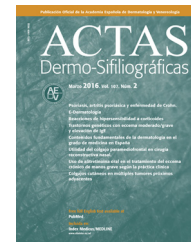




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## ORIGINAL

### Sexually Transmitted Infections: Experience in a Multidisciplinary Clinic in a Tertiary Hospital (2010-2013)<sup>☆</sup>



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#### KEYWORDS

Sexually transmitted infections;  
Sexually transmitted infections clinic;  
Human immunodeficiency virus;  
Syphilis

#### Abstract

**Background:** The number of consultations for sexually transmitted infections (STIs) is increasing in Spain. The aim of this study was to describe and analyze the epidemiological, behavioral, clinical, and microbiological characteristics of patients registered at the STI unit of a tertiary hospital.

**Methods:** This was a retrospective, single-center descriptive study carried out between 2010 and 2013 in a multidisciplinary unit specialized in STIs, situated in a tertiary hospital. Epidemiological, clinical, and behavioral data were gathered using a face-to-face interview and a standardized questionnaire. Samples were collected for microbiology analysis.

**Results:** The study included 546 patients: 96% were men, 41% had human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) infection, and 56% were men who have sex with men. The reasons for consultation were the following: urethritis; genital, anal, or perianal ulcers; proctitis; oral ulcers; sexual contact with a person with a known STI; and high-risk sexual contact. The most common microbiological diagnoses were *Neisseria gonorrhoeae* in urethritis, *Treponema pallidum* in genital and anal or perianal ulcers, and *Chlamydia trachomatis* lymphogranuloma venereum serovars in proctitis. The highest prevalences of the main STIs studied occurred in homosexual men with HIV infection.

**Conclusion:** This study confirms the increase in the incidence of STIs in recent years and the epidemiological characteristics of the HIV/STI epidemic in Spain.

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**PALABRAS CLAVE**

Infecciones de transmisión sexual; Unidad de infecciones de transmisión sexual; Virus de la inmunodeficiencia humana; Sífilis

## Infecciones de transmisión sexual: experiencia de una consulta multidisciplinar en un hospital terciario (2010-2013)

**Resumen**

**Introducción:** Las infecciones de transmisión sexual son un motivo de consulta creciente en nuestro medio. El objetivo de este trabajo es describir y analizar las características epidemiológicas, conductuales, clínicas y microbiológicas de los pacientes registrados en una unidad de infecciones de transmisión sexual de un hospital terciario.

**Métodos:** Estudio descriptivo, retrospectivo y unicéntrico realizado en una unidad multidisciplinar especializada en infecciones de transmisión sexual de un hospital terciario entre 2010 y 2013. Se recogieron datos epidemiológicos, clínicos y conductuales mediante entrevista oral abierta y cuestionario estandarizado, y se llevó a cabo la obtención de muestras para estudio microbiológico.

**Resultados:** Se estudiaron 546 pacientes, de los cuales fueron 96% varones, 41% infectados por el VIH, 56% hombres que tienen sexo con hombres. Los motivos de consulta más prevalentes fueron: uretritis, úlceras genitales y/o anales/perianales, proctitis, úlceras orales, contacto sexual de persona con ITS conocida y contacto sexual de riesgo. Los diagnósticos microbiológicos más frecuentes fueron: *Neisseria gonorrhoeae* en uretritis, *Treponema pallidum* en úlceras genitales y/o anales/perianales y *Chlamydia trachomatis* serovares de linfogranuloma venéreo en proctitis. Las principales ITS estudiadas fueron más prevalentes en varones homosexuales e infectados por el VIH.

**Conclusión:** Se confirma el incremento en la incidencia de las infecciones de transmisión sexual en los últimos años y las características epidemiológicas de la epidemia VIH/ITS de nuestro entorno.

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**Introduction**

The incidence of sexually transmitted infections (STIs) has risen in the past decade. According to the 2013 Report on the Epidemiological Sentinel Surveillance of STIs in Catalonia, published by the Catalan Center of Epidemiological Studies of STIs and AIDS (CEEISCAT), the annual incidence of syphilis increased from 1.4 to 10.6 cases per 100 000 inhabitants between 2003 and 2013, while that of gonorrhoea increased from 2.4 to 12.2 cases. The first cases of lymphogranuloma venereum (LGV) were reported in 2007, and the reported incidence in 2013 was 0.8 cases per 100 000 inhabitants.<sup>1</sup> The increase in STIs has been linked to numerous factors, such as sociocultural changes, socioeconomic factors, population explosion, migratory movements, and behavioral changes.<sup>2</sup>

STIs are an increasingly common reason for seeking care at primary health care centers and specialized outpatient and inpatient care units. To meet this demand, dedicated clinics, specialized in the management of STIs, have been created. These clinics are at the frontline of STI prevention.<sup>3</sup> However, in view of the current epidemiological situation, the saturation of the health care system, and the complexity of certain cases of STIs, particularly in patients with concomitant human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) infection or other infections that require multidisciplinary management, the creation of specialized hospital-based STI units is justified. In 2008, our hospital opened a multidisciplinary unit for the management of acute STIs (urethritis, proctitis, genital and anal ulcers, and secondary syphilis), headed by the dermatology and infectious diseases departments, with

participation of the microbiology and gynecology departments.

The aim of this study was to describe the epidemiological and clinical characteristics of the patients seen by this unit, based in a tertiary care hospital. We found no recent studies in the literature analyzing the current situation of STIs in high-risk patients in our setting.

**Patients and Methods**

This was a descriptive, retrospective, single-center study in which we collected epidemiological, behavioral, clinical, and microbiological data for patients seen at the STI unit of Hospital Clínic de Barcelona (HCB) in Barcelona, Spain between January 2010 and December 2013.

The patients included patients who came to the unit spontaneously for an emergency visit or who had been sent from primary care centers affiliated with the hospital or from the hospital's dermatology, infectious disease, and emergency departments, among others.

Data pertaining to epidemiological factors, sexual behavior (type of relationship, number of partners, use of drugs before sexual activity, and others), and reasons for the visit were obtained by face-to-face interviews and completion of a standardized questionnaire used by the Catalan STI Registry (RITS).<sup>4</sup> The RITS is a sentinel STI surveillance network for Catalonia that is coordinated by the CEEISCAT and Public Health Agency of Barcelona (ASPB). Use of the questionnaire was authorized by the institutional review board at HCB.

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