

Prostitutes are a major reservoir of sexually transmitted diseases in Nairobi, Kenya.

D'Costa, LJ; Plummer, FA; Bowmer, I; Fransen, L; Piot, P; Ronald, AR; Nsanze, H
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Abstract:

Prostitutes are a major reservoir of sexually transmitted diseases in many developing nations. In Nairobi we found that 16%, 28%, and 46%, respectively, of upper-, middle-, and lower-social strata prostitutes were infected with *Neisseria gonorrhoeae*. Genital ulcers and infections with *Haemophilus ducreyi* were more prevalent among prostitutes of the middle and lower social strata. A group of 97 prostitutes of the lower social strata were followed longitudinally to determine the rate of reinfection with *N. gonorrhoeae*. The mean time to acquisition of a new infection was 12.0 +/- 9.2 days. These results show that in Nairobi prostitutes are a readily identifiable group of high-frequency transmitters of gonococcal infection. Strategies based on intervention in the prostitute reservoir could prove to be an effective means of control of gonococcal infections in developing nations.