



Scientific Bulletin of the Academy of Medical Sciences

Number 129/ 6 December 2024

UK HEALTH OFFICIALS WARN OF RISING CEFTRIAXONE-RESISTANT GONORRHEA

UK health officials are warning about an increase in cases of **ceftriaxone-resistant gonorrhea**.

In a report by the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA), 15 cases of *Neisseria gonorrhoeae* resistant to ceftriaxone were detected in England between June 2022 and May 2024, including 5 XDR (extensively drug-resistant) strains.

Previously, a total of 31 cases of ceftriaxone-resistant gonorrhea, 7 of them XDR, had been reported in England since 2015.

Ceftriaxone is the recommended first-line antibiotic for gonorrhea infections. It is the last remaining effective treatment option for *N. gonorrhoeae*, which has developed resistance to every other class of antibiotics used. Ceftriaxone-resistant strains have particularly spread in certain parts of Asia.

All patients were heterosexual men, most in their 20s, and the majority had acquired the infection abroad. While transmission within England has been limited, UKHSA officials are concerned about the potential for wider spread as gonorrhea cases

increase.

The 85,223 cases of gonorrhea reported in England in 2023 represent the highest annual number since officials began keeping records in 1918.

Gonorrhea is becoming increasingly resistant to antibiotics, raising the risk that it could become **untreatable** in the future. Untreated gonorrhea can lead to serious health issues, including pelvic inflammatory disease and infertility. The best method of gonorrhea prevention is the use of **condoms**.

UKHSA has issued an alert to sexual health clinics, advising them to culture suspected gonorrhea samples, retest patients after recovery, and send all ceftriaxone-resistant strains or potential treatment failures to UKHSA.

Gonorrhea's growing antibiotic resistance poses a significant risk of it becoming untreatable in the future.

Adapted after Chris Dall, 16 August 2024

Editorial board: CS 1 Dr. Viorel Alexandrescu
Prof. Dr. Mircea Beuran
Prof. Dr. Emanoil Ceaușu
Dr. Gabriel - Cristian Văcaru
Technical editing: Ref. Narcisa Samoilă
Translation: Andreea Antochi
Website: <https://www.adsm.ro>

