidence of gonorrhea than non-Hispanic whites in the rest of Texas, and Hispanics in South Texas had a slightly higher incidence than Hispanics in the rest of Texas (Figure 4.12). The high overall incidence of gonorrhea observed in the rest of Texas is possibly due to a higher percentage of African-Americans residing in the rest of Texas than in South Texas (as African-Americans have a higher incidence of gonorrhea than any other racial/ethnic group in the U.S.).

Hispanics had a higher incidence of gonorrhea than non-Hispanic whites in both South Texas and the rest of Texas. In 2001-2005, the average annual incidence of gonorrhea among Hispanics in South Texas (71.8/100,000) was more than two times higher than among non-Hispanic whites (29.4/100,000) (Figure 4.12).
In South Texas, the incidence of gonorrhea was higher for females (84/100,000) than for males (78.8/100,000). Individuals ages 20-24 had a higher risk of gonorrhea (346.7/100,000) than all other age groups in South Texas. The incidence of gonorrhea was more than two-and-a-half times higher in South Texas metropolitan counties (88.3/100,000) than in non-metropolitan counties (34.6/100,000). Bexar County had a much higher incidence of gonorrhea (144.3/100,000) than all of South Texas (81.5/100,000); however, the gonorrhea incidence estimates for Webb County (14.1/100,000) and the Lower Rio Grande Valley region (22.9/100,000) were much lower than for South Texas as a whole (Figure 4.13). The incidence of gonorrhea in Webb County was five times lower than the incidence of gonorrhea in South Texas.
Figure 4.13. Incidence of gonorrhea in selected South Texas locations, 2001-2005. Source: HIV/STD Epidemiology and Surveillance Branch, Texas Department of State Health Services

References

