

Abstract

OBJECTIVE: The objective of this study was to assess the risk factors for and persistence of *Mycoplasma genitalium* (MG) in a highly exposed female population in Kenya. **STUDY DESIGN:** Two hundred fifty-eight sex workers in Nairobi, Kenya, 18 to 35 years of age, were enrolled. Every 2 months, cervical samples were collected for MG, *Chlamydia trachomatis* (CT), and *Neisseria gonorrhoeae* (GC) testing by polymerase chain reaction. **RESULTS:** At enrollment, 16% were infected with MG. Seventy-seven subjects acquired 107 MG infections, giving an incidence of 22.7 per 100 women-years. Incident CT (adjusted hazard ratio [HR] = 2.4; 95% confidence interval [CI] = 1.5-4.0), GC (HR = 2.0; 95% CI = 1.2-3.5), and HIV infection (adjusted HR = 2.2; 95% CI = 1.3-3.7) were associated with an increased risk of MG. Seventeen percent, 9%, and 21% of MG infections persisted 3, 5, and ≥ 7 months, respectively. **CONCLUSION:** The high incidence of MG, greater than that for both CT (14.0%) and GC (8%), association with common sexually transmitted infection risk factors, and persistence in the female genital tract supports its role as a common sexually transmitted infection in Kenyan women.