



Public Health Regulation Department Dipartiment ghar-Regolazzjoni Sahha Pubblika

Ministry for Health, the Elderly and Community Care

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To All medical Practitioners

Sexually Transmitted Infections

I hardly need to bring to your attention the fact that sexually transmitted infections (STIs) have become a public health problem not only globally but also locally. Apart from the increasing incidence of infections, there is the more worrying problem of ever increasing resistance of the various causative organisms to antibiotics. ‘

May I remind you that two of the most common causative organisms of urethral discharge, epididymo-orchitis and pelvic inflammatory disease - *Neisseria Gonorrhoeae* and *Chlamydia Trachomatis*, have both become resistant to most commonly used antibiotics. The local strain of *Neisseria Gonorrhoeae* as in other countries has become highly resistant to ciprofloxacin. It is also not indicated in the treatment of chlamydia, and therefore the use of this antibiotic in suspected STIs is not recommended.

One must remember that wrong treatment of STIs will not only contribute to the spread of disease, but may also result in the development of complications e.g. infertility and ectopic pregnancies, and the masking of other important infections especially syphilis.

In view of the above it is not recommended that STIs are treated blindly but should be investigated and treatment provided as appropriate. It is therefore recommended that all cases with suspected STI should be referred to the GU Clinic in Boffa Hospital where more focused management as well as counselling and partner notification can be provided. Urgent cases (i.e. males with a urethral discharge, or acute ulcers in either sex) are to be referred immediately will be seen within 48 hours at the latest. Other cases can be referred for a routine appointment either the patients themselves or the referring doctor by phoning the clinic on 22987115,(direct line), or contact details can be left on the answering service available on 21227981.

I thank you in advance for your co-operation

R. Busuttil
Superintendent of Public Health