



**SYPHILIS 1998-1999**

No. 34, 2000

**Laboratory surveillance**

In 1998 syphilis was diagnosed in a total of 44 persons and in 1999 in 34, including three children with congenital syphilis. These figures are in line with those for recent years, EPI-NEWS 17/98 and 7/96. They include both early (< 2 years duration) and late cases, [table 1](#).

**Table 1. No. of cases of syphilis diagnosed, 1998-1999**

Diagnosis	1998		1999	
	M	F	M	F
Acquired, early	19	6	15	4
Acquired, late	6	13	5	7
Congenital	0	0	1	2
Total	25	19	21	13

The M:F ratio was 1.4 for the two years 1998-99. This is similar to the ratio for 1996-97 (1.1) and 1994-95 (1.5). There was previously a considerable preponderance of male cases.

**Acquired syphilis**

Cases of acquired syphilis were diagnosed in 13 of the 16 hospital regions, and as in previous years, most (32%) were found in the Municipality of Copenhagen, [table 2](#).

**Table 2. Cases of acquired syphilis by region of diagnosis, 1998-1999**

County	1998-1999	
	M	F
Cph. Municip.	17	7
Frb. Municip.	1	0
Cph. County	7	3
Frederiksborg	1	1
Roskilde	0	0
West Zealand	0	0
Storstrøm	0	1
Bornholm	0	1
Funen	5	1
South Jutland	0	2
Ribe	1	2
Vejle	3	4
Ringkøbing	4	1
Aarhus	5	7
Viborg	0	0
North Jutland	1	0
Total	45	30

45% of these cases were diagnosed by general practitioners, 27% in public venereal disease (VD) clinics and 15% in hospital in-patient departments, [table 3](#).

**Table 3. Cases of acquired syphilis by place of diagnosis, 1998-1999**

	1998-99	
	M	F
Diagnostic centre		
General practice	17	17
Dermatological practice	0	1
Other specialist practice	6	2
Public VD clinic	15	5
Other public out-patients	1	0
Hospital in-patients	6	5
Total	45	30

Of the male patients, 51% were born in Denmark, while this only applied to 20% of the women, [table 4](#).

**Table 4. Cases of acquired syphilis by patient's place of birth, 1998-1999**

Place of birth	1998-99	
	M	F
Denmark	23	6
Faroese	0	0
Greenland	0	1
Other countries	20	22
Not stated	2	1
Total	45	30

Places of birth for foreign patients were, in descending order of frequency: Africa, Asia, Europe, Central America and South America. The country in which infection took place was unstated for 45% of patients, while the remainder were infected abroad, [table 5](#).

**Table 5. Cases of acquired syphilis by country of infection, 1998-1999**

Country of infection	1998-99	
	M	F
Denmark	0	0
Faroese	0	0
Greenland	0	0
Other countries	27	14
Not stated	18	16
Total	45	30

The foreign regions stated as the place of infection were, in descending order of frequency: Eastern Europe, Africa, Asia, South America, Western Europe and Central America. The age distribution is shown in [table 6](#). As in previous years, there was a preponderance of cases in the 25-39-year age group.

**Table 6. Cases of acquired syphilis by age at diagnosis, 1998-1999**

Age (yrs)	1998-1999			
	Early		Late	
	M	F	M	F
0-19	2	0	1	0
20-24	1	1	0	4
25-29	3	2	4	6
30-39	18	3	1	6
40-49	4	3	2	2
50+	6	1	3	2
Total	34	10	11	20

The number of cases of syphilis diagnosed in pregnant women was 11 in 1996, 12 in 1997 and 11 in 1998, falling to six in 1999, [table 7](#).

**Table 7. Cases of acquired syphilis diagnosed in pregnant women, 1998-1999**

Diagnosis	Birthplace	1998	1999
Early	Denmark	0	1
	Abroad	1	0
Late	Denmark	1	0
	Abroad	9	5
Total		11	6

**Congenital syphilis**

Congenital syphilis was diagnosed in two adopted children from Haiti and Colombia, respectively, and in a 9-year-old Danish child in which the diagnosis could not be excluded, [table 1](#).

**Comments**

The total number of diagnosed syphilis cases remains at the level of recent years. Nevertheless, the number of pregnant women found to have syphilis in 1999 was only half that found in the preceding years. It cannot be excluded that this decline in diagnosed cases could be due to the discontinuation of general screening of pregnant women from 1 July 1998.

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**Notification of syphilis**

Over the last two years less than half the laboratory-diagnosed cases of syphilis have been notified. Physicians are reminded that syphilis is a notifiable disease.

(Department of Epidemiology)



## Streptococci isolated from blood and CSF from infected patients

2nd quarter of 2000 compared with the same period of the two previous years

		2nd quarter 2000				2nd quarter	
		< 2 yrs	2-59 yrs	60 yrs +	Total	1999	1998
April	S. pneumoniae	4	29	44	77	79	74
	Gr. A strep.	1	4	9	14	13	24
	Gr. C strep.	-	-	1	1	-	1
	Gr. G strep.	-	2	3	5	6	9
May	S. pneumoniae	2	24	39	65	68	61
	Gr. A strep.	1	4	8	13	5	15
	Gr. C strep.	-	1	2	3	1	2
	Gr. G strep.	-	2	5	7	5	11
June	S. pneumoniae	4	14	34	52	61	67
	Gr. A strep.	-	7	2	9	12	14
	Gr. C strep.	-	2	2	4	-	3
	Gr. G strep.	-	3	7	10	10	7
2nd qtr	S. pneumoniae	10	67	117	194	208	202
	Gr. A strep.	2	15	19	36	30	53
	Gr. C strep.	-	3	5	8	1	6
	Gr. G strep.	-	7	15	22	21	27

(Streptococcus Unit)

## Patients with laboratory-confirmed Listeria monocytogenes infection

2nd quarter of 2000 compared with 1999

	2nd qtr 2000	Cumulated 2000	Whole year 1999
Mother/child infection	1	4	2
Septicaemia	6	10	29
Meningitis	-	5	7
Other		-	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>43</b>

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