



Department of Health and Social Services
Valerie J. Davidson, Commissioner

3601 C Street, Suite 540
Anchorage, Alaska 99503

<http://www.epi.Alaska.gov>

Division of Public Health

Jay C. Butler, MD, Chief Medical Officer
and Director
Local (907) 269-8000
24 Hour Emergency (800) 478-0084

Editors:

Joe McLaughlin, MD, MPH
Louisa Castrodale, DVM, MPH

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Chlamydia Infection Update — Alaska, 2014

Background

Chlamydia trachomatis (CT) is the most commonly reported sexually transmitted bacterium in the U.S., and during 2010–2013, Alaska had the highest CT infection rate in the nation.¹

Untreated CT infection can cause miscarriage, pre-term labor, low birth weight,² and conjunctivitis and pneumonia in neonates; pelvic inflammatory disease (PID), ectopic pregnancy, chronic pelvic pain, and infertility in women; and epididymitis and Reiter's syndrome in men. Moreover, CT can facilitate the transmission and acquisition of human immunodeficiency virus (HIV).

Methods

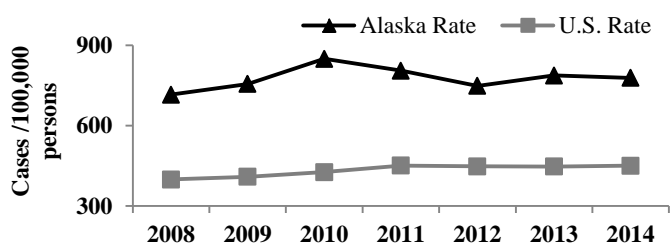
Case data were obtained from the Section of Epidemiology (SOE) reportable conditions database and the Sexually Transmitted Disease-Management Information System. Population data were obtained from the Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development.

Results

In 2014,

- 5,726 CT cases were reported to SOE, yielding an annual incidence rate of 778 cases per 100,000 persons, which represents a 1% decrease compared to 2013 (Table);
- Alaska's CT infection rate was 73% higher than the U.S. rate of 450 cases per 100,000 persons (Figure 1); and
- Alaska was preliminarily ranked third in the nation for CT incidence.

Figure 1. Chlamydia Rates, by Year — Alaska and the United States, 2008–2014*

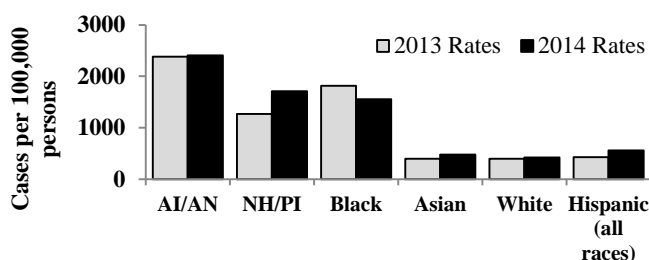


*The 2014 U.S. case rate is preliminary.

Of the 5,726 CT cases reported in 2014,

- 3,902 (68%) were in females, of whom 41 (1%) developed PID;
- except for two CT infections in young children, the ages of CT-infected persons ranged from 13–70 years, of whom, 4,648 (81%) were in persons ≤ 29 years;
- rates were highest in persons aged 20–24 years at 3,923 cases per 100,000 persons; and
- CT rates were highest in non-Hispanic American Indian/Alaska Native people (AI/AN), Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islanders (NH/PI), and Blacks (Figure 2).

Figure 2. Chlamydia Infection Rates, by Race and Ethnicity — Alaska, 2013 and 2014*



*Note: 240 cases in 2013 and 229 cases in 2014 were of unknown or multiple races and are not included in this chart.

The Northern and Southwest regions had the highest CT rates in 2014, while the greatest rate increase from 2013 was in the Interior region (18%). Five-year trend data show rate decreases in all areas except the Gulf Coast; Southwest rates initially decreased and then returned to 2010 levels (Table).

Table. Chlamydia Rates per 100,000 population with 1- and 5-year Rate Changes, by Region — Alaska, 2010–2014

Region	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	1 Year	5 Year
Anch/MatSu	810	771	727	786	725	-8%	-11%
Gulf Coast	355	365	414	329	370	+12%	+4%
Interior	811	799	597	645	759	+18%	-6%
Northern	2250	2060	2278	2216	1975	-11%	-12%
Southeast	604	460	487	513	512	0%	-15%
Southwest	1801	1753	1501	1598	1798	+13%	0%
Statewide	849	803	750	787	778	-1%	-8%

Discussion

Proportionally, the distribution of CT cases in Alaska mirrors that of the nation, with females, persons aged 15–24 years, and racial and ethnic minorities bearing the greatest burden of disease.¹ Alaska has experienced recent reductions in CT incidence; however, it is unknown if Alaska's decrease in reported CT incidence is the result of a true decline in disease transmission or a decline in case detection (or both). In Alaska, incidence rates are highest in the Northern and Southwest regions. Concerningly, the Interior region has seen a substantial increase in CT incidence during 2012–2014.

Recommendations

1. Promptly treat CT-infected patients and their sex partner(s) with azithromycin 1 g PO in a single dose, OR doxycycline 100 mg PO twice daily for 7 days.³
2. Test all persons who are infected with CT for other sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV.
3. A thorough sexual history should be elicited from all STD patients to include same-sex and oral/anal sexual activities; obtain rectal and/or pharyngeal specimens,⁴ as appropriate, for CT and GC detection.
4. Develop a partner management plan with CT-infected patients that include timely notification of all sex partners. Consider expedited partner therapy for sexual partners who are unlikely to present for clinical evaluation.⁵
5. Screen pregnant women for STDs at the first prenatal visit; repeat testing in the third trimester for those at high risk.
6. Annually screen all sexually active females aged ≤ 25 years and women aged >25 years with new or multiple partners.
7. Counsel patients at risk for STDs on risk-reduction strategies, including correct and consistent condom use.
8. Report confirmed CT cases and treatment to SOE within 5 working days by fax to 561-4239, or call 561-4234 (800-478-1700). Report forms are available at: www.epi.alaska.gov/pubs/conditions/frmSTD.pdf

References

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